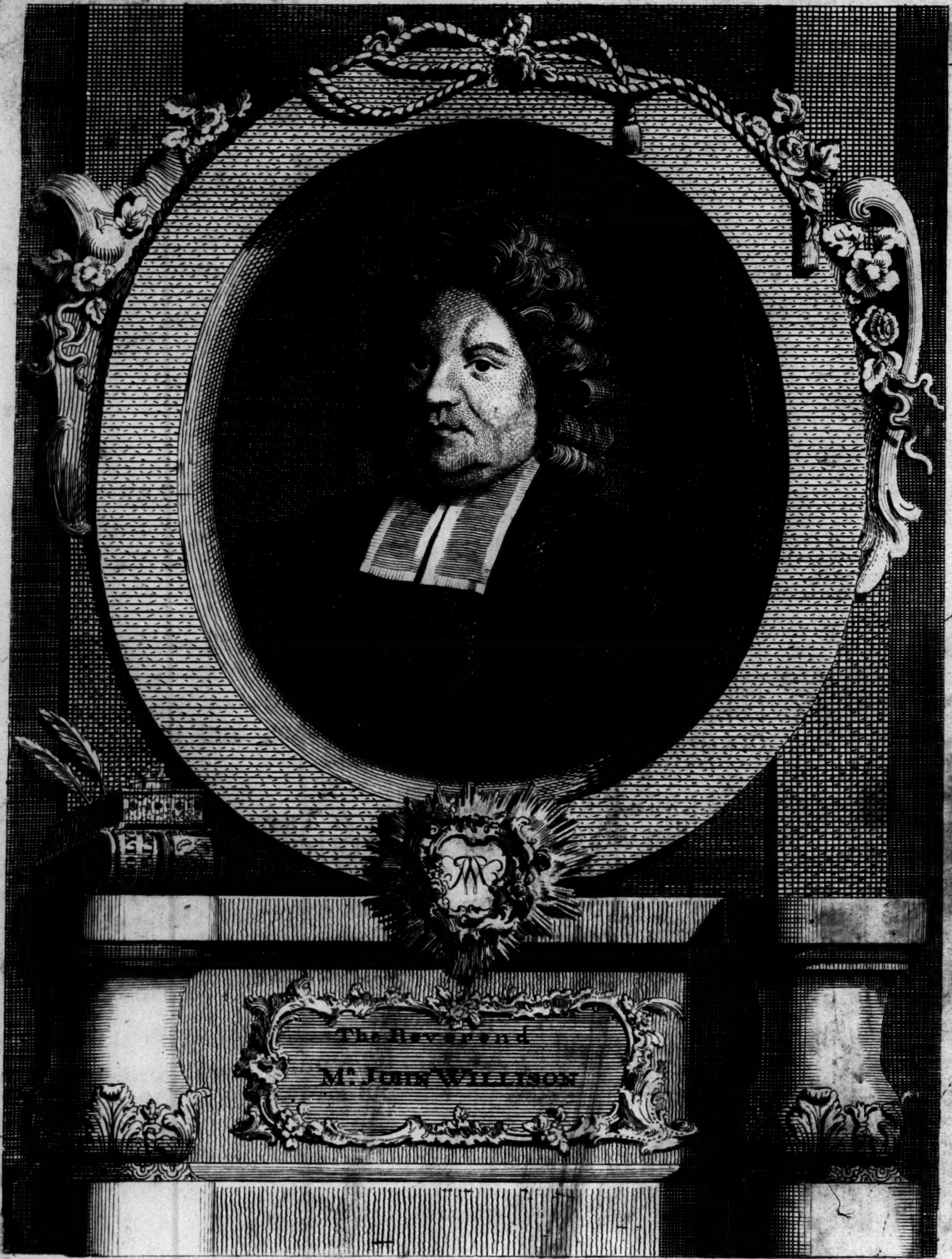
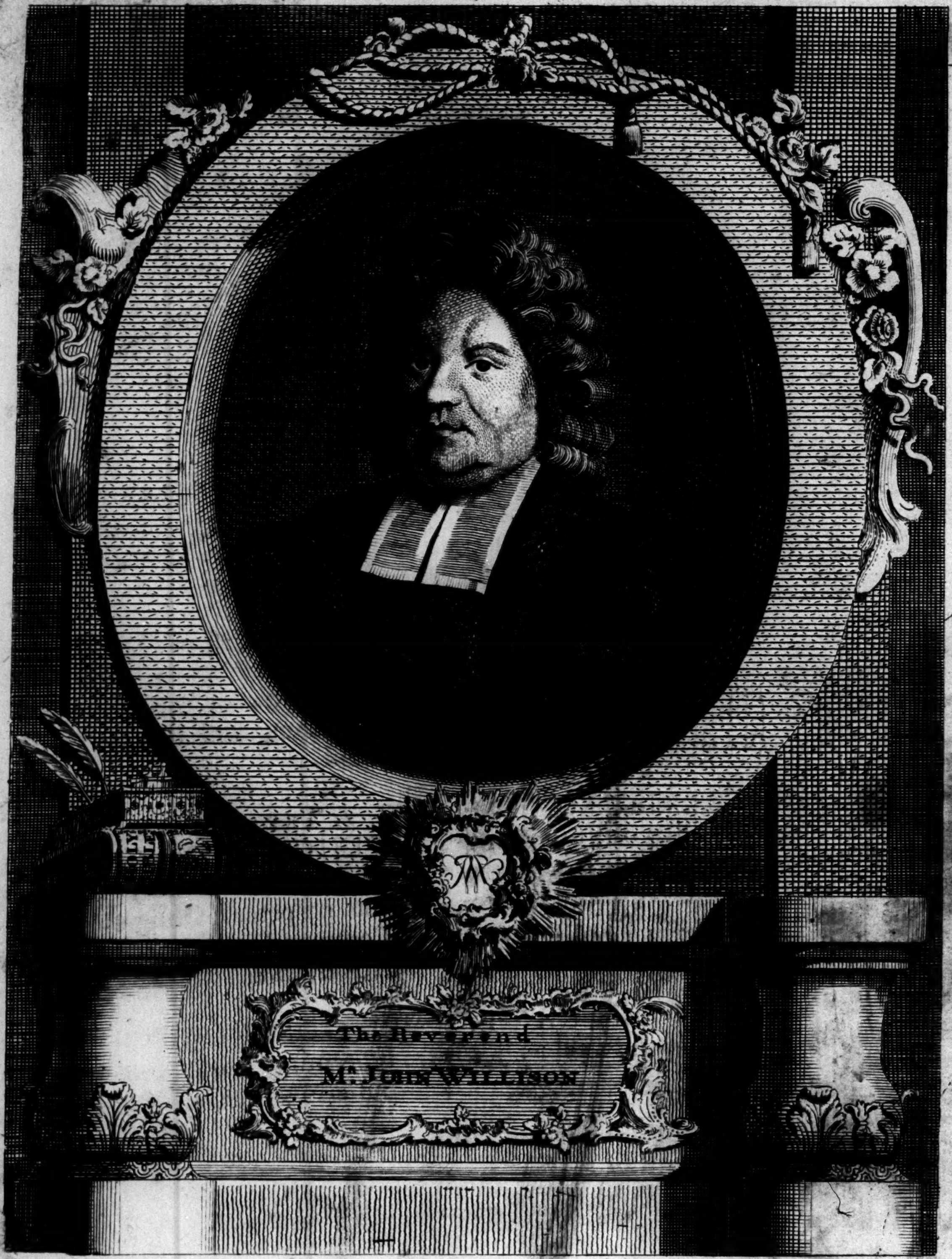


The Reverend
Mr. John Willison


The Reverend
Mr. John Willison

THE WHOLE

WORKS

Of the REVEREND and LEARNED

MR JOHN WILLISON,

K

Late Miniſter of the Goſpel in DUNDEE.

CONTAINING,

I. The AFFLICTED MAN's COMPANION; or a DIRECTORY for Families and Perſons afflicted with Sickneſs, or any other Diſtreſs: With Directions to the Sick, both under and after Affliction.

II. A SACRAMENTAL DIRECTORY; or a TREATISE concerning the Sanctification of a COMMUNION SABBATH.

III. A SACRAMENTAL CATECHISM; or a FAMILIAR INSTRUCTOR, for young Communicants: plainly unfolding the Nature of the COVENANT of GRACE, with the Two Seals thereof, BAPTISM and the LORD's SUPPER.

IV. An EXAMPLE of plain CATECHISING, upon the ASSEMBLY's SHORTER CATECHISM.

V. SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS, proper for Communicants to prepare their Hearts, excite their Affections, and enliven their Devotions on Sacramental Occaſions.

VI. The BALM of GILEAD, for healing a diſeaſed Land; with a SCRIPTURE PROPHECY of the Increaſe of CHRIST's Kingdom, and the Deſtruction of Antichriſt.

VII. A TREATISE concerning the SANCTIFICATION of the SABBATH; wherein the Morality of the Sabbath, or the perpetual Obligation of the Fourth Commandment is maintained againſt all Adverſaries.

VIII. GOSPEL HYMNS, in Memory of redeeming Love, and of the Death and Sufferings of the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

——————— *Being dead yet ſpeaketh,* HEB. xi. 4.

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For WILLIAM CUSHNIE.
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BRITISH MUSEUM

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TO THE

READER.

THE ſubject of this Book, however melancholy it may appear to ſome, yet is neceſſary to all; ſeeing the word of God, and our own experience, do aſſure us, that *Man who is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble;* and that he *is born to trouble as the ſparks fly upward.* Nay, God's deareſt children are not exempted from this common fate. We ſee what is the character God giveth of his church, Iſa. liv. 11. *O thou afflicted, and toſſed with tempeſt, and not comforted.*

If in this world then we muſt look for tribulation, it is highly neceſſary for every man to ſeek direction how to provide for it, and behave under it, ſo as he may glorify God, edify others, and attain to eternal happineſs at laſt. The tribulations we have to look for here are manifold; but, among theſe that are outward, I know none about which men ought to be more thoughtful and concerned, than bodily ſickneſs, that uſual harbinger of death, and which uſhers the way to judgment.

This is a ſubject not much handled in public ſermons, which are delivered only to them that are in health, the ſick being incapable to attend them. Wherefore it ſeems the more neceſſary to handle it in writing, that ſo the afflicted may have a book in their houſes, and at their bed-ſides, as a monitor to preach to them in private, when they are reſtrained from hearing ſermons in public.

And though ſometimes miniſters ſermons may be very ſuitable to the caſe of the ſick and afflicted; yet, alas! the moſt part are careleſs and forgetful hearers of theſe things while they are in health and proſperity, as reckoning the evil day at ſome diſtance from them. A book then, ſuch as the following Directory, being with them in time of ſickneſs and affliction, may, by the divine bleſſing, be uſeful to bring to their remembrance theſe counſels and admonitions which they very much neglected in the time of their health.

Again, miniſters of the goſpel, though never ſo much inclined to attend the ſick, yet by reaſon of diſability and multiplicity of other work, cannot be always with them, to direct, reſolve and comfort them. But ſuch a book as this they may have ſtill at hand to conſult with.

And, in regard the afflicted for the moſt part are out of caſe to read for themſelves, it would be a moſt charitable work for friends or neighbours that attend them, to lay hold on proper ſeaſons for reading ſuch a book as this in their hearing, and eſpecially ſuch chapters or directions as they judge moſt ſuitable for them. Thus you might be helped in ſome meaſure to exoner your conſciences, and do your laſt offices of kindneſs to your ſick and dying friends, when you can ſerve them no longer in this world.

I might have brought in and handled ſome controverſies (had I been fond of them) in the enſuing treatiſe, about the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper to the ſick, and about extreme unction, which ſome alſo begin to plead for, and thence have taken occaſion to touch at ſome other new uſages, ſuch as the middle ſtate, prayers for the dead, and other Popiſh errors, that ſome (called Proteſtants) would have revived and introduced among us. But I have induſtriouſly ſhunned what is controverſial, and kept cloſe to what is practical and owned by all true Chriſtians.

For preventing the growth of theſe and other errors (from which this nation hath been much longer free than others) I wiſh all ranks among us would cloſly obſerve the ſacred rule of faith, God's word, and remember the ſolemn and national engagements, we of this land are under, to maintain the pure truths of God therein contained, in oppoſition to all ſorts of errors, whether Popiſh, Pelagian, Arian, Antinomian, *&c.* And, may we ever abhor the doctrine that would teach us to break theſe bands aſſunder!

Have we not ground this day to ſuſpect that Satan is carrying on a deep and ſubtile plot for ſhaking our covenanted reformation, and weakening a proteſtant intereſt? When, upon the one hand, ſome are beginning openly to advance and propagate the old abjured popiſh doctrines which our reformers did throw out, and with axes and hammers would go at once to cut down all our carved work; and at the ſame time, on the other hand, ſome would be at breaking down the excellent fences of our Reformation, viz. our covenants, confeſſions, the Magiſtrate's power, &c. For this end, papers are ſpread, and poſitions advanced, impugning the warrantableneſs of our national covenants and confeſſions, and the obligation thereof; reflecting alſo upon our worthy reformers and anceſtors, as uninlightned who framed and took them, or died adhering thereunto; and alſo denying the magiſtrate's power, *circa ſacra* (for the ſupport of the truth, and ſuppreſſing of hereſies) acknowledged by the word of God and our Confeſſion of Faith; and all this, forſooth, to make way for a toleration of all errors and ſects among us: Tho' they cannot but know, that tolerating of falſe religions, is expreſly ranked among the ſins forbidden in the ſecond commandment, according to the expoſition of our Larger Catechiſm; and is alſo condemned by the xxiii. chapter of our Confeſſion: In both which, we may ſee the clear ſcripture texts, cited by the Aſſembly, for refuting and condemning any ſuch toleration. Ah! what joy may all this cauſe at Rome! therefore tell it not in Gath, *&c.*

As the Lord did ſignally countenance our reformers practice in entering into ſolemn and national covenants with God, and among themſelves, for religion and reformation, by the pouring out of his Spirit from on high, for bringing in of many ſouls to himſelf, and for overturning idolatry and ſuperſtition, and advancing reformation to a great pitch, in ſpite of all the enemies and difficulties that were in the way; ſo their practice of national covenanting, even under the New Teſtament diſpenſation, is ſufficiently warranted both by the light of nature, and by the word of God, and that in both Teſtaments. And this will appear if we conſider the ſcripture precedents, together with the promiſes and prophecies of the Old Teſtament relating to goſpel-times, and compare them with the New; and eſpecially theſe which foretel the unchurching of the Jewiſh nation, and the ingrafting of the Gentile nations into their room: and that thereupon the national church-ſtate and privileges of the Jews were to be transferred to Chriſtian nations, and particularly this of being nationally in covenant with God. Which prophecies are to have their ſpecial and full accompliſhment at Babylon's downfal. For illuſtrating theſe points, and applying the ſcripture texts relative thereto, I might expatiate in ſeveral ſheets of paper, if it were proper here. I ſhall only at this time cite ſome of the texts that may be well improven to the foreſaid purpoſes; which the reader may turn to and conſider at his leiſure, ſuch as Iſa. xix. 18. 21. 23. 24. 25. Iſa. xlv. 23. Jer. l. 4. 5. the lx. lxi. and lxii. chapters of Iſaiah throughout. Iſa. lv. 3. 4 5. Micah iv. 1. 2. Zech. viii. 21. 22. 23. Rev. ii. 15. Rom. xi. 17. 19. Rom. x. 12. 19. Mat. iii. 5. 6. Acts viii. 6. 12. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Mat. xxi. 43. Rom. ix. 24. 25. 26. compared with Hoſ. i. 9. 10. 11. Hoſ. ii. 23. Likewiſe I might cite ſeveral propheſies with reſpect to the Iſlands, and utmoſt ends of the earth, which were peopled by Japhet, that have a very particular and favourable aſpect to this covenanted land.

Beſides all which, it is evident from the firſt and great command of the law, which is directed to Iſrael as a nation, and is obligatory under the new Teſtament as well as the old; that it is a moral duty univerſally and perpetually binding upon nations and ſocieties, as well as ſingle perſons, to chuſe, acknowledge, and avouch the Lord to be their God, to walk in his ways and keep his ſtatutes. This is required in the firſt commandment, according to the expoſition of our Larger Catechiſm; and is there confirmed by theſe texts, that warrant and exemplify the practice of national covenanting, ſuch as Deut. xxvi. 19. 17. Joſh. xxiv. 22. In ſuch a national way did our fathers of old acknowledge and avouch the Lord to be their God, and devote themſelves and their poſterity to the Lord. And, bleſſed be the Lord our God, who did many ways declare himſelf to be well pleaſed with the bargain, and eſpecially by filling the temple with his glory.

As the prophets and godly Jews were at great pains to convey to poſterity hiſtorical accounts of the wonderful deliverances God wrought for Iſrael at the Red-ſea, and in reſcuing them from Egypt, Babylon and other enemies; ſo it would be uſeful to fortify our reformation, if we were careful to hand down to the riſing generation a ſenſe of God's diſtinguiſhing mercy to this land, in delivering us from ſpiritual Babylon, and reſcuing us from time to time from theſe captains that have ſought to lead us back thither. Many a time hath he delivered us, when we have been brought very low.

By many inſtances it hath appeared, that the glorious JEHOVAH hath not been aſhamed to own his covenant-relation to this ſinful and unworthy land. God forbid that we of this age ſhould be aſhamed to own our covenant-relation to him. This hath been both our glory and our ſafety; and I hope, there will ſtill be found a remnant to own it, and plead it with God in the time of danger. Surely, it is not time now to diſclaim it, when the enemies of our Zion are combining together, and ſeeking to raze her to the foundation. Let all her lovers cry mightily to her covenanted Lord in her behalf, in theſe ſhaking times: let them join to put up that prayer of the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxviii. 28. *Strengthen, O God, that which thou haſt wrought for us;* and that of Habakkuk, Hab. iii. 2. *O Lord, revive thy work in the midſt of the years.*

MAY 27. 1727.

N. B. The foreſaid digreſſion in the preface to the firſt edition was occaſioned by the broaching of ſome Sectarian notions, which introduced great reelings and ſhakings in this corner, and other parts of this church, ſince which time, alas! ſhe hath enjoyed little peace within her walls or proſperity within her palaces; but inſtead thereof, ſhe hath been toſſed with tempeſts and troubles of various kinds, whereby the children of Zion have been brought and ſtill ly under great diſtreſs and affliction.

The firſt impreſſion of this book being diſpoſed of, and a ſecond called for, I have the more readily conſented to it, at this time of general calamity and diſtreſs, ſeeing the book is intended as a directory to Chriſtians under affliction whatever ſort it be. It cannot but be obvious to every ſerious obſerver, that the Lord's judgments are in the earth at this day, and that the inhabitants of this land are generally viſited with calamities of divers kinds, both ſpiritual and temporal; which makes a Directory how to manage and carry under them the more ſeaſonable and neceſſary.

Ah! the Lord's hand is viſibly lifted up againſt us at this day, and hath been for ſome years paſt, in ſhutting up the churches womb, blaſting goſpel ordinances, and withdrawing his Spirit from the aſſemblies of his people, and from our judicatories. The flood-gate is opened for error, infidelity, and looſeneſs to overſpread the land; ſo that the goſpel of Chriſt, the holy Scriptures, and all revealed religion are contemned and ridiculed by many. "The anger of the Lord hath divided us " both in church and ſtate, and hath mingled a perverſe " ſpirit in the midſt of us;" yea, hath made ſuch woful breaches amongſt godly miniſters and Chriſtians, who are aiming at the ſame things, that no balm can be found for healing them. There is a way opened for a carnal ſelf-ſeeking miniſter to get into the vineyard, when faithful labourers are thruſt out, and godly preachers and ſtudents are diſcouraged from entering in. Not a few chriſtian congregations, who lately were harmonious and unite in partaking of goſpel ordinances, are now ſo miſerable, rent and ſcattered thro' mournful intruſions and dividing courſes, that they cannot worſhip God together; and many of them are wandering like ſheep having no ſhepherd, expoſed to beaſts of prey, and liable to periſh in a ſtate of ignorance or negligence.

Likewiſe, the Lord's hand is remarkably lifted up againſt us, in the variety of temporal judgments and calamities brought upon us within a very ſhort time bypaſt. Sometimes the Lord ſends forth his ſtormy winds with extraordinary violence, ſo as to carry terror and deſtruction alongſt with them both by ſea and land, and even threaten to bury us in the ruin of our houſes. Sometimes he ſends ſuch long continued rains in harveſt, as threatens to deſtroy the whole crop before our eyes. Sometimes ſuch extraordinary ſtorms of froſt and ſnow, as to bind up the waters and mills, that food cannot be prepared for us, and we are ready to famiſh in midſt of plenty. Sometimes he ſends ſuch deſtructive ſtorms of lightening and thunder from heaven, and kindles ſuch violent fires on earth, that whole cities with their inhabitants are like to be conſumed therewith. Upon our neighbouring countries dreadful inundations have been ſent of late, for deſtroying the inhabitants with their cattle and effects. Again, God hath viſited us with long continued drought, cold and unnatural ſtorms in the ſpring, and ſometimes with froſt in midſt of ſummer, which have brought on extraordinary ſcarcity and dearth of victual, ſo that there are great diſorders committed in the land by riots and tumults for want of food, and multitudes of families are diſſolved, and forced to wander begging their bread; and the cattle alſo are famiſhed for want of graſs and food to ſuſtain them. In the mean time we are engaged in war with cruel enemies, who ſeize our ſhips, carry our countrymen captives, throw them into dungeons and nauſeous priſons, where they uſe them barbarouſly; yea much of their blood is ſhed, and many valuable lives are loſt in our defence. And beſides our other calamities, we ſuffer greatly thro' decay of trade and merchandiſe, and penury of money: In many places merchants, tradeſmen and artificers want buſineſs: there is no work nor hire for labourers, and for thoſe who would uſe honeſt induſtry for bread, whether men or women: So that want is *come upon us as one that travelleth, and poverty like an armed man*, and many are reduced to extreme miſery and ſtarving circumſtances for lack of bread.

By all which proceedings it appears that God hath a peculiar controverſy with Scotland, and threatens to puniſh her remarkably for her heinous ſins and provocations. The Lord's hand hath been long lifted up againſt us, and now it is higher lifted up than ever: and, the higher it is lifted, the blow is like to be the ſeverer when given. He hath ſent many leſſer ſtrokes and judgments upon us, as forerunners and warnings of greater, which he hath ſtill in reſerve for us, if we repent not; for his magazine is far from being exhauſted. As there are many cauſes for theſe calamities of ours, ſo I think there is a principle one mentioned, Mat. xxiv. 12. *Iniquity doth abound and the love of many is waxen cold.* Infidelity, immorality and contempt of the goſpel are come to a prodigious height: Our hearts are become cold and frozen to Chriſt and his intereſt, to his people and holy laws; for which cauſe God is provoked to ſend ſuch judicial cold and froſts upon our land and the fruits of the earth, ſo as to mar and diminiſh our crops, and reduce both men and beaſts to the greateſt ſtraits. And yet ſo great is our impenitency and perverſeneſs, that we will not ſee the Lord's hand, nor be reformed by all theſe judgments.

It might well be expected, when the Lord's judgments are ſo viſible in the earth, that not only his people by profeſſion, but even the inhabitants of the world, would learn righteouſneſs, according to Iſa. xxvii. 9. But alas! ſo perverſe are we to walk with God, that neither the inhabitants of the world, nor thoſe who profeſs to be ſeparated from the world, will alter their courſe, nor learn righteouſneſs; nay, inſtead of that, many are learning ſtill more wickedneſs, *Shall I not viſit for theſe things? ſaith the Lord: and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?* Alas! hath he not been provoked to ſay concerning us, as he did concerning his ancient people, Lev. xxvi. 23. 24. *If ye will not be reformed by all theſe things, but will walk contrary unto me; Then will I alſo walk contrary unto you, and will bring ſeven times more plagues upon you, according to your ſins.* And likewiſe to ſay unto us, as unto them, *When ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; and when ye faſt and make many prayers, I will not hear: but I will conſume you with the ſword, with the famine, and with the peſtilence* as in Iſa. i. 15. Jer. xiv. 12.

The ſword, famine and peſtilence, are God's three mortal arrows, which he commonly threatens to ſhoot againſt impenitent and incorrigible offenders. Two of theſe are already ſhot againſt us: the ſword is drawn, and much of our countrymens blood is already ſhed; and what further ſtreams of it may flow before it be put up in its ſheath, God only knows. The evil arrow of famine (as God calls it, Ezek. v. 16.) is let fly againſt us at the ſame time, and the famine is the arrow which is the ſoreſt of the three. When it was put to David's choice, which of the three he would be the butt of, he would not chuſe famine. The prophet Joel doth bewail and deprecate this judgment in the moſt pathetick manner, and calls the whole land to faſting and prayer for removing it, Joel i. 10. 14. And we ſee, when God is moſt angry, and threatens to ſpend his arrows upon a guilty people, he begins with the arrow of famine as the ſoreſt, as in Deut xxxii. 23. 24. *I will ſpend mine arrows upon them, they ſhall be burnt with hunger.* And we ſee what the Spirit of God ſaith of theſe who die by this arrow, Lam. iv. 9. *They that be ſlain with the ſword, are better than they that be ſlain with hunger; for theſe pine away; ſtriken through for want of the fruits of the field;* and therefore their death is moſt lingering and miſerable. Likewiſe famine uſeth to bring on the moſt nauſeous and mortal diſeaſes, and frequently the peſtilence doth follow upon the back of famine. Is it not high time then for our land to take the alarm, when God begins to ſhoot his evil arrows? When the lion roars, it becomes us to fear, yea, to humble ourſelves in the duſt, and mourn for our iniquities which kindle the fire of wrath.

Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, from whom we have deeply revolted: and particularly, let us mourn for and turn from theſe ſins which the word of God points out as bringing on famine; ſuch as, 1. Aſcribing our earthly comforts and bleſſings to other things than God the true author. This ſin we find threatened with ſcarcity and famine, Jer. xliv. 17. 26. 27. Hoſ. ii. 5. 9.—2. Perverting of plenty to luxury and prodigality, ſenſuality and exceſs, revelings and dancings, balls and aſſemblies. We ſee how theſe are threatened, Iſa. v. 11. 12. 13. Amos. vi. 4. 6. 7.——3. Rejecting the bread of life, and deſpiſing the food of our ſouls. God uſed to puniſh men for their ſins, by depriving them of bread for their bodies, Jer. xi. 21. 22.——4. Men minding their own things more than the things of God; and neglecting to build his houſe, and put reſpect upon his ordinances. Upon ſuch account God brings on ſcarcity and famine, Hag. i. 9. 10. 11.—5. Covenant-breaking, and dealing cruelly with the poor, or with ſtrangers that live among us; It was for theſe ſins that God ſent a three years famine upon the land of Iſrael, 2 Sam. xxi 1.

Moreover, let us look upon all theſe temporal ſtorms and calamities which are come or coming upon the land as warnings to prepare for a more awful ſtorm that we muſt all meet with, namely, the ſtorm of death and judgment; let us ſtand habitually prepared for that ſtorm, and then other ſtorms will not ſo much affect us. If it be aſked, What we ſhall do to be ſafe in time of that trying ſtorm? the anſwer is, Let us ſee that we be among the broken in heart, or the ſincere penitents, who are heartily grieved for all known ſin; that we be true believers in Chriſt, who truſt in nothing but his righteouſneſs and merits for juſtification and ſalvation, that we be born again, and made new creatures by a ſaving change both in heart and life: that it be our great buſineſs to clear up our evidences of peace with God thro' Chriſt, and of our title to the manſions which he hath purchaſed by his blood. O that God's judgments, when they are on the earth, were means to awaken us to flee from the wrath to come, to Chriſt our refuge! when the floods of great waters are ſwelling up to the brim, our only ſafety is to ſecure a hiding-place in Chriſt's wounds.

Let us follow the example of Noah, who when he ſaw the flood coming, took warning, and prepared an ark for ſaving himſelf and his houſhold, Heb. 11. 7. Let us even imitate the Egyptians that feared the Lord, they, when warned of the dreadful ſtorm of hail that was coming on the land, made their ſervants and cattle to flee into the houſes, Exod. ix. 20. God hath in mercy provided chambers for his people to hide themſelves in when ſtorms are coming, even the chambers of his attributes and promiſes, and the chambers of Chriſt's wounds and interceſſion; in theſe only we can find ſafety: Let us enter into them by faith, when he invites us, Iſa. xxvi. 20. 21.

Seeing in theſe evil days we have ſo many harbingers and forerunners of death before our eyes, it will be highly our wiſdom to keep ourſelves ſtill in a waiting poſture always ready and willing to die. What is there in this weary land to tempt us to deſire to abide in it! Is it not a land overwhelmed with ſin and ſorrow: O believers, are you toſſed with tempeſts here? Seek the wings of a dove, that you may fly away and be at reſt. Be habitually deſiring to depart, that you may be with Chriſt. Surely for you to die is gain, yea, infinite gain! What are the imaginary pleaſures of this world to the real happineſs of the next? Tho' the ſtruggles of death be grievous to nature, yet the gains of dying ſhould reconcile you to do it. You do not ſtick at the trouble of putting off your cloaths at night, to gain a little reſt to your bodies; and why ſhould you ſtick at uncloathing yourſelves of the garments of fleſh at God's call, to gain everlaſting reſt to your ſouls, and the fruition of Chriſt's glorious preſence for ever? Let the thoughts of this gain put you upon uſing all means to get your hearts wean'd from the love of the world and its comforts. Keep the mantle of earthly enjoyments, hanging looſe about you, eſpecially in theſe calamitous times, that ſo it may be eaſily dropt when death comes to carry you to the eternal world. O for more of the lively faith of that world, and of him that is the Lord and purchaſer of it! But, ſeeing this ſubject is more largely inſiſted on in the book itſelf, I ſhall add no more here upon it. Only I ſhall ſubjoin a collection of ſome ſweet and comfortable texts of ſcripture, very proper for dying believers to meditate and feed on by faith, to grip to and plead with God, and ſuck conſolation from, when they have a near proſpect of going through the dark valley, and entering into the unknown regions of eternity. God's word will then be our hope.

A
COLLECTION OF COMFORTABLE
TEXTS
For DYING BELIEVERS.

COME unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt, Mat. xi. 28. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out, John vi. 37.

In my father's houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo, John xiv. 2. 3.

Becauſe I live ye ſhall live alſo, John xiv. 19.

Chriſt ſaith, Surely I come quickly. Anſ. Amen. Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus, Rev. xxii. 20.

There remaineth a reſt to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9.

I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord, Gen xlix. 18.

Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace. For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, Luke ii. 29, 30.

He is the Rock, and his work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me, Pſal. cxxxviii. 8.

Being confident——that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt, Phil. i. 6.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God: whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another; though my reins be conſumed within me, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

Although my houſe is not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure. For this is all my ſalvation and all my deſire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5,

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, Pſal. xxiii. 4.

Into thine hand I commit my Spirit: Thou haſt redeemed me O Lord God of truth, Pſal. xxxi. 5.

For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death, Pſal. xlviii. 14.

Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth. But God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Pſalm lxxii. 24. 25. 26.

The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not deſpiſe, Pſal. li. 17.

O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at reſt. I would haſten my eſcape from the windy ſtorm and tempeſt, Pſal. lx. 6, 8.

Though ye have lien among the pots, yet ſhall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold, Pſal. lxviii. 13.

The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin, 1 John i. 7.

Having boldneſs, to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, Heb. x. 19.

He hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee. Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 5. 8.

He retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy, Micah. vii. 18.

Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him, Job xiii. 15.

In his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt, Mat. xii. 23.

Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him, Pſal. ii. 12.

He knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are duſt, Pſal. ciii. 14.

I lothe it, I would not live alway, Job vii. 16.

We know that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 1. 8.

For me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain. Having a deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt, which is far better, Phil. i. 21, 23.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee Pſal. xxxix. 7.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me, Awake, O North wind, come, thou South, blow upon my garden that the ſpices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come unto his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits. Until the day brake and ſhadows fly away. Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or to a young hart on the mountains of ſpices, Cant ii. 6. 16. 17, and iv. 16. and viii. 14.

O death, where is thy ſting? O grave where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.

The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

The day of death is better than the day of one's birth, Eccl. vii. 1.

And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away, Rev. xxi. 4.

This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am chief, 1 Tim. i. 15.

God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life, John iii. 16.

For he hath made him to be ſin for us who knew no ſin; that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15.

Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed his people, and hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant David, Luke i. 68. 69.

Them which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him. Then ſhall we be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord, in the air; And ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. 17.

Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, &c. Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and glory, Rev. i. 5. and v. 11.

We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren, 1 John iii. 14.

I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeperate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38. 39.

I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day, 2 Tim. i. 12.

I count all things but loſs and dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, *&c.* Phil. iii. 8. 9.

Chriſt Jeſus who is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30.

We rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh, Phil. iii. 2.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, Col. i. 12.

Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him. Amen. Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, Rev. i. 7. and xxii. 20.

Dundee, 5th June
1741.

THE

AFFLICTED MAN's COMPANION:

OR,

A DIRECTORY for a Family, or Perſon under AFFLICTION by Sickneſs, or otherwiſe.

THE INTRODUCTION.

MAN, when he firſt dropt from his Maker's hands, was a holy and innocent creature, pure from ſin, and conſequently free from ſickneſs and trouble, enjoying uninterrupted health and proſperity both in body and ſoul. But no ſooner was he tainted with ſin, but he became liable to all ſorts of miſeries, temporal, ſpiritual and eternal: his ſoul being the reſidence of his ſins and luſts, his body turned the receptacle of ſickneſs and diſeaſes. And ſeeing God's own children have the relicks of ſin and corruption in them while in this world, they are not to expect exemption from ſuch afflictions; and the infinitely wiſe God ſees meet to make uſe of bodily diſtempers to correct the corruptions, and try the graces of his people, and to promote both their ſpiritual and eternal advantage. Hence it is ſaid of Lazarus, John xi. 3. 'Behold, he whom thou loveſt is ſick.' He was beloved, and yet ſick. It is no rare thing for the deareſt of God's ſaints to be put to chatter like cranes, and mourn like doves, by reaſon of ſore ſickneſs; as Hezekiah did, Iſa. xxxviii. 14. Sanctified and healthy ſouls may be matched with weak and ſickly bodies, as was Gaius, 3 John 2. Notwithſtanding the caſe is ſometimes moſt trying and exerciſing to the beſt of God's people: and they are never more ready to queſtion God's love, or quarrel with his providence, than under heavy ſickneſs and bodily diſtreſs. It is therefore highly the concernment of all, whether families or private perſons, to enquire how they ought to behave under or after afflicting ſickneſs; and how they ſhall provide for ſuch an evil time before it come. And, for the help of all that deſire inſtruction in this matter, I have written the following Directory, which, for method's ſake I ſhall divide into ſeveral chapters.

I. I ſhall give ſome general directions to all families and perſons viſited with ſickneſs and affliction.

II. Some particular directions to thoſe who are ſharply afflicted with ſore ſickneſs and long trouble.

III. Directions to the children of God under ſickneſs.

IV. Directions to unregenerate perſons under ſickneſs.

V. Directions to the people of God when recovered from ſickneſs.

VI. Directions to unrenewed perſons recovered from ſickneſs.

VII. Directions to theſe ſick perſons who are apparently in a dying condition.

VIII. Directions to the relations, acquaintances and neighbours of the ſick, who are themſelves in health for the time.

N. B. Let it be remembred, that what I ſay to thoſe viſited with ſickneſs, is likewiſe applicable to all other afflicted perſons, whatever their diſtreſs be.

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CHAP. I.

Containing general Directions to all families and perſons viſited with ſickneſs.

DIRECT. I. *Diligently enquire into the ends and deſigns, for which uſually God ſends ſickneſs and affliction upon perſons.*

AN infinitely holy and gracious God hath various and wiſe ends in afflicting the children of men, whether they be converted or unconverted; which ought to be duly conſidered by all, and eſpecially by thoſe who are viſited with ſickneſs; ſome whereof I ſhall inſtance.

I. God viſits with ſickneſs, to cauſe careleſs ſinners bethink themſelves concerning their ſoul's eſtate and condition, who perhaps had never a ſerious thought about it before. There are many who, when in health and ſtrength, are ſo intent upon the pleaſures and profits of the world, that they mind nothing elſe; all the warnings, exhortations and counſels of miniſters, teachers and friends are loſt upon them; they cannot endure to entertain a thought of God, of the ſoul, of death, of heaven, of hell, or of judgment to come; till God doth caſt them into ſome ſickneſs or bodily diſtreſs, and then ſometimes they begin with the prodigal to come to themſelves, and bethink themſelves concerning their ſouls and a future life. Now, this is God's deſign, 1 Kings viii. 47. "If they bethink themſelves in the land whither they are carried captives, and repent," *&c.* By ſickneſs God gives a man, that before was wholly diverted from ſoul-matters by buſineſs, company and pleaſures, occaſion to bethink himſelf. The man is now confined to his chamber, is deprived of his former company and diverſions, and ſo gets time and leiſure to commune with his own heart, and reflect on his former ways, and to hear what conſcience ſpeaks concerning a judgment day, and a world to come, and the need of a Saviour. And ſo, by the bleſſing of God upon ſuch afflictions, not a few have begun their firſt acquaintance with God and Chriſt, and ſerious religion. Nay, the furnace is Chriſt's uſual work-houſe, where he has formed the moſt excellent veſſels of honour and praiſe, Iſa. xlviii. 10. "I have choſen thee in the furnace of affliction." Manaſſeh, the Prodigal, Paul and the Jailor were all choſen there.

II. God viſits us with ſickneſs, in order to inſtruct and teach us theſe things we know not, Pſal. xcvi. 12. It was a ſaying of Luther, *Schola crucis eſt ſchola lucis.* And indeed the ſchool of affliction is the place where many of Zion's ſcholars have made good proficiency in ſpiritual and experimental knowledge. Now, there are ſeveral remarkable leſſons which God would teach us by the rod.

1ſt, The knowledge of God. It is ſaid of Manaſſeh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 13. "When he was brought to affliction, *&c.* then Manaſſeh knew that the Lord he was God." Though Manaſſeh was well educated, and early taught the knowledge of God, yet till now he knew not the Lord: but now he knew him in his power and greatneſs, his holineſs, and hatred of ſin; now he knew God in his goodneſs and mercy, and wondered that he had kept him ſo long out of hell.

2dly, Another leſſon is the knowledge of ourſelves. In time of health and proſperity we are apt to forget ourſelves, and our mortality: but ſickneſs cauſeth us to know that we are but men, and frail men, Pſal. ix. 20. that God hath an abſolute ſovereignty over us, and can as eaſily cruſh us as we do a moth.

3dly, He teacheth us the emptineſs of the world. How vain a help is that, which fails a man in the time of his greateſt need! And often times we ſee that worldly means and friends can neither give the leaſt eaſe to the bodies, nor comfort to the ſouls of perſons under ſickneſs and diſtreſs.

4thly, Another leſſon is the great evil of ſin, which is the cauſe of all ſickneſs and diſeaſes whatſoever, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you." Ah! what a root of bitterneſs muſt that be, which brings forth ſuch bitter fruit!

5thly, He ſheweth us the preciouſneſs and excellency of Chriſt and his promiſes; which only can enable a Chriſtian to rejoice in tribulation, and be eaſy under the greateſt pains and diſeaſes. There are many who are indifferent about Chriſt in time of health, that when ſickneſs comes, do change their note, and cry, O for an intereſt in Chriſt, above all things!

III. God ſends ſuch trials and diſtreſſes, in order to mortify and kill ſin in us, Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin." And indeed ſickneſs and affliction, through the bleſſing of God, hath a native tendency to weaken and ſubdue our prevailing ſins and luſts. O man, is thy heart turned hard, ſo as thou art not ſenſible of thy own ſins, or of others ſufferings? God ſees meet to try the fire of affliction, to ſee if it will melt thy frozen heart. Haſt thou undervalued health, and ſlighted thy mercies? Now God removes them from thee, that, by the want of them, thou mayeſt know the worth of them. Art thou turned proud and ſelf-conceited? God ſends thee a thorn in the fleſh, to prick the ſwoln bladder of pride, that thou mayeſt not be puffed up above meaſure; God lays thee low upon thy bed, that thou mayeſt be lowly in thy heart. Doth love to the world prevail in thee? God ſends affliction to diſcover its emptineſs, and wean thee from it. Art thou fallen ſecure, dead and formal? God ſends affliction to awake thee, that thou mayeſt not ſleep the ſleep of death.

IV. God ſends ſickneſs, to awaken in us the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication, and make us more earneſt and importunate in our addreſſes to the throne of grace. There is a great difference betwixt our prayers in health and in ſickneſs, betwixt our humiliations in proſperity and in adverſity. In proſperity we pray heavily and drouſily, but adverſity adds wings to our deſires, Iſa. xxvi. 16. "Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chaſtening was upon them." Though they were backward enough to pray before, yet they pour it out moſt freely now. The very Heathen mariners cried loud to God in a ſtorm. What a famous prayer did Manaſſeh make when he was under his iron fetters! we find it thrice mentioned, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13. 18. 19. And the voice of fervent prayer is what the Lord deſires to hear.

V. Another end is, to looſe our hearts from things of this world, and cauſe us look to and long for heaven. When we enjoy health and eaſe in this world, we are apt to ſay with Peter on the mount, "It is good for us to be here:" but, when diſtreſs cometh, God's people will turn their tongue, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 27. "It is good for me to draw nigh to God." When things here go well with us, we are apt to think ourſelves at home; but, when trouble ariſeth, we begin to ſay, "Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt." Though heaven was much out of ſight and out of mind before, yet when afflicting ſickneſs comes, the poor believer will ſigh, and ſay with David, Pſal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at reſt: I would haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt."

VI. God deſigns to make the world bitter, and Chriſt ſweet to us. By ſuch afflictions he lets men ſee that the world is nothing but vanity and vexation of ſpirit, that riches avail not in the day of wrath; then it is they may ſee the inſufficiency of the world to relieve them, that, as one ſaith, "A velvet ſlipper cannot cure the gout, a golden cap cannot drive away the head-ach, nor a bed of down give eaſe in a fever." And as the world turns bitter, ſo Chriſt grows ſweet to the believer. In time of eaſe and health, Chriſt is often very much neglected and forgot. As the diſciples, while the ſea was calm, ſuffered Chriſt to ſleep with them in the ſhip, thinking they might make their voyage well enough without his help; but when they were ready to be drowned, then they ſee their need of Chriſt, they awaked him crying, *Maſter, ſave us, or elſe we periſh.* So the beſt of ſaints, when all is eaſy about them, are prone to ſuffer Chriſt to ſleep within them, and ſo to neglect the lively actings of faith on Chriſt; but when the ſtorm of affliction begins to ariſe, and they are ready to be overwhelmed with diſtreſs, then they cry, *None but Chriſt, none but Chriſt.*

VII. God tryſts with ſickneſs and diſtreſs, in order both to prove and improve his people's graces. Deut. viii. 2. Rev. ii. 10. Grace is hereby both tried and ſtrengthened. *1ſt,* Such afflictions do prove both the truth and ſtrength of our graces, as they ſerve to try if we love God for himſelf, if we can endure to hold out in ſerving him, waiting and depending upon him, notwithſtanding of diſcouragements. That faith will ſuffice for a little affliction, that will not ſuffice for a great one. Peter had faith enough to come upon the ſea at Chriſt's call; but, aſſoon as the waves began to ſwell, his faith began to fail, and his feet to ſink, till Chriſt mercifully caught hold of him, ſaying, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?* Mat. xiv. 31. Little did Peter think his faith was ſo weak till now.

2dly, They tend to improve our graces alſo, by quickening and ſtrengthening them. They ſerve as a whetſtone to ſharpen faith, ſo as the ſoul is made to renounce earthly ſhelters, and to claſp about God, in Chriſt, as its only refuge and portion. They excite to repentance and ſerious mourning for ſin; for, like the winter froſt and ſnows, they make the fallow-ground of our hearts more tender. They prompt us to heavenly-mindedneſs, ſelf-denial, and patient waiting on God. Yea, the experience of God's people can atteſt it, that grace is never more lively than under affliction. David never found himſelf better as to his ſpiritual ſtate, than when he was perſecuted and hunted as a partridge on the mountains; and hence he ſays, Pſal. cxix. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*

VIII. God's aim is, to awake us to redeem time, to prepare for flitting, and clear up our evidences for heaven. In time of health we are apt to trifle away time, loiter in our journey, and forget that we are pilgrims on the earth: wherefore God ſends ſickneſs as his meſſenger to mind us hereof.

Now it highly concerns us, when ſickneſs attacks us, to conſider and meditate upon theſe ends for which God brings on diſtreſs, and pray earneſtly that they may be accompliſhed in us; and ſo our ſickneſs ſhall not be unto death, (ſpiritual or eternal) but to the glory of God, and good of our ſouls.

DIRECT. II. *Let all, who are viſited with ſickneſs and diſtreſs, ſearch for the Achan in the camp, and enquire diligently what is the ground and cauſe of God's controverſy with them.*

IT hath been the practice of God's people in ſcripture-times, to enqure into the cauſe and meaning of God's rods which have been laid upon them. So David, 2 Sam. xxi. When the land of Iſrael was three years under the ſtroke of famine, he enquired into the meaning of it. So Job is exceedingly deſirous to know, why God ſet him up as a mark for his arrows, Job vii. 20. And hence it is that he makes that petition, Job x. 2. which is moſt ſuitable for every man in diſtreſs, *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me.*

I grant indeed, that God ſometimes viſits his people with affliction for the trial and exerciſe of their grace, and for their ſpiritual inſtruction, more than for the correction of their ſin. But, ſin being the original and foundation of all affliction, it is ſafeſt when it is our own caſe, and moſt acceptable to God, to look on ſin as the procuring cauſe. Or, if our ſins have not immediately procured the preſent affliction, yet the beſt of God's children muſt own that they have at leaſt deſerved it; for God never afflicted a perfectly innocent perſon, there is ſtill juſt cauſe for it. We ſee the ſin of the Corinthians is mentioned as the cauſe of their ſickneſs, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you." The Pſalmiſt concludes the very ſame thing, Pſal. cvii. 17, 18. "Fools, becauſe of their tranſgreſſions and their iniquities, are afflicted: their ſoul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw nigh unto the gates of death." But ordinarly by ſickneſs the Lord points at ſome one ſin in us more than another; ſome Jonah in the ſhip that hath raiſed the ſtorm, which the Lord would have us to ſearch out, and throw over-board without delay.

Q. But how ſhall we diſcover and find out the particular ſin for which God afflicts us with ſickneſs and diſtreſs?

Anſ. 1. Study the Lord's word, and the chaſtiſements there recorded, which he hath inflicted upon people for their ſins; and enquire if you be guilty of the like. Obſerve what hath been God's mind to his people, and what ſin he hath pointed out to them when they have been brought under ſuch a rod, and ſo you may learn his mind to you, Rom. xv. 4. "For whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written "for our learning."

2dly, Conſider what is the ſin which conſcience doth moſt of all accuſe thee for, in thy moſt ſerious and ſolitary hours. Conſcience is God's deputy, and thy boſom monitor, whoſe voice perhaps thou haſt little regarded in the day of thy health; wherefore God hath ſent a ſharper meſſenger to ſecond the voice of conſcience. Hear now the voice of the rod, for it is the ſame with the voice of conſcience. In the day of proſperity, carnal profits [illegible] pleaſures made ſuch a noiſe, that the voice of conſcience could not be heard; wherefore God hath brought on thee the ſilent night of adverſity, that his deputy may obtain audience. Well then, give ear; What ſaith conſcience now? May you not hear it ſaying, as Reuben to his brethren in diſtreſs, ſpake I not to you in the day of health, do not commit ſuch a ſin, and do not delay repenting for ſuch a ſin, but you would not hear? O man, let conſcience get a hearing at laſt as it got with the patriarchs when they were brought to diſtreſs in Egypt, and made them confeſs their ſins in ſelling of Joſeph, Gen. xlii. 21. "We are verily guilty "concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh "of his ſoul, when he beſought us, and we would not "hear him: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us."

3dly, Conſider what are theſe evils that others have obſerved in you, whether they be friends or foes: hearken to what a Chriſtian friend noticeth in you, either when ſpeaking to you, or to others about you, "Let "the righteous ſmite me (ſaith David) and it ſhall be "a kindneſs." Yea, do not diſregard what even enemies ſay of you: As David got good by the malicious reproaches of Shimei in the day of his affliction, ſo may you in the time of diſtreſs; for ſometimes malice itſelf will ſpeak truth. Enemies are ſharp-ſighted to ſpy out our faults, and ſo may, through the divine bleſſing, prove monitors to us, both with reſpect to ſin and duty.

4thly, Conſider the nature and circumſtances of thy diſtreſs. Oft-times the affliction is ſo ſuitable to the tranſgreſſion, that we may clearly read our ſin written on the forehead of our puniſhment, as in the caſe of Adonibezek, and many others. And alſo you may be helped to find it out by the Lord's timing of the rod to you: Was it ſent when you was under much formality in duty? Or when you was eagerly purſuing the things of the world? or when you was under the power of ſome prevailing luſt or other? Then the rod comes to reprove you, and awake you to ſee the evil thereof.

5thly, Conſider what is the ſin that hath been formerly moſt affrighting to thy thoughts and perplexing to thy conſcience, when thou haſt been in the immediate view of death and a tribunal. It is very likely (if thou haſt not truly repented of it,) that is the ſin which God now intends to awake thee to ſee the evil of, that thou mayeſt ſincerely mourn for and turn from it, looking to God in Chriſt for pardon and mercy.

Object. Ah (ſaith one) it is my lot to ly under a dumb and ſilent rod, I do not underſtand its language, I cannot hear its voice, I cannot find out the ſin that is pointed at by it; what courſe ſhall I take?

Anſ. 1. Be deeply humbled under this trial, and bewail thy caſe before the Lord; for it very much aggravates the affliction to God's people, when they know not the language of it; hence was it that Job lamented ſo heavily, that his way was hid, and he knew not the reaſon of God's contending with him, Job. iii. 23.

2. A believer's caſe may be ſometimes ſo dark, that it requires a great deal of ſpiritual art and wiſdom to enable him to hear the voice of the rod, and underſtand its language. Hence it is ſaid, 'He is a man of 'wiſdom that ſeeth God's name upon it.' Mic. vi. 9. Now, this wiſdom muſt only come from above: Therefore,

3. Go to God and earneſtly beg for this wiſdom, that you may know his mind, and the meaning of the rod. Do as Rebekah when the children ſtruggled in her womb, ſhe went to enquire of the Lord, ſaying, 'Why am I thus? Gen. xxxv. 22. Cry to God to give you this ſpirit to teach and enlighten you to ſee ſin in its evil, and the particular evils you are guilty of. This was Job's courſe in his affliction: 'Shew me (ſays he) 'wherefore thou contendeſt with me. That which I 'ſee not, teach thou me. Make me to know my 'tranſgreſſion and my ſin.' There is no better way for a priſoner to know the reaſon of his confinement, than to aſk the magiſtrate that committed him. God is a wiſe agent, and can give beſt account of his own actions.

4. If thou canſt not find out the particular ſin for which God afflicts thee, then labour to repent of every known ſin, and cry for pardon of every unknown and forgotten ſin alſo. Do that out of wiſdom, which Herod did out of malice, who, becauſe he could not find out the babe Jeſus, killed all the children of Bethlehem, that he might be ſure to kill Jeſus among them. Let us ſeek the utter ruin and death of all [illegible] ſins, that we may be ſure to deſtroy that ſin for wh[illegible]d afflicts us.

5. Study to exerciſe a ſtrong faith, [illegible] a humble ſubmiſſion, while God keeps you under [illegible]ent rod. Believe firmly that God is moſt juſt, th[illegible] know not for what he contends. And, however [illegible] he thinks fit to make you walk in the dark, reſolve humbly to wait on him, and commit yourſelf to him who [illegible] many times guided the blind in the way they knew not.

DIRECT. III. *When any fit of ſickneſs attacks you, think ſeriouſly upon death, and make diligent preparation for it.*

I Do not mean that any man may delay the work of preparation for death, till ſickneſs cometh: No, no; this ſhould be the great and uptaking buſineſs of every man in the time of his health and ſtrength. But ſickneſs and diſeaſes being the harbingers of death, and meſſengers ſent from God to warn us of its coming; every man is thereby called to renew the work of preparing for death with all earneſtneſs and application. God's voice by every fit of ſickneſs is that in Deut. xxxii. 29. 'O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, 'that they would conſider their latter end!' God knows our folly, and readineſs to forget this great work in the day of health; and therefore in his mercy he ſends ſickneſs and affliction, to teach us ſo to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to this piece of heavenly wiſdom, of making preparation for death.

And here I ſhall drop, 1ſt, ſome motives to preſs it. 2dly, Advices for the doing it aright.

I. For motives, conſider theſe things;

1ſt, Conſider God's mercy and patience towards you, in giving you ſo many warnings, and ſo many years to prepare for death: and in ſending his meſſengers and warnings ſo gently and gradually to excite you to this work; when many younger and ſtronger than you are hurried into eternity, and little or no time given them to think where they are going. Have you not been ſpared many years in the midſt of dangers, when you have ſeen that bold archer death, ſhooting his arrows, and killing thouſands of your neighbours and friends round about you? Sometimes the arrow hath glanced over your head, and ſlain ſome great man your ſuperior: Sometimes it hath lighted at your feet, and cut off a child or ſervant your inferiors; ſometimes it hath gone by on your left hand, and killed your enemy; at other times it hath paſſed on your right hand, and killed your near relations. So that you have ſeen friends and foes, ſuperiors and inferiors, relations and ſtrangers dropping down dead round about you; and all this for a long tract of time, to give you warning to prepare for death. O let the goodneſs and forbearance of God towards you lead you to repentance, and perſuade you to fly ſpeedily to Chriſt for refuge and protection from wrath.

2*dly*, Conſider how terrible death will be, if it meet you in an unprepared ſtate, in a Chriſtleſs and impenitent condition. What a fearful change will it bring upon you? A change from earth to hell, from hope to deſpair, from pleaſure to pain, from comforts to terrors; a change [illegible] offers of grace to the revelation of wrath [illegible] from probabilities to utter impoſſibilities [illegible]. Death will cut off all your hopes and [illegible] of mercy for ever, Job xxvii. 8. There [illegible] back to amend what hath been done [illegible] there is no work nor device in the [illegible] you go. As the tree falls, ſo will it ly [illegible]ity.

[illegible] give ſome advices, in order to the right [illegible]ation for death. 1*ſt*, Set about ſelf-examination [illegible]. Enquire if you be in Chriſt or not; if you be [illegible] far off from God, or if you be brought near by the blood of Jeſus. And ſee that you be impartial in this ſearch, and willing to find out the truth in this important queſtion. Be not fooliſhly tender of yourſelf, and apt to believe that you are ſafe, when it is not ſo; for this way thouſands [illegible] ruin themſelves. But be content to know the worſt of your caſe, and thoroughly to underſtand your ſouls danger, that you may be moved to take the [illegible] to eſcape it. Wherefore take a view of the [illegible] Chriſtleſs and unconverted perſons ſet down in God's word, and judge yourſelf by them: And [illegible]er alſo the ſigns of true grace there recorded, [illegible] if they be applicable to you or not.

[illegible] after enquiry, you find your ſtate is bad, [illegible] have been a lover of the world more than of God, you have minded your body more than your ſoul, you have lived in the neglect of precious Chriſt, allowed yourſelf in known ſin; O then be convinced of your inability to help yourſelf, and of your need of Chriſt to help you. And labour to be deeply humbled before God under a ſenſe of your ſin and folly. "Ah, how fooliſhly, how rebelliouſly, how unthankfully have I carried! I have abuſed God's mercies, "and left undone the work for which I was made, preſerved, and enjoyed the goſpel. Oh! I had all my "by-paſt time given me to make preparation for endleſs eternity, and I have never minded it, till now "that ſickneſs, the harbinger of death, is come upon "me. And now what ſhall I do to be ſaved?" Well, then, in order to convince and humble you the more, caſt back your eyes upon the ſins of your nature, and of your by-paſt life; view them in their nature, number, aggravations and deſervings. O, do not ſo many years ſins need a very deep humiliation? O, do you not ſtand greatly in need of ſuch a perſon as Chriſt, to be your Saviour and Ranſomer from ſuch a vaſt number of ſins? O but their weight [illegible] preſs you eternally down to the loweſt hell, if [illegible] and laid upon your back.

3*dly*, O ſinner, art thou [illegible]ed, and deſirous of mercy upon any terms [illegible]eve then, that thy caſe is not remedileſs, but that there is a ſacrifice provided for your ſins, and an able and all-ſufficient Saviour in your offer. Believe that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and become fleſh, to be a ſurety for you, that he is both able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him. Though your ſins, your dangers, and your fears were never ſo great, yet he is able and willing to ſave. O flee preſently to this refuge city, whoſe gates are open to receive you. Truſt your ſouls upon Chriſt's ſacrifice and meritorious blood for mercy and ſalvation. Apply humbly to him, that he may teach you the will of God, reconcile you to his Father, pardon your ſins, renew you by his Spirit, and ſave you from eternal wrath.

4*thly*, Give up yourſelves to God in Chriſt, by way of covenant and ſolemn reſignation. Every man doth this ſacramentally in baptiſm; but you muſt alſo renew it perſonally and explicitly, and thereby give a cordial and voluntary conſent to the covenant of grace. Acquieſce chearfully in the goſpel way of ſalvation thro' Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and accept of God, in Chriſt, as thy portion. Make choice of God the Father as thy reconciled father in Chriſt; and God the Son as thy Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghoſt for thy ſanctifier, guide and comforter. And likewiſe give up thyſelf, ſoul and body, and all thou haſt to be the Lord's; engaging in Chriſt's ſtrength to live for God, and walk with him in newneſs of life. And ſtudy to do all this deliberately, unfeignedly and chearfully. Though perhaps you have done this hypocritically at former times, you have profaned God's covenant, and behaved unſtedfaſtly and perfidiouſly therein; yet now endeavour to be ſincere with God for once.

5*thly*, Be living daily in the exerciſe of faith and repentance; renew the acts thereof frequently, in proportion to your renewed ſins and guiltineſs, cleave cloſe to glorious Chriſt your high-prieſt and ſurety, and be ever waſhing in his blood. As long as you are in the world, you'll need to waſh your feet. John xiii. 10. Come death when it will, let it find you at the fountain, always looking to and making uſe of Jeſus Chriſt. You have great need of Chriſt every day of your life, more eſpecially in ſickneſs; but moſt of all at a dying hour. O what need will you have of Chriſt then as an advocate with God, when the queſtion is to be determined, where your manſion is to be aſſigned thro' all eternity, whether in heaven or hell? O then be looking always to Chriſt with the eye of faith. Live in the conſtant thoughts of this bleſſed Mediator. Let him be firſt in your thoughts in the morning, and laſt in your thoughts at night.

6thly, Be ſtriving to mortify every ſin and luſt, both outward and inward. By dying to ſin daily, that ſo you may not die for ſin eternally. O that ſin may be daily loſing its ſtrength, and dying in you! ſo that it may be certainly dead before you. Pray earneſtly, that all your ſins may die before you die: for if they die not before you, but out-live the dying body, they will live eternally to ſting and torment the never-dying ſoul.

DIRECT. IV. *Be not anxious for recovery to health; but leave the iſſue of the preſent ſickneſs to the will and pleaſure of the infinitely wiſe God.*

Remember, O man, thou art the clay, and God is the Potter; he is abſolute Lord of thy life and times, therefore learn to adore his ſovereignty over thee and all thy enjoyments. David doth ſo, when he ſays, *Lord, my times are in thy hand*, Pſal. xxxi. 15. And indeed they are only beſt in his hand, for he beſt knows how to diſpoſe of them. The prophet ſaith Iſa. xxx. 18. *The Lord is a God of judgment, bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* Judgment there ſignifies wiſdom: The Lord is a God of wiſdom, and will order and time all things well; and therefore it becomes us quietly to wait for his pleaſure, ſaying *The will of the Lord be done.* It is taken notice of, as a great ſin in the Iſraelites, that they waited not for his counſel, but limited the holy one of Iſrael, Pſal. lxxviii. 14. What unaccountable folly and preſumption is it, for worms of the earth to ſeek to ſtint and limit the Sovereign of heaven to their meaſures! It becomes us at all times, and eſpecially in ſickneſs and affliction, to have low ſubmiſſive thoughts of ourſelves, and high exalted thoughts of God's ſovereignty, ſuch as Nebuchadnezzar had, Dan. iv. 35. *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, what doſt thou?* We ſhould therefore refer all to his wiſe determination, and be willing to die or to live, as he ſhall be pleaſed to appoint. I remember I have read of a godly woman, who in her ſickneſs being aſked by one, Whether ſhe was moſt deſirous to die or to live? She anſwered, I have no choice in that matter, but refer myſelf unto the will of God. But, ſaid the other, ſuppoſe God ſhould refer it unto you, whether to die or to live, which of them would you chuſe? If God (replied ſhe) ſhould refer it to me, I would even refer it back again to him. It becomes thee, O man, to be intirely reſigned to the will of thy Maker, and to ſtand like a centinel in thy ſtation, ready to move as thy great general and commander ſhall give orders concerning thee. It would be pleaſant and acceptable to God, to ſee thee more deſirous to be delivered from ſin than from ſickneſs. O but ſin is a far worſe diſeaſe than any ſickneſs in the world! Beg importunately, that the great phyſician may cure this woful ſoul-diſeaſe, and let him do with the body what he pleaſeth. This was David's practice in his affliction, Pſal. xxv. 18. *Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my ſins.* As for his pains and afflictions, he aſks no more but that God would regard them, and look upon them, and do with them as he thought fit; but, as for his ſins no leſs well ſatisfy him then a pardon, and blotting them intirely out, ſo as they might be remembred no more.

DIRECT. V. *Bind yourſelf with holy purpoſes and reſolutions in Chriſt's ſtrength, to be more watchful againſt ſin, more diligent in duty, and to improve the time of health better, if God ſhall be pleaſed to reſtore it again to you.*

When God is viſiting your iniquities with rods, and pleading a controverſy with you for your omiſſions and ſlackneſs in duty, he expects that you will return from your backſlidings, and ſet about a ſerious reformation and change of life, Hoſ. v. 15. *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face; in their affliction they will ſeek me early.* See then that you open your ear to diſcipline; ſtudy to anſwer God's call and expectation, and in his ſtrength reſolve to enter upon a new life. *Surely now it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more*, Job xxxiv. 31. 32. Now is the ſeaſon you ſhould ſay with Ephraim, Hoſ. xiv. 8. *What have I to do any more with idols?*

Having duly examined yourſelves and ſearched out your ſins, you ought to put a bill of divorce into each of their hands. Deliberately reſolve againſt all your ſins, whether ſecret or open; and eſpecially reſolve againſt your darling and beloved ſins, theſe ſins which do moſt eaſily beſet you. Reſolve alſo againſt all temptations to ſin, and particularly againſt the ſnares of bad company, whereby you have been formerly enticed; ſay now with David, Pſal. cxix. 115. *Depart from me, ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.* You muſt not only purpoſe to forſake all ſin, but alſo to mind every known duty: That you will make religion your one thing needful; the pleaſing of God, the chief buſineſs of your life; that you will ſet the Lord alway before you, give him your heart in all duties, aim at nearneſs and communion with God in every one of them; and ſtill preſs foreward to the full enjoyment of God in heaven thro' eternity.

Reſolve alſo, thro' grace, that you will in a ſpecial manner, mind ſecret duties, which the eyes of men do not obſerve, and theſe duties, which conſcience doth moſt challenge you for neglecting. And you that are heads of families, reſolve to make more conſcience of family religion, of worſhipping God with your families both morning and evening, inſtructing your children and ſervants in the knowledge of Chriſt, and recommending religion and godlineſs to all round about you, whether relations or ſtrangers.

And, if you would have your reſolutions effectual, ſee that they be accompanied with a deep ſenſe of your inſufficiency to perform them in your own ſtrength. Bear always in mind the corruption and deceitfulneſs of your own heart, and make all your reſolutions in a humble dependance on the ſufficiency of Jeſus Chriſt your ſurety. Obſerve the apoſtle Paul's advice to his ſon Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 1. *Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt.* All your ſtock, O believer, is in his hand, ſo that without him you can do nothing; but through Chriſt ſtrengthening you, you are able to do all things.

DIRECT. VI. *Set your houſe in order, by making your latter-wills, and ſettling your domeſtic and ſecular affairs, while you have freedom and capacity for doing it.*

AFter the heart is ſet in order, the next work is to ſet your houſe in order, according to God's counſel to Hezekiah, Iſa. xxxviii. 1. It is recorded of the patriarch Abraham, that he was careful to ſettle the affairs of his family before his death, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. He diſpoſed of his eſtate to Iſaac, and legacies to the ſons of his concubines. It is too general a fault, that men delay and put off making their wills as they do their repentance, to the very laſt, and ſo too frequently never make them at all. Conſider the evil of deferring or neglecting this neceſſary affair; for if you, upon whom God hath beſtowed means, ſhould die inteſtate, your eſtate may deſcend otherwiſe than you intended; much of it may be ſpent in tedious and expenſive law-ſuits; ſuch differences may fall out among relations, that ſhould live in friendſhip and mutual affection, as cannot be healed; ſome of them may be reduced to extreme want, when a ſmall legacy might have put them in a way of living; and many ſuch inconveniencies may follow. Well then, if your neglect ſhould bring on theſe evils, and involve poſterity into endleſs ſtrifes and contentions; may you not juſtly fear that the guilt thereof will purſue you into another world, whoſe wretched careleſneſs was the occaſion of all that miſchief.

Pray, what is the reaſon that men put off this affair? Is it not becauſe they do not incline to think ſo ſeriouſly on death, as this will occaſion them to do? Doth not this ſmell of abominable earthly-mindedneſs ſpeak as if a man deſired all his portion in this life, and cared not for a better? and that he is ſo far from preparing for death that he cannot endure to think of it? Alas that this worldly diſpoſition ſhould ſo far prevail amongſt us! But ſurely there is no wiſe man will ſay, that the putting off the thoughts of death will keep death at the greater diſtance; or that preparing for death, and making our wills, will bring on death the ſooner.

It were ſurely beſt to order our affairs timeouſly; yea, do it in time of health, rather than to delay unto a ſick-bed or a death-bed; for either you may be ſnatched off ſuddenly, and have no time for it; or you may be taken with ſuch a diſtemper as ſhall ſeize your tongue, ſo as you cannot expreſs your mind; or ſeize your underſtanding, ſo as you cannot rationally diſpoſe of your effects. And tho' none of theſe ſhould happen, yet certainly it proves a great diſturbance to a dying man, to be caſting up, ordering, and ſettling the affairs of his family, when he ſhould be ſecuring a heavenly manſion for his ſoul, and clearing up his evidences thereunto. It is great wiſdom to put this affair by hand, that you may have as little to do with the world as may be, and all occaſions of diſtraction to your immortal ſoul may be prevented, when it is near to its flitting into an eternal and unchangeable ſtate.

Moreover, in ſettling your ſecular affairs obſerve theſe following advices. 1. Make your wills cheerfully, and freely lay down whatever you enjoy, when God calls you to it. Praiſe God that you had theſe things while you needed them, and when you have no longer uſe for them, leave them without repining to theſe that come after you. Look not back to Egypt when you are upon your march to Canaan.

2*dly*, See that you deal juſtly, in providing your family, paying all your juſt debts, and making reſtitution if you have wronged any. Abhor all deſigns of defrauding any of your lawful creditors: For, if your laſt act ſhould be unjuſt, you leave a blot upon your name here; and ſince you cannot repent of this wickedneſs, it being among your laſt deeds, you expoſe yourſelf to a fearful doom in the world whither you are going.

3*dly*. In ſettling your eſtates, ſee that God and good uſes be not forgot nor left out. When you are leaving the world, and can glorify God no longer here by your words or actions, ſee to honour the Lord with your ſubſtance, by leaving ſome part thereof to a pious and charitable uſe. I know, it is a work of charity to give for maintaining the bodies of the poor; and eſpecially the poor of God's people, who belong to his family: But it is much more pious and charitable to leave ſomewhat for propagating Chriſtian knowledge in dark places, for educating poor children to read the ſcriptures, and inſtructing ignorant ſouls in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. It is much to be lamented, that ſo many rich men amongſt us die, and leave nothing to ſuch pious uſes. The liberality of papiſts on their death-beds, may give a ſharp challenge to many profeſſed proteſtants: O what a ſhame is it to the profeſſors of the doctrine of grace, that the falſe doctrines of merits and purgatory ſhould produce ſo many donations and mortifications amongſt the papiſts, and the faith of Chriſt's moſt glorious goſpel ſhould not do the like among true believers! Shall the proud conceit of merit, and the imaginary fear of purgatory, prompt men, to do more this way, than the certain perſuaſion of the love of God in Chriſt, and the well grounded hope of eternal life thro' the alone merits of Jeſus Chriſt; O what a reproach is this to our holy religion!

4*thly*, It might be much to the glory of God and good of ſouls, that a great part of our teſtaments and latter wills ſhould conſiſt of ſolemn charges, exhortations and bleſſings to our children, or thoſe to whom we bequeath any legacy; ſo as they can never open our teſtaments, or look into them but they might hear ſomething that may make impreſſions on their ſouls for their ſpiritual edification, and for quickning them to the diligent practice of both family and perſonal godlineſs.

CHAP. II.

Containing ſome particular directions to theſe who are ſharply afflicted with ſickneſs and long trouble.

DIRECT. I. *Juſtify God in the greateſt afflictions which befal you.*

THO' God ſhould condemn you, ſee that you acquit him, and ſay he is righteous in all his dealings. When the church was under the heavieſt diſtreſs, ſhe finds cauſe to juſtify God, Lam. i. 18. *The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled againſt his commandment.* So doth godly Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33. *Howbeit thou art juſt in all that is brought upon us: for thou haſt done right, but we have done wickedly.* The ſame doth holy David acknowledge, Pſal. cxix. 75. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulneſs thou haſt afflicted me.* Now in order to bring you to this agreeable frame, and to convince you of the equity and juſtice of God in his diſpenſations, however heavy and long your diſtreſs be, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations :

1ſt, Conſider the infinitely holy and righteous nature of that God who ſmiteth thee, Pſal. cxix. 137 ‘ Righteous art thou O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.’ We preſume it of a righteous man that he will do righteous things ; and ſhall we not much more believe ſo of a holy and righteous God ? We cannot be infallibly certain that a righteous man will always do ſo ; for a righteous man may leave his righteouſneſs, becauſe the creature is mutable ; but God is immutably righteous ; ſo that we may be confident of it, that the judge of all the earth will do right, for it is impoſſible he can do otherwiſe, Zech. iii. 5. ‘ The juſt Lord is in the midſt thereof, he will not do iniquity.’ He will not, he cannot ; for it is contrary to his nature.

2dly, Conſider, that God never brings on any affliction without a cauſe, 1 Cor. xi. 30. *For this cauſe many are ſick.* He hath ſtill juſt ground for the heavieſt affliction, from thy ſins and provocations ; and may always ſay to thee, as to Iſrael, Jer. ii. 17. 19. ‘ Haſt thou not procured this unto thyſelf in that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way ? Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſliding ſhall reprove thee : Know therefore, and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou haſt forſaken the Lord.’ There is ſtill ground enough for affliction to be found in the beſt of God's people ; and therefore it is ſaid, Lam. iii. 33. ‘ For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.’ No ; it is our ſins that oblige him to it. As Chriſt whipped the ſellers of oxen and ſheep out of the temple with a whip (as is generally thought) made of their own cords, ſo God never ſcourgeth us but with a whip made of our own ſins, Prov. v. 22. ‘ His own iniquities ſhall take the wicked himſelf, and he ſhall be holden with the cords of his ſins.’ If we conſider the mighty God as a Lord diſpenſing grace, then we find he acts ſovereignly, and according to his will and pleaſure, Mat. xi. 26. ‘ Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.’ But if we conſider him as a judge diſpenſing judgments, he never doth it without a foregoing cauſe on the creature's part. God's treaſure of mercy is always full and ready to be let out to them that ſeek it ; but his treaſure of wrath is empty till men fill it up by their ſins, Rom. ii, 15. ‘ Thou treaſureſt up to thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath :’ We always do provide fuel for God's wrath before it kindle and break out upon us.

3dly, Conſider further this inſtance of God's equity ; that when there is a cauſe given, God doth not preſently take it, but continues to threaten oft, and warn long, before he execute the ſentence of his word. He ſends leſſer ſtrokes as warnings of greater if we repent not ; and he repeats his warnings many times, both by his word and providence, before he ſmite. Yea, even when repeated warnings are ſlighted, he delays a long time and waits to be gracious, Iſa. xxx. 18. And when mens obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſs arrive to ſuch a height that he can ſpare no longer ; yet, how loth is he to give them up to ſevere judgments ! Hoſ. xi. 8. *How ſhall I give thee up Ephraim ? How ſhall I deliver thee, Iſrael ? How ſhall I make thee as Admah ? How ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim ? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* When the Lord hath ſinners in his arms, ready to give them up to ſevere judgments, yet he makes a ſtand, and would be fain prevented before he proceed to this ſtrange work ; for ſo he calls his acts of judgment, Iſa. xxviii. 21. Acts of mercy are co-natural, moſt agreeable and pleaſant to God, Mic. vii. 18. *He delighteth in mercy : But judgment is his ſtrange act, and his ſtrange work.*

4thly, Conſider, that when at laſt he ſends ſtrokes on us, they are always ſhort of the cauſe, he exacts not the whole debt that ſinners owe to his juſtice, as Ezra doth acknowledge, Ezra ix. 13. *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve.* The ſtroke he there is ſpeaking of, was a moſt heavy judgment ; fearful ruin and deſolation came upon Jeruſalem, and the whole land of Judah ; the city and temple were burnt to aſhes, the people carried captive to a ſtrange land, and treated as bond ſlaves among the heathens. Yet ſaith the holy man, *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve.* q. d. *It is true we have been carried to Babylon, but in juſtice we might have been ſent to hell : Our houſes were burnt, but our bodies might have been burnt too : We have been drinking water, but we might have been drinking blood : We have had grievous burdens on earth, but we might have been groaning in hell : We were baniſhed from the temple, but we might have been eternally baniſhed from God's preſence.* We think it a great favour among men, when any puniſhment is mitigated, when the ſentence of death is changed into baniſhment, or when baniſhment is turned into a fine, or a great fine is made ſmaller : And will you think that God deals ſeverely or rigorouſly with you, when he lays you on a ſick bed, when he might juſtly have laid you in hell, and poured out all his wrath upon you there ? You but taſte of the brim of the cup, when God might cauſe you to drink of the bottom and dregs thereof.

Have you not cauſe then to acknowledge God's juſtice, nay, even his mercy too, in his dealings with you, however rough they may ſeem to be ! May you not, with good reaſon, ſay, any thing leſs than hell is a mercy to ſuch an ill-deſerving creature as I am ! If even a hard-hearted Pharaoh, under diſtreſs, came the length to own the juſtice of God, Exod. ix. 27. *I have ſinned, the Lord is righteous* : Shall any profeſſed Chriſtian fall ſhort of that obſtinate Egyptian ?

DIRECT. II. *Labour ſtill to be ſenſible of God's hand under heavy affliction, and beware of ſtupidity and unconcernedneſs under it.*

IT is a ſin to faint under heavy affliction, but it is a duty to feel it, Heb. xii. 5. *My ſon deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.* The apoſtle there doth caution againſt two extremes, which every Chriſtian under the rod ſhould be careful to avoid ; 1. Deſpiſing or making light of affliction. 2. Sinking or deſponding under affliction. We are in great hazard of running into the one or the other. As to the firſt, We may be ſaid to deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord, when we do not obſerve God's hand in our affliction, ſo as to reform the things whereby he is diſpleaſed : Or, when we reſolve to abide the trial, by the ſtrength of our own reſolutions and ſtout-heartedneſs, without looking to God for ſupporting grace ; or when we turn ſtupid and inſenſible under the heavy and long continued rod. This deſpiſing and ſlighting of the rod is not patience, but ſtupidity; it is not Chriſtian magnanimity, but a ſtoical temper of mind, moſt ſinful and provoking to God. We ſee how angry God is with ſinners when his ſtrokes are not felt, Iſa. xli. 25. "He hath poured upon him "the fury of his anger; and it hath ſet him on fire "round about, yet he knew it not; and it hath burned him, yet he laid it not to heart," Jer. v. 3. "Thou "haſt ſtricken them, but they have not grieved: Thou "haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction: They have made their faces harder "than a rock, they have refuſed to return." There is little hope of a ſcholar's minding his leſſon, that is regardleſs of whipping. It is a dreadful ſign to be like Pharaoh, ſleeping in our ſins when God is thundering in his wrath. He that will ſleep when his houſe is on fire, or ly ſtill in bed, as if he was not concerned, may aſſuredly expect to be conſumed in its flames. As David could not bear it, when the meſſengers he ſent to the Ammonites out of good-will, were affronted and deſpiſed; ſo neither will God endure it, when the meſſengers he ſends to ſinners are ſlighted; for he that ſlights a meſſenger affronts his maſter. Theſe who make light of affliction, make light of God that ſends it, and make light of ſin that procures it.

Queſt. But, when is it that people are ſuitably concerned under a heavy rod?

Anſw. When they ſee God's hand, hear God's voice, anſwer his intent, are curious to know his mind, deſirous to do theſe things he requires, and reform theſe things he is diſpleaſed with. Remember, every affliction is a meſſenger from God, and deſerves a hearing from you. It comes to thee with ſuch a meſſage as Ehud did to Eglon, Judg. iii. 20. "I have an errand from God to thee, O King;" I have a meſſage from God to thee, O Chriſtian, O ſinner. Well, lend an ear, and hearken with reverence and attention to this errand; ſay, *Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth, what wouldſt thou have me to do?* Believe it, that God ſpeaks as really to you by his rod, as by his word; therefore he ſays, Hear ye the rod. God ſpake as truly by his ten plagues to Egypt, as he did by his ten precepts to Iſrael. And if the calm voice of the word were more regarded, we ſhould hear leſs of the rough voice of the rod. As Gideon took briers and thorns of the wilderneſs, and with them taught the men of Succoth, who would not be taught by fairer means, Judg. viii. 16. So God takes the ſharp prickles of ſore affliction, to teach you his ſtatutes, when you will not be taught by ſofter methods. Beware then of grieving God's Spirit, by turning ſtupid and inſenſible under ſharp or long continued trials: But the more pains God it at with you by his rod, hearken the more carefully to his voice, and labour to make the greater proficiency in the ſchool of affliction, where he thinks fit to continue you; that ſo you may inherit that bleſſing, Pſal. xciv. 12. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him out of thy law.*

DIRECT. III. *Beware of miſconſtructing God's dealings towards you, and of charging him fooliſhly.*

WE are apt to believe Satan's ſuggeſtions under heavy trials, and to entertain wrong thoughts of God and his diſpenſations. Now, theſe you ought to guard againſt; as for inſtance, *1ſt,* Beware of harbouring atheiſtical thoughts, as if there were no providence, no wiſe governor of this lower world, no diſtinction betwixt the good and bad; and that it is to no purpoſe to be religious, like theſe mentioned in Mal. iii. 14. 'Ye have ſaid, it is vain to ſerve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and walked 'mournfully before the Lord of hoſts?' Yea, even the Pſalmiſt, when he begins to compare his own ſharp trials with the wicked's eaſe and proſperity, is tempted to think all religion is in vain, and ſay, Pſal. lxxiii. 13. 14. 'Verily, I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and 'waſhed my hands in innocency. For all the day long 'have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning.' But theſe are nothing but the helliſh ſuggeſtions of Satan, that irreconcileable enemy of God and precious ſouls, againſt which we ſhould cloſely ſtop our ears.

2dly, Beware of charging God in your hearts with rigour and injuſtice in his dealings, like theſe, Ezek. xviii. 25. *Yet, ye ſay, the way of the Lord is not equal.* How highly unjuſt and injurious are ſuch thoughts of him who is the judge of all the earth and cannot but do right?

3dly, Beware of thinking that heavy afflictions do always ſpeak wrath in God againſt thee. No, ſometimes they ſpeak forth love, and God may be carrying on a love-deſign thereby to thy ſoul, *viz.* to ſubdue thy ſtrong luſts, and draw thee nearer unto himſelf. As for theſe who think that the ſmarting rod, and divine love cannot dwell together, let them read that paſſage, Heb. xii. 5. 6. *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children, my ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtning of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chaſtneth: and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.*

4thly. Beware of deſponding and diſtruſtful thoughts of God under ſharp afflictions. Some are ready to raze the foundation; quit their intereſt in God and the promiſes, and caſt away their hope and confidence, ſaying with Gideon, Judg. vi. 13. *Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us?* So David was ready to draw a haſty concluſion, Pſal. xxxi. 22. *I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes.* But this was the effect of unbelief; for he that believeth will not make haſte.

DIRECT. IV. *Under ſore trouble and diſtreſs, labour to exerciſe a ſtrong and lively faith.*

IT was a noble and heroic reſolution in that holy man Job under his ſingular trials, Job xiii. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him. q. d.* Let my ſtrokes be never ſo ſore and heavy, yet I will not let go my grips of his word and promiſes, I will not raze theſe foundations of my hope. It was this way the Pſalmiſt kept himſelf from ſinking under his heavy burdens, Pſal. xxvii. 13. *I had fainted unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.* Conſider but a little the noble influence that faith hath to ſtrengthen and ſupport the ſoul under ſore trials,

1ſt, Faith grips to the great goſpel promiſes of ſalvation in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo ſecures the ſoul's main intereſt thro' eternity; which is enough to make the ſoul eaſy in every lot.

2dly, Faith views God in Chriſt at the helm in the greateſt ſtorm, and ſo it endures as ſeeing him who is inviſible, Heb. xi. 27.

3dly, Faith caſts the ſoul's anchor upon the rock of ages, and ſtays itſelf on God and the faithful promiſes; whereby the ſoul is eaſed and diſburdened of its fears and melancholly apprehenſions, Pſalm. lv. 22. Iſa. l. 10.

4thly, Faith brings new ſtrength and auxiliary ſupplies of grace from heaven, when the former ſupply is exhauſted and ſpent; whereof David had the ſweet experience, Pſal. xxvii. 13. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the ſoul, ſo he is pleaſed to come in with ſeaſonable ſupplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, anſwerable to their preſent exigences and preſſures: And thus he doth from time to time feed the believers lamp with freſh oil, giving more faith, more love, more hope, and more deſires; and hereby he gives power to the faint, and ſtrengthens the things which remain when ready to die.

5thly, Faith keeps the ſoul from ſinking under heavy trials, by bringing in former experiences of the power, mercy and faithfulneſs of God to the afflicted ſoul. Hereby was the Pſalmiſt ſupported in diſtreſs, Pſal. xiii. 6. Pſal. lxxxvii. 4. O ſaith faith. "Remember what God hath done both for thy outward and inward man; he hath not only delivered thy body when in trouble, but he hath done great things for thy ſoul; he hath brought thee out of a ſtate of black nature, entered into a covenant relation with thee, made his goodneſs paſs before thee; he hath helped thee to pray, and many times hath heard thy prayers and thy tears. Hath he not formerly brought thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and put a new ſong in thy mouth, and made thee to reſolve, never to give way to ſuch unbelieving doubts and fears again? And how unbecoming is it for thee now to ſink in trouble?"

6thly, Faith ſupports the ſoul, by giving it a pleaſant view and proſpect of a happy outgate from all trouble; when it ſhall be admitted to ſee and dwell with Chriſt hereafter. Thus was Job ſupported in his great diſtreſs, Job xix. 25. 26. 27. *For I know that my redeemer liveth: and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth.——Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold*, &c. A believing view of the ſoul's meeting with its Redeemer and receiving a crown of glory from him at laſt, is an excellent ſupport to a Chriſtian under the heavieſt affliction; and ſo it was to Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7. 8.

7thly, Faith gives great ſupport, by the encouraging repreſentations it makes of Chriſt, and of his preſent concern for the believer while under affliction. As for inſtance, *1ſt*, Faith repreſents Chriſt to a believer under trials, as ſympathizing with him under his diſtreſs, feeling his pain, hearing his groans, bearing his burdens, and ready to relieve him in his own appointed time, which it well becometh him to wait for.

2dly, Faith repreſents Chriſt as putting in his almighty arm under the believer's head and conveying inviſible ſtrength to ſupport and hold him up under his greateſt preſſures.

3dly, Faith repreſents Chriſt as pleading the afflicted believer's cauſe with God, and anſwering all the charges of the law, the challenges of conſcience, and accuſations of Satan againſt him.

4thly, Faith repreſents Chriſt as ſtanding by the furnace as a refiner where his gold is melting; carefully overſeeing the trials of his people, that they may work for their good; and ready to bring them out thereof, when they are ſufficiently purified from their droſs.

5thly, Faith repreſents Chriſt as ſmiling on his people under the croſs, whiſpering peace into their ear, and ſaying, *Well done, good and faithful ſervant.*

DIRECT. V. *Labour to bear with patience whatever load of trouble the Lord appoints for you.*

WE will perhaps obſerve ſome who are ſtrangers to religion contentedly enduring very painful evils; and this they may do by virtue of a natural hardineſs and reſolution which ſome are endued with, or upon the account of arguments furniſhed by human prudence: This is only patience as a moral virtue, which ſome attain to. But it is patience as a ſpiritual grace, or a fruit of the ſpirit, which we muſt aim at under our trials; that we may bear them contentedly, from divine principles, to divine ends. Now, this grace of patience we muſt earneſtly beg from God under heavy afflictions, for it is only he that muſt work it in us; and therefore he is called the God of patience, Rom. xv. 5. And in order to your attaining of this grace, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations, which may be uſeful thro' the Lord's bleſſing for that end.

1ſt, Conſider the patience of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt under ſufferings inexpreſſibly greater than yours. When it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and put him to grief; how patiently did he bear all? According to that remarkable word, Iſa. liii. 7. *He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth.* Now Chriſt ſuffered as an example of patience, tho' it was not his chief end: And ſurely all the members of the body ſhould ſtudy to imitate the head in patience. Did your bleſſed Saviour patiently endure ſuch agonies and preſſures of wrath for you; and will you decline to undergo ſome ſhort pains or ſickneſs in obedience to his command?

2dly, Conſider God's ſovereignty over you. He is the great Potter, and you are his clay; and, why may he not do with you as he pleaſeth? If your children offend you, you ſcourge them, and perhaps do it ſometimes without reaſon; yet how ill do you take it, when they refuſe to ſubmit? How will you drive and ſpur your horſes under you, and may be ſometimes unreaſonably? Yet they bear all quietly, and make no reſiſtance. Shall they take blows from their maſter; and will not you from your maker, that has far more power over you? If any challenge you for cruelty to your children or beaſts, you take it not well, becauſe you think you may do what you will with your own, and no man hath right to quarrel you: But, hath not God a greater propriety in you, than you in your children or cattle? And will you not patiently ſubmit to your wiſe and abſolute ſovereign?

3dly, Conſider thy ſin as the meritorious cauſe of all thy afflictions, however heavy they be. If thou haſt right thoughts of thy ſins and the aggravations thereof, thy mind may be compoſed to a patient ſubmiſſion to God's hand: If ſin be heavy on thee, all thy afflictions will be light. Luther gives us this as a reaſon why he ſlighted the rage of the pope and emperor, and all his outward troubles: ‘ They are all little to me, becauſe ‘ ſin is ſo weighty on me.’ Hence it was that Paul complained not at all of his ſufferings, for as great as they were; but he cried out much of his ſins, Rom. vii. 24. ‘ O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deli‘ ver me from the body of this death?’ Senſe of ſin doth ſwallow up the ſenſe of affliction, as the ocean doth little brooks. For, with whom ſhouldeſt thou quarrel, but thyſelf, when thou bringeſt troubles on thyſelf? This conſideration ſhould bring thee to reſolve and ſay with the prophet, Micah vii. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.*

4thly, Conſider how ſharp ſoever the pains are, you are called to bear, yet they fall infinitely ſhort of what you have juſtly deſerved at God's hands. It is of his infinite mercy that death and everlaſting deſtruction hath not been your portion long ſince; and that you are not now roaring under the extremity of his indignation in the bottomleſs pit, together with the devil and his angels. And conſequently whatever falls ſhort of this, is truly a great mercy, and is ſo far from being ground of quarrelling, that the greateſt ſufferer on this ſide hell, hath juſt cauſe to admire God's clemency in dealing more favourably with him than he hath deſerved.

5thly, Compare thy caſe with others that have been or preſently are in diſtreſs. Do not ſay, there is none ſo hardly dealt with as thou art; for thou knoweſt not the affliction of others. Conſider duly the trials of that eminent ſaint Job, in all the circumſtances thereof, and ſee if you can ſay, that your ſorrow is near ſo great as his ſorrow was. Again, compare your caſe with that of the damned in hell, who lie and fry in endleſs and eaſeleſs flames, ſo that they have no reſt day nor night, but the ſmoke of their torment aſcends for ever: And think what a bleſſing it is, that you are yet in a ſtate of ſalvation, and not delivered over to theſe everlaſting burnings, which were the due demerits of your ſins, and to which you might long ago been juſtly condemned, had it not been for the patience and long-ſuffering of almighty God, who waiteth to be gracious to guilty ſinners. When you conſider theſe things, inſtead of being diſſatisfied with the divine diſpenſations, you have cauſe to bleſs God, that matters are not worſe with you; and that you are kept out of hell to this day, where thouſands no more guilty than you, are preſently roaring in endleſs deſperation.

Unto theſe conſiderations I ſhall ſubjoin ſome few helps or advices in order to the attaining of patience under ſore troubles. 1. Labour to get pardon of ſin and peace with God ſecured to thy ſoul, and this will enable you to bear the heavieſt croſs with patience. Hence it was that Luther cried, “ Smite Lord, as thou “ wilt, I take all in good part, ſeeing my ſins are par“ doned: O pardon of ſin is the crowning bleſſing, “ therefore I will bear any thing, I will ſwallow up “ quarreling into admiring; I will welcome the prun“ ing knife, ſeeing there is no fear of the bloody ax “ to fell me down.”

2. Labour to ſee God's hand in thy affliction. Do not, like the dog, ſnarl at the ſtone, but look up to the hand that throws it. And ſurely a view of the hand of a holy God, may ſerve to calm all the boiſterous waves of thy corruption; ſo did it with David, Pſal. xxxix. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.* When he looked to the inſtruments and ſecond cauſes of his afflictions, his heart waxed hot, and the fire of his inward paſſion began to burn and break out; but, when he once eſpied God's hand and ſeal to the warrant for his correction, he became ſilent, and patiently ſubmitted to the divine will.

3. Get a humble and ſelf-denied frame of ſpirit, that you may have low thoughts of yourſelf, and of all your attainments whatſoever. A proud man cannot think of ſubmitting to the divine will, but will break before he bow. Hence we ſee a vaſt difference betwixt a proud Pharaoh, and an humble Eli, under the rod; the one ſays, Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey him? But the other ſaith, it is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.

4. Get love to Jeſus Chriſt. Love is an enduring principle, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. It endureth all things. It makes the ſoul, like the kindly child, draw nearer to Chriſt the more it is beaten.

5. Interpret God's ways and dealings with you always in the beſt ſenſe. And, laſtly, Be earneſt in prayer, that God may conquer your rebellious will, and ſubdue theſe mutinous riſings of heart within you againſt himſelf.

DIRECT. VI. *Beware of envying wicked men, when you ſee them in health and proſperity.*

THE Pſalmiſt, when he was chaſtened every morning and in great adverſity, was liable to this evil. Pſal. lxxiii. 3. *I was envious at the fooliſh, when I ſaw the proſperity of the wicked.* Corrupt nature doth ſtrongly incline us to this ſinful diſpoſition, eſpecially in the day of ſore affliction; for the ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy, Jam. iv. 5. But, did we rightly conſider the ſtate of wicked men, we would ſee greater ground to pity than envy them in the moſt proſperous condition: Why? *The proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them*, Prov. i. 32. It makes them forget God and turn hardened and ſecure in ſin, which haſtens their ruin Who would envy a malefactor's going up a high ladder, and being mounted above the reſt of the people, when it is only for a little, and in order to his being turned over and hanged? That is juſt the caſe of wicked men, who are mounted up high in proſperity; for it is ſo only that they may be caſt down deeper into deſtruction. Obſerve that word, Pſal. xxxvii. 1. 2. “ Fret not thy“ ſelf becauſe of evil-doers, neither be thou envious a“ gainſt the workers of iniquity: For they ſhall ſoon “ be cut down like graſs,” *&c.* and that word, Pſal. xcii. 7. “ When the wicked ſpring as the graſs, and “ when all the workers of iniquity do flouriſh, it is “ that they ſhall be deſtroyed for ever.” It would be a brutiſh thing to envy an ox his high and ſweet paſture, when he is only thereby fitted for the day of ſlaughter. Who would have envied the beaſts of old, the garlands and ribbons with which the heathens adorned them, when they went to be ſacrificed? Theſe external ornaments of health, wealth, pleaſures and preferments, wherewith wicked men are endowed, cannot make their ſtate happy, nor change their natures to the better. Whatever appearance theſe things make in the eyes of the world, they are but like a nauſeous dunghill covered with ſcarlet, as vile and loathſome in God's ſight as ever. How quickly is the beauty of earthly things blaſted! *The triumphing of the wicked is ſhort,* Job xx. 5. They live in pleaſures on the earth for a while; but God ſets them in ſlippery places, from whence they ſoon ſlide into perpetual pain and anguiſh. They have a ſhort time of mirth, but they ſhall have an eternity of mourning. The longer is their proſperity, their ſins are the greater, and their ſufferings will be more grievous. But, O believer, it is in mercy to thee, that God doth hedge up thy way with thorns, that thou mayeſt not find thy paths; whilſt he turns the wicked looſe and ſuffers them to ſtray and wander whither they will, to their eternal ruin. God takes this method with thee to make thee meet for an inheritance, and prepare you for a crown of glory; but he takes a contrary way with the wicked, to fit them for deſtruction: Therefore you ought not to be fretful under his hand, but thankful. We read of queen Elizabeth, when ſhe was in priſon, how ſhe envied the poor milk-maid ſhe ſaw paſſing by, and would have thought herſelf happy to have been in her condition: But had that afflicted princeſs known the glorious reign of forty-four years ſhe was ſoon to enter upon, ſhe would not have repined at the happineſs of ſo mean a perſon. But O afflicted believer, it is not a glorious reign for a ſet number of years, that is provided for thee; it is even a reign with glorious Chriſt thy Redeemer for ever and ever: And, haſt thou any ground to be diſcontented or envious?

DIRECT. VII. *Guard againſt repining complaints and diſcontented murmurings againſt the providence of God under heavy ſickneſs and affliction.*

WE ſee the murmurers and complainers are claſſed with theſe that walk after their own luſts, Jude ver. 16. I know the people of God are liable to murmuring and impatience alſo under affliction; but there is a great difference betwixt them and the wicked. I'll have occaſion to ſpeak of believers murmurings afterwards, when I come to ſpeak of their caſe in particular; but here I ſhall handle the ſin of murmuring in general, and as it appears mainly in the unregenerate, under heavy affliction.

This ſin of murmuring is the froth of impatience, and ſcum of diſcontent; it is firſt cheriſhed by repining thoughts, and then vented by unſuitable complaints and expoſtulations, taxing the adminiſtration of providence, as if God dealt too hardly with us. Our very thoughts are audible with God, yea, as loud in his ears, as words are in ours; but it is yet worſe, when repining thoughts are not cruſhed, but ſuffered to break out into words tending to the diſhonour of God.

Queſt. But, is it altogether unlawful to complain of affliction whatever be our caſe?

Anſ. Humble complaints are not murmurings, nor ſinful in themſelves, otherwiſe there would be no room for prayer, and for ſpreading out our diſtreſſed caſe before the Lord. We find God's children making complaints in affliction; but then they do not complain of God, but to God, with a humble inquiry into the cauſe and meaning of his diſpenſations, and laying all the blame upon themſelves, as did Job, chap. x. 1, 2. *I will leave my complaint upon myſelf; I will ſpeak in the bitterneſs of my ſoul, I will ſay unto God, do not condemn me: ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me.* Thus the bleſſed Son of God himſelf did in his diſtreſs, when he cried, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* But there we may obſerve, he complains to God, not of God; he hath not a hard word or thought of God, but expreſſeth a holy confidence in God, *My God, my God,* he hath two words of faith for one word of fear. He humbly enquires into the cauſe of the diſpenſation, and deſires to bring up his will to God not that God ſhould bring down his will to him: If it be poſſible (ſays he) let this cup paſs; however, glorify thy name, provide for thy own glory, and do with me what thou pleaſeſt. In this matter our Lord doth ſet himſelf as an example of patience to us, teaching us to beware of impatient murmuring and quarreling with God's providence in our affliction; which many times we are guilty of, either when we harbour harſh thoughts of God's dealings, or break forth into raſh and unadviſed ſpeeches; when we charge God fooliſhly, and complain either of too much ſeverity, as Ezek. xviii. 2, 25. Or of too long delay, as Iſa. xlix. 14. Or when our complaints are mixed with unbelief and diſtruſt, as Pſal. lxxviii. 19. Or when we complain more of our puniſhment than we do of our ſin, and nothing will ſatisfy us but deliverance from trouble.

Now, to deter you from theſe murmurings and complaints in trouble, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations; 1ſt. They who deſerve worſt, do commonly complain and murmur moſt, and are moſt ready to think they are hardly dealt with. The unthankful Iſraelites were ſtill murmuring, ambitious Abſalom was diſcontented. Bloody Haman, in the midſt of all his greatneſs, cries out, What doth all this avail me? But humble Jacob ſaith, he was not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies and truth which God had ſhewed him. And holy Job bleſſes God, and patiently ſubmits, when he took from him, as well as when he gave him.

2dly, Murmuring is a ſin that God takes ſpecial notice of, and looks on it as an injury and affront done immediately againſt himſelf. Numb. xiv. 27. *I have heard the murmurings of the children of Iſrael, which they murmur againſt me.* He that gives ear to the groans of his own ſpirit, doth alſo hear the grumblings of thine, and will reckon with thee for them.

3dly, It can no wiſe benefit or relieve us in diſtreſs. I may ſay of ſinful complaining (as Chriſt of ſinful care) which of you, by complaining, can add one cubit to his ſtature? What eaſe or relief can you get by contending with God? Nay, inſtead of eaſing you of your burden, it will make it heavier; as a child, the more he ſtruggles with his parents, he is the more beaten. The Iſraelites were once within eleven days journey of Canaan; but by their murmurings, they provoked God to lead them forty years march in the wilderneſs before they could reach it.

4thly, Whatever be your diſtreſs, there is no juſt ground for complaints, whilſt thou haſt thy life for a prey. Remember that word of the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 39. *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?* A man living, a man upon the earth, a man out of hell hath no cauſe to complain, whatever be his affliction. For, let him compare his ſin and puniſhment together, and he'll find there is no proportion: Sin is a tranſgreſſion againſt the infinite God; puniſhment is but an affliction upon the finite creature: Sin ſtrikes at the very being of God; but puniſhment only at the comfort of the creature. So that whatever your puniſhment be, you have more cauſe to give thanks than to complain, and to ſay with Ezra, thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve: It might have been a thouſand times worſe if ſtrict juſtice had been the rule: It is of the Lord's mercies we are not conſumed.

5thly, When you murmur under ſickneſs, you quarrel with the meſſenger of that ſovereign God, who gave you your lives, and can take them again when he thinks fit; and we know, meſſengers ought not to be maltreated or abuſed, whatever be their commiſſion, and far leſs when they are ſent upon a good deſign. Now, if you conſider the deſign of this meſſenger and his errand to you, inſtead of fretting and quarreling at his coming, you ought rather to bleſs God that ſends ſuch a ſuitable harbinger and forerunner to tell you that death is approaching, and that he vouchſafes to take ſo much pains on you to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone, by long continued trouble; when he might have ſeized you in a violent manner, and driven you away by main force, without uſing any means to obtain your conſent. Have not many, who were moſt unwilling to die, at the beginning of a ſickneſs, been brought, by the increaſe and continuance of it, to be well ſatisfied to leave the world, and long to be with Chriſt? And was not this for their advantage?

6thly, Conſider the great evil and ſinfulneſs of impatient murmurings, complaints and quarrelings under affliction.

1. Murmuring hath in it much unbelief and diſtruſt of God, Pſal. cvi. 24. 25. *They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents.* They could not believe that the wilderneſs was the way to Canaan, that God would provide and furniſh a table for them there, and relieve them in all their ſtraits. So it is with us in trouble; we quarrel with God's providence, becauſe we do not believe his promiſes; we do not believe that this can be conſiſtent with love, or can work for good in the end.

2. It hath in it unthankfulneſs. While we complain of one affliction, we overlook a thouſand mercies. The Iſraelites murmured ſo for what they had not, that they unthankfully forgot all that they had. Whereas a thankful perſon is ſo far from fretting that God doth not give him every thing, that he wonders that God ſhould give him any thing. *I am leſs than the leſt of all thy mercies,* ſaid Jacob. We are perplexed, ſaid Paul, but not in deſpair; we have God to go to, which is matter of praiſe; But the murmurer unthankfully overlooks all his preſent, and forgets all his former mercies; and gives not God thanks for any thing. Becauſe God removes his comforts, his health, ſtrength and eaſe for a time; all the years he formerly enjoyed them, tho' moſt undeſervedly, are quite buried in oblivion.

3. It implies much pride and ſelf-conceit. He that complains of God's dealings, ſecretly applauds his own deſervings. Only by pride comes contention. When men have a conceit of themſelves, they pick quarrels with God's providence, being apt to think they deſerve better treatment at his hands; whereas the humble ſoul is ſenſible he deſerves nothing but wrath, and therefore lays his hand on his mouth when the Lord afflicts him.

4. It involves men into rebellion againſt God. When God ſtrikes men for ſin, murmurers fly in his face, and kick againſt his ſtrokes, like bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke. They in ſome reſpect reſemble that deſperate apoſtate Julian, of whom it is written, that he ſhot up his darts againſt heaven, when he was in diſtreſs. They fulfil that word, Prov. xix. 3. *The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord.* The repining heart boils with rage againſt God and his diſpenſations, like theſe wicked Jews when hungry and hardly beſtead, Iſa. viii. 21. *They ſhall fret themſelves, and curſe their king and their God, and look upward.*

5. It imports much impenitency and unhumbledneſs for ſin; and that we have ſeen little of the intrinſick evil of ſin; and of our ill deſervings for it. Can we truly believe that our ſins deſerve hell fire, and yet impatiently repine at ſickneſs and leſſer ſtrokes upon our bodies?

6. It includes much atheiſm and blaſphemy againſt God, and his infinite perfections, in ſeveral reſpects: (1.) By our impatient murmurings, we either virtually deny that things here below are governed by God's providence; or elſe,

2. We tax his providence with unrighteouſneſs in the managements thereof; as if God did withhold from us what is due, or inflict on us what we have not deſerved. Oh what atheiſm is this! Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? May he not, upon the juſteſt ground, anſwer every murmur, as Mat. xx. 13. *Friend, I do thee no wrong?*

(3.) We in effect graſp at the ſovereignty, and uſurp the throne of the moſt high God, and would have the diſpoſal of things in our hands; yea, we preſume to ſummon God to our bar to give account of his adminiſtrations, when we take upon us to quarrel any of his diſpenſations. Alas, we little remember the wo that is pronounced againſt ſo doing. Iſa. lxv. 9. *Wo unto him that ſtriveth with his Maker: ſhall the clay ſay to him that faſhioneth it, What makeſt thou? or thy work, he hath no hands?*

(4.) We on the matter take ſin's part againſt God; we either juſtify it, or extenuate its evil, and alledge by our murmurings, that God is unrighteous to puniſh ſuch ſmall ſins with ſuch heavy afflictions.

(5.) We virtually queſtion God's power to reach us a greater blow, when we enter the liſts with God; and contend with our Maker, is it not in effect to ſay, we know how to reduce him to our terms, or make our party good againſt him?

(6.) We diſparage his wiſdom, and take upon us to be his counſellors, as if we could inſtruct him better in the management of affairs, and teach him what is fit to be done with his creatures. Hear what the Lord ſaith, Job xi. 2. *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, inſtruct him? He that reproveth God let him anſwer it.* Murmuring is a reproving of God, and a charging him with ill conduct, ſaying in effect with Abſalom, *There is none that takes care to order mens affairs: O that I were king of the world! Then ſhould things be better ordered than now they are.* So blaſphemous is the language of our impatient murmurings. Let us therefore be aſhamed of them, and abhor our ſelves in duſt and aſhes for our fooliſhneſs in cenſuring the actions of the only wiſe God. Shall a poor ignorant paſſenger that underſtands not the uſe of the compaſs, be angry that the ſkilful pilot will not ſteer the veſſel according to his pleaſure.

(7.) We hereby ſlight and undervalue the riches of divine goodneſs, of which we have formerly ſhared, and do ſtill partake; like the fooliſh and pettiſh children, if they cannot have their will, or get ſome things they want, do preſently throw away the things which they have, ſaying with unthankful Haman. *All this availeth me nothing*,

Laſtly, I might add, This ſin hath ſome reſemblance to hell itſelf; for there the damned do continually vex and torment themſelves with their fretting and impatient thoughts, which cauſe them to break out in fearful rage and blaſphemy againſt God.

Queſt. But how ſhall we prevent ſuch diſcontented murmurings? For ſometimes trouble is ſo great, we cannot bear it patiently.

Anſ. God hath given you reaſon to bear rule over paſſion, and furniſhed you with ſtrong arguments to prevail againſt diſcontents. Why then ſhould you be ſo brutiſh as to dethrone reaſon, and ſuffer ſenſe and paſſion to govern you? Are you not Chriſtians, and ſworn to live according to the rules of that excellent religion? Why then do you act ſo contrary to your profeſſion and engagements.

Beſides what I have already ſaid, I ſhall add ſome few remedies more for the cure of this murmuring diſtemper.

1ſt. Look on thy murmurings as worſe than all thy pains and troubles whatſoever; thoſe are but afflictions from God, but theſe are ſins grievous and provoking unto God.

2dly, Remember the judgments which murmuring hath brought down from heaven upon ſinners. Miriam was ſmitten with a leproſy for it; Dathan and Abiram were ſwallowed up alive; fiery ſerpents, plagues, and excluſion from Canaan, were Iſrael's judgments for this ſin, 1 Cor. x. 10. *Neither murmur ye, as ſome of them mnrmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer.* The arrows which murmurers ſhoot againſt heaven, do ſoon return upon their own heads.

3dly, Whatever thy ſufferings are for the preſent, yet ſtill believe thy caſe might be worſe. The troubles that light upon the body are nothing ſo terrible as theſe that light on the ſoul, Prov. xviii. 14. *A wounded ſpirit who can bear.* They are nothing to what thy innocent Saviour ſuffered upon the croſs, yea, nothing to what ſome martyrs have endured for the truths of the goſpel.

4thly, Get very low thoughts of yourſelf, and a deep ſenſe of ill deſervings for ſin. O! ſhould a fire-brand of hell murmur for temporal afflictions?

5thly, Be ſtill examining thyſelf, rather than cenſuring God. Doth God ſeem to neglect thee, ſay alas, it is moſt juſt! Have I not neglected him, and given a deaf ear to his calls many a day?

6thly, Bear in mind that theſe troubles will not laſt, there is a great change near; either they will iſſue in life or death. If life, you will be aſhamed you had no more patience when ſick; if death then, if you belong to Chriſt, it will give a finiſhing ſtroke to all troubles and complaints, and heaven will make amends for all. But if you be not in Chriſt, whatever your afflictions be now, troubles a thouſand times worſe are abiding you in another world: Death will turn thy croſſes into pure unmixed curſes; and then, how gladly wouldſt thou return to thy former afflicted ſtate, and purchaſe it at any rate, were there any poſſibility of ſuch a return? You now fly out in a paſſion, and ſay, you are not able to bear what you complain of; but conſider, if you will not, obediently bear God's rods now; you will then bear more, whether you will or not; and God will make you able to bear more, when there will never be any hopes of relief.

7thly, Study to give vent to thy ſorrows in a way of prayer and praiſe. An oven ſtopped is the more hot within; but the breath of prayer or praiſe gives eaſe. If we did complain more to God, we ſhould complain leſs of God. What a mercy is it, that you have ſtill God to go to? Improve the privilege, confeſs unworthineſs, and beg the grace of patience and ſubmiſſion out of Chriſt's full treaſures. Be alſo praiſing God for mercies received; and however bad thy caſe is, bleſs God it is not in hell, you are in the land of hope.

CHAP. III.

Containing ſpecial directions to the children of God, when under ſickneſs, or any other affliction.

Read this with attention

Direct. I. *Let believers eſpecially guard againſt faintings or deſponding under God's afflicting hand.*

THIS is an exhortation which God in a peculiar manner directs unto his children, Heb. xii. 5. *My ſon deſpiſe not thou the chaſtning of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.* There are two extremes mentioned, deſpiſing and fainting; I ſpoke of the firſt before, in Chapter II,, Direction II. It is a duty to feel our affliction, but a ſin to faint under it. God's people may be ſaid to faint under their trials, when they ſink or deſpond or give way to fretting or repining under them. In the preceeding direction I ſpoke of the evil of murmuring in general; here I ſhall ſpeak of believers fainting in particular.

1. I ſhall enquire whence their fainting under affliction doth proceed.
2. Bring ſome arguments and helps againſt this evil.
3. Anſwer ſome objections of fainting believers.

I. As to the firſt, Whence theſe faintings in believers do proceed. *1ſt*, They proceed from the grievouſneſs of their affliction, and the heavineſs of their burden, which is ready to amaze and ſtagger their thoughts and ſink their ſpirits with fear and deſpondency. Hence did the Pſalmiſt complain, Pſal. lx. 3. *Thou haſt ſhewed thy people hard things; thou haſt made us to drink the wine of aſtoniſhment.* And, Pſal. lxix. 2. *I ſink in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*

2dly, From the ſmalneſs of their ſpiritual ſtrength, and particularly the weakneſs of their faith Prov. xxiv. 10. 'If thou faint in the day of adverſity, thy ſtrength 'is ſmall.' Whence was it that Peter, fainted and began to ſink in the waters, but from the weakneſs of his faith? Mat. xiv. 30. 31. We know not our ſtrength till it be tried. Sometimes we have ſuch a conceit of it, that we think, like Peter we can walk upon a ſea of trouble: but in a little, behold, ſome ſurpriſing blaſt aſſaults our confidence; and then we faint, and cry out with him, *Help, Lord, or elſe we periſh.* Peter reckoned only upon the ſea, but did not think of the boiſterous wind; and he looked to his dangers, more than to the power that was to carry him thro' them.

3dly, From their impatience of delay. When deliverance is long a-coming, it is not eaſy to wait God's leiſure, and to keep the heart from deſperate concluſions. Pſal. xxxi. 22. *I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes.*

4thly, From the power of Satan's temptations, and furious aſſaults. When Satan is let looſe in time of affliction to throw in his fiery darts, the believer is ready to faint, and ſay, as Pſal. lxxvii. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever?* &c.

5thly, From their weariſom conflicts with a body of death, and an ill heart. Theſe in time of affliction do add affliction to the afflicted.

6thly, From long and great deſertions. When God hides his face from the believer in affliction, his ſoul faints under it, as in Iſa. xliv. 14. *Zion hath ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, my God hath forgotten me.*

7thly, From the conſciouſneſs of their guilt, and ill-deſervings before God, upon the account of old ſins, abuſe of mercies, and untender walking before God. Affliction doth revive old ſins, as with Job, Job xiii. 26. *Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the ſins of my youth.* His old ſins and guilt of his youthful follies, now revived upon him, and ſat cloſe to his conſcience; which occaſioned his fainting under his burden,

Laſtly, Great afflictions do frequently cloud the believers graces and evidences for heaven, and diſcover their corruptions; whereby they are made to ſink under their trial. They ſee more unbelief, impatience, diſtruſt, and enmity to God in them, than they ſaw before; they ſee more of the weakneſs of grace, and of their want of faith and love, than before: Whereby they are ſometimes tempted to raze the foundation, and ſay, all their former attainments were but deluſions, and their profeſſions but hypocriſy. Theſe things make afflictions ſometimes very heavy and ſinking to the people of God.

II. In the next place, for preventing and helping this evil of fainting under affliction; let believers conſider,

1ſt, Theſe heavy trials are all needful for you. Deep waters are not more needful to carry a ſhip into the haven, than great afflictions are to carry the veſſels of our ſouls into the port of bliſs. Strong winds and thunder are frightful, but they are neceſſary to purge the air. One of the ſharpeſt calamities that ever befel Iſrael was the Babyloniſh captivity, yet even this was in mercy to them; for the Lord ſaith Jer. xxiv. 5. *I have ſent them out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.* Strange! Of freemen to be made priſoners, and that in a ſtrange land among the heathen; to be removed far from their own houſes, vineyards, friends, nay, and from the temple of God and his ordinances; and yet all this for their good! Why? They were hereby effectually weaned and broke off from their darling ſin of idolatry.

2dly, Conſider that your affliction, however heavy it be, will ſoon have an end; Iſa. lvii. 16. 'For I 'will not contend for ever, neither will I be always 'wroth; for the ſpirit ſhould fail before me, and the 'ſouls which I have made.' The goldſmith will not let his gold ly longer in the furnace than it is purified. The wicked have a ſea of wrath to drink; but, O drooping believer, take comfort; you have but a cup of affliction, which will ſoon be exhauſted. The time is near when all thy trials ſhall have an end: In heaven there is no croſs, no complaint, no tears, nor ſorrows for ever.

3dly, Faint not, O child of God; for theſe afflictions are all the hell which thou ſhalt have; thou haſt nothing to fear hereafter. Judas had two hells, one in time by terror in his conſcience, another after this life which endures to eternity; but all the hell that a believer hath is this light affliction, which is but for a moment.

4thly, Deſponding or murmuring in affliction, is evil in any, but in none is it ſo bad as in the children of God. It doth very ill become their covenants, their privileges, their hopes. Have they reſigned and given up themſelves, and all they have, to God by a ſolemn covenant, and will they fret when he diſpoſeth of them? Didſt thou not ſay, O believer, in the day when thy heart was ſtung with ſin, and the terrors of God made thee afraid, 'O let me have Jeſus Chriſt for my Saviour and portion, and I will be content tho' I ſhould 'be ſtricken with boils like Job, or beg my bread with 'Lazarus?' Now, God tries thee if thou wilt ſtand to thy word: O beware of retracting. Hath not that ſoul enough, who hath an all-ſufficient God for his portion? If God be thine in covenant, that comprehends all things.

5thly, It doth diſcompoſe and unfit the ſoul for any duty. It is ill ſailing in a ſtorm, ſo it is ill praying when the heart is in a ſtorm of diſquiet and deſpondency.

6thly, Your fainting under affliction, and carrying as if the conſolations of God were ſmall, is enough to ſtumble others at religion, and make them call the truth of it in queſtion. When they ſee thoſe that profeſs religion, and have oft declared that their rejoicing is in Chriſt Jeſus as their portion, begin to ſink and deſpond under outward afflictions; O may not they be tempted to ſay, 'Where is the truth of religion? where are 'theſe divine ſupports and conſolations we have often 'heard of?'

Laſtly, O then ſeek to get faith revived, and ſtrengthened, and reſolve with Job to truſt in God, tho' he ſhould ſlay you. This would be of noble uſe to keep the heart from ſinking under preſſures of affliction, as the Pſalmiſt found it to his ſweet experience, Pſal. xxvii. 13. 'I had fainted unleſs I had believed to ſee the 'goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.'

III. I come to anſwer ſome objections or excuſes of fainting believers, which they do commonly alledge as the ground of their diſcouragement in their afflictions.

Object. I. "O (ſaith one) my afflictions are not ordinary; they are ſore preſſures I lie under, and of various kinds too."

Anſ. 1. O believer, God hath taken the ordering of your lot in his own hand, and he knows what is fitteſt for you. Should a man be left to carve out his own portion, it would ſoon appear he would be his own greateſt enemy. We would all be for the dainties of pleaſure and proſperity, which would not be for our ſouls health; as children think green fruit the beſt diet, becauſe they pleaſe their taſte; but their parents are wiſer to keep them from them.

2*dly*, God may ſee you have many and ſtrong luſts to be ſubdued, and that you need many and ſore afflictions to bring them down. Your pride and obſtinacy of heart may be ſtrong, your diſtempers deeply rooted, and therefore the phyſic muſt be proportioned to them; as with the Iſraelites, Pſal. cvii. 11, 12. *Becauſe they rebelled againſt the words of God, and contemned the counſels of the moſt high: therefore, he brought down their heart with labour.* O believer, your God and father, that hath the mixing of your cup and portion, is a wiſe and ſkilful phyſician, who knows your conſtitution and your need, 1 Pet. i. 6. *If need be, you are in heavineſs through manifold temptations.* And as he knows your need, ſo he underſtands your ſtrength, 1 Cor. x. 13. *Faithful is he, that will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able.*

3*dly*, God ſends great and ſore troubles, that you may have the more experience of God's wiſdom and mercy in your ſupport and deliverance, Pſal. lxxi. 20. *Thou which haſt ſhewed me great and ſore troubles, ſhalt quicken and bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*

Object. II. But (ſaith another) my affliction is ſingular; there was never any in my condition.

Anſw. 1*ſt*, It is very ordinary for every man in great diſtreſs to reckon his caſe ſingular, becauſe he feels beſt what is neareſt himſelf, but is a ſtranger to what his neighbour feels.

2*dly*, This ſuggeſtion is one of Satan's devices that he may tempt a child of God to queſtion his father's love; but he is a liar, and not to be credited in what he ſaith: for others of your brethren have been afflicted in the ſame kind and degree, if not worſe, 1 Pet. v. 9. *Knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world.*

3*dly*, Whatever your caſe be, you muſt own your ſufferings are not ſo great as your ſins. The trials of God's people in Babylon were ſingular; yet Ezra owns, Ezra ix. 13. *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve.* If our provoked judge ſhall in his clemency ſend us to Babylon inſtead of hell, we have no cauſe to complain.

4*thly*, But, O child of God, however thou complaineſt of the ſingularity of affliction now, all ſuch complaints will be taken out of thy mouth ere long, and the time is near when thou ſhalt be made to wonder at the wiſdom of God in guiding ſo many ſons and daughters to glory, through ſuch a variety of trials, exerciſes, afflictions and temptations; and made to ſay as thoſe in Mark vii. 37. *He hath done all things well.*

Object. III. But (ſaith one) my affliction is long continued, and I ſee no outgate; and, how can I but faint under it?

Anſw. 1*ſt*, It is not ſo long as your ſins deſerve; for in juſtice it might be for ever, it might be the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched.

2*dly*, Your ſufferings on earth are not ſo long as your reward in heaven, Rom. viii. 18. *For I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us.*

3*dly*, No length or continuance of affliction here ſhould hinder a believer's comfort. If we take a view of our head and pattern Jeſus Chriſt, how long did his afflictions continue? No end was put to them, till he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghoſt. Tho' he was the Son of God, yet from the hour of his birth to the moment of his death, from his manger to his croſs, his affliction ſtill increaſed, and he ended his days in the midſt of them. Now, Chriſt is the head of the church, and your great repreſentative, O believers, into a conformity with whom you are predeſtinated; be content then to be like your head and pattern, to have no eaſe or reſt from afflictions till you ly down in the grave; it is *there the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary are at reſt*, Job iii. 17.

4*thly*, Remember that your afflictions are a part of Chriſt's croſs, which your loving Redeemer hath contrived for your good, and hath appointed you to take up and bear with him. Now love to Chriſt ſhould keep you from wearying to bear off a part of Chriſt's croſs, eſpecially when he himſelf bears the heavieſt end of it, nay, bears you and your croſs both. It is ſaid of Jacob, Gen. xxix. 20. that *he ſerved ſeven years for Rachel, and they ſeemed to him but a few days, for the love he had for her.* And ſhall not we endure a few years affliction for our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who lived a life of ſorrows, and died a curſed death for our ſakes? Had we more love to Chriſt, his croſs would not be ſo tedious to us.

5*thly*, Should it not be good news to thee, that there is a deliverance for thee at death from all thy troubles, and that this time is haſtening and very near; be not anxious for an outgate here in time, for that ſavours too much of unbelief and love to the world. Doth it not ſeem to ſay, that you would be better content to be turned back again to the ſtormy tumultuous ſeas of this world, than to be ſafely and ſpeedily landed at your reſt above? That you would be gladder of a few temporal mercies on earth, than to enter upon your eternal inheritance with Chriſt?

Object. IV. No wonder (ſaith one) that I faint under my affliction, for I want theſe conſolations and ſupports which God uſeth to reſerve for afflicted ſaints.

Anſ. 1. If God be preſently chaſtiſing you for your ſins, you muſt be content to feel the bitterneſs of ſin, before you taſte the ſweetneſs of God's conſolations.

2. Can you ſay that your afflictions have duly humbled you, and fitted you for comfort! Have they yet brought you to a willingneſs to quit and renounce all your beloved ſins, and even to part with all your earthly enjoyments and comforts at God's call, and be content with God in Chriſt alone for your happineſs and portion? If this be not done, your afflictions have not had their due effect, to prepare you for comfort, and till then you cannot expect it. You are in the hands of a wiſe and ſkilful phyſician, who will not too haſtily heal and bind up your ſores, ſo as to let them ſpoil and feſter at the bottom.

3. Tho' you have no ſenſible conſolations from God in your preſent trials, yet you muſt ſtill labour to keep in the way of duty, and live by faith on his promiſes. Believe firmly, that God is good to them that love him, and that there is forgiveneſs with him to the penitent ſinner. And if all ſtars withdraw their light whilſt you are in God's way, then aſſure yourſelf the ſun is near the riſing.

Object. V. But my affliction is ſuch, that it diſables me from duty, and makes me uſeleſs and unprofitable; and this makes me faint under my burden.

Anſ. 1. God ſends afflictions never to unfit, but to quicken you for the performance of duty; to make you repent more throughly, pray more fervently, flee to Chriſt more earneſtly, and mind heaven more intenſely.

2. If it be your duty to others that your affliction incapacitates you for, then remember, If God in his providence diſable you for that, it is no longer a duty incumbent on you; and you muſt not grudge if God take you off, and put others in your room. God is a free and ſovereign agent, and will be tied to no mean or inſtrument whatſoever for carrying on his work.

DIRECT. II. *Let the children of God be exemplary in patience and ſubmiſſion to God under their afflictions.*

I Treated of patience, and gave ſome motives and helps to it, to all afflicted perſons in general, Chap. II. Direct. V. But here I ſhall bring ſome ſpecial arguments to Chriſtian patience and ſubmiſſion proper for believers. You that God hath done ſo much for beyond others, ought to ſhine in this grace of patience, and be examples to others for it, when God chaſtens you, tho' with very ſore affliction.

1ſt. Study patience under affliction; for it is the common path and beaten road to heaven, that all the ſaints have trod, who have gone thither before you. Behold the print of the foot-ſteps of all the cloud of witneſſes in this road, and, would ye be ſingular and chuſe a way of your own? When God ſolemnly renewed his covenant with Abraham, and he had prepared the ſacrifice, whereby it was to be ratified and confirmed, God made a ſmoaking furnace to paſs betwixt the pieces of the ſacrifice, Gen. xv. 17. to let him know that there was a furnace of affliction attending the covenant of grace and peace, and all that entered thereinto. God has appointed that all the ſtones of the ſpiritual and heavenly building ſhall be hewed and poliſhed by affliction here; and we are not to think that God's ordinary way will be changed for us. We muſt not think to walk on roſes when ſo many worthies have marched thro' briers and thorns to heaven.

2dly, Conſider, that the greateſt afflictions you meet with are conſiſtant with the love of God, nay, ſpring from his love to you. Every ſanctified rod is a gift and royal donation ſent by the hand of God to you, Phil. i. 29. *To you it is given in behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake.* Now ſurely, if we look on the croſs as a gift, an honour, an advantage and bleſſing, we would bear it patiently, Pſal. xciv. 12. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord.* O believer, thy temporal croſs comes from the ſame love that thy eternal crown comes from, according to Rev. iii. 19. 21. Men will not take pains to correct ſtubborn ſervants, but will turn them out of doors; but love conſtrains them to chaſtiſe their ſons. God out of hatred lets many a ſinner go unpuniſhed in this world; for, why ſhould he prune or dreſs the tree which he intends for the fire? The malefactor eſcapes ſcourging that is condemned to the gallows. Job. xxi. 30. *The wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruction, they ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath.* But it is far otherwiſe with the children of God. That is a ſtrange word, which Job hath, Job vii. 17. 18. *What is man that thou ſhouldſt magnify him? And that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine heart upon him? And that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?* Now if we compare this place with others in the context, we'll ſee how he acknowledgeth that the moſt overwhelming diſtreſs proceeds from the love and care of God, yea, from his fixing his heart on him, to magnify him, and do him good: And that for this end he doth chaſten him every morning, and try him every moment! And that with ſuch afflictions as for the preſent are ſo far from being joyous, as that they give the ſoul no reſt, but even make the man weary of his life; as he expreſſeth what effects his affliction had on himſelf. Yea, it may be obſerved in the providence of God from the foundation of the world, that thoſe who have had moſt afflictions have had moſt grace, and the moſt eminent teſtimonies of acceptance with God. Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, had the moſt affliction of any; and yet the Father always loved him, and was well pleaſed with him.

3dly, Conſider the bright examples of patience which God ſets before you in his word. Beſides that of his dear Son the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of which I ſpoke before; conſider the patience of Job, when he was ſtript of all his earthly comforts, and laid under the greateſt afflictions, yet he calmly falls down and worſhips God, Job i. 12. and ſaid, *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly.* Conſider the patience of David, when he was driven from his throne, from his houſe and from God's ſanctuary, and all this by his own ſon: yet how ſubmiſſive is he to God? 2 Sam. xv. 26. *Behold here I am, let him do to me as ſeemeth good to him.* And when Shimei curſed him and threw ſtones at him, he patiently bore it, and would ſuffer no harm to be done him for it, ſaying, as 2 Sam. xvi. 11. *Let him alone; and let him curſe for the Lord hath bidden him.* Conſider the patience of holy Eli, when, tho' he heard ſuch news as like a ſudden clap of thunder made the ears of ſuch as heard it to tingle, and their hearts to tremble, yet he calmly and quietly ſubmitted to it, 1 Sam. iii. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* He doth not fly in God's face in a paſſion, but falls down at his feet in a humble ſubmiſſion. Obſerve alſo the wonderful patience of Aaron when God afflicted him very ſore, he is ſilent and ſubmiſſive under the Lord's hand, Lev. x. 3. *And Aaron held his peace.* If we conſider the greatneſs of the puniſhment, we will ſee the more cauſe to commend the greatneſs of his patience. 1. Aaron loſt his children; not his eſtate or worldly ſubſtance, but his children; theſe are a part of a man's bowels; other earthly loſſes are not comparable to this; therefore it was that Satan that cunning enemy reſerved the loſs of Job's children to the laſt onſet, as his great maſter-piece and ſharpeſt attack. How ſadly did Rachel lament and weep for her children! Mat. ii. 18. yet Aaron held his peace. 2. Aaron loſt his two ſons at once; how pathetically did David bewail the loſs of one ſon! 2 Sam. xviii. 33. *O my ſon Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon,* &c. yet Aaron loſt both his ſons together, and ſaith not one word; he held his peace.——3. Aaron loſt them by a ſudden death, of which he had no warning: ſickneſs uſually prepares men for the ſtroke that is coming by death; but Aaron met with a ſurpriſing blow, yet he held his peace—4. Aaron's ſons were not taken away by an ordinary ſtroke of God's hand, but by an extraordinary ſupernatural rod; for it is ſaid, *There went out a fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord*, Lev. x. 2. He loſt them in ſuch a manner, as might ſpeak forth God's anger; now, a religious father had rather loſe all his children in the favour of God, than one child in his anger; yet, whatever were the bitter ingredients of this cup, Aaron was not impatient againſt God that mixed it for him, but held his peace, becauſe God did it.

4thly, To engage you to patience under your trials, do but compare your caſe with that of others. Do not ſay, there is none afflicted as you are; for there are many far deeper plunged in the waters of Mara than you are; ſome are ſtill upon the rack, and ſpend their whole days and years in continual fighting and ſtruggling; as in Pſal. 31. 10. *My life is ſpent with grief, and my years with ſighing.* Have you ſore diſtreſs in your bodies; others have grievous wounds in their ſouls. Do you bear the wrath of man? Others bear the wrath of God. You have but one ſingle trial, others have many twiſted together. Some are ſtript of all comforts, you have comforts ſtill remaining. You may have many ſad things in your trial, but you have not ground as yet to complain, as the Pſalmiſt doth, Pſal. xlii. 7. *All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.* Take a view of what the Son of God, what the apoſtles, and what the martyrs and other worthies have endured. They had trial of cruel mockings, ſcourgings, bonds and impriſonments: They wandered in deſerts, and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented. They were tempted, they were crucified, ſtoned to death, ſawn aſunder, ſlain with the ſword, &c. And yet, how well did they take with the croſs? Saith Paul, *We glory in tribulation*, Rom. v. 3. And what ſaith James, Jam. i. 2. *My brethren, count it all joy when [illegible] into diverſe temptations.* As if he had ſaid, "Rejoice ay more and more that you are afflicted: God is "magnifying you, he is viſiting you, doing you good, "taking the more pains on you, and fitting you for "glory."

5thly, The conſideration of God's former mercies and kindneſſeſs to you, ſhould engage you to patience in trouble, and make you bluſh to take any thing ill out of God's hand. Thus Job taught his impatient wife, Job ii. 10. *What? ſhall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil?* O believer, let not thy afflictions cauſe thee to bury thy mercies in oblivion. Has not God brought thee from Satan's family, and put you among his children; and will you forget or undervalue that honour? Hath he ſtruck off thy fetters, taken off thy priſon garments, and ſet you at liberty; and, will you be unthankful! Hath he given thee Chriſt for thy treaſure and portion, and entitled you to his unſearchable riches; and, will you be diſcontented? Hath he given you the graces of his Spirit, which are more precious than rubies, and will you quarrel when he ſmites in ſome outward things? Hath he made you an heir of glory; and provided eternal manſions above for you; and, will you be fretful for want of ſome trifles here? The view Moſes had of the recompence of reward in heaven, cauſed him chuſe to ſuffer affliction patiently with the people of God.

6thly, The time of affliction is uſually God's gracious tryſting ſeaſon with his people, the time of their rareſt comforts and ſweeteſt foretaſtes of heaven according to 2 Cor. i. 5. Paul and Silas did never ſing more joyfully than when they were laid in the inner priſon, with their backs torn with ſcourges, and their feet faſt in the ſtocks, Acts xvi. 24. And, when was it that Jacob ſaw the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the ladder that reached betwixt heaven and earth, but at the time when he was in a deſtitute caſe, forced to ly in the open field, having no canopy but the heavens, and no pillow but a ſtone? When was it that the three children ſaw Chriſt in the likeneſs of the Son of man walking with them, but when they were in the furnace, and that when it was hotter than ordinary? When was it that Ezekiel had a viſion of God, but when ſitting ſolitarily by the river Chebar in the land of his captivity? When was it that John got a glorious viſion of Chriſt, but when he was an exile in the iſle of Patmos? And, when was it that Stephen ſaw the heavens opened, and Chriſt ſtanding at the right hand of God pleading for him, but when they were ſtoning and bruiſing him to death? So that the moſt remarkable experiences of God's kindneſs, that believers get in this world, have been tryſted to the time of affliction: The conſideration whereof ſhould move every Chriſtian to wait on the Lord, and bear his croſs with patience.

7thly, When you are helped to Chriſtian patience and ſubmiſſion under God's hand, it doth contribute much to the credit of religion, and to the conviction of the world, that there is a certain reality in the truths of the goſpel, and a great efficacy in the grace of God which bears you up, and carries you thro' beyond the ſtrength of nature.

Laſtly, O believer bear up with patience under the croſs, for thou haſt not long to bear it. God's wrath on the church abideth but for a moment, yea, a little moment, Iſa. xxvi. 20. *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut up thy doors about thee, hide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt.* Surely a moment, a little moment, which is the ſmalleſt part of time, will ſoon be over; and wilt thou not have patience for a moment? The Pſalmiſt ſupported himſelf with this conſideration, Pſal. ciii. 9. *He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever.* The time of indignation will ſoon be overpaſt, and the time of conſolation will ſucceed. O believer, the end of all thy trials is near; think on it, and look for it. Is it bodily pain or ſickneſs that is thy affliction! Then conſider, the end of it will be either life or death: If death, then what thou ſuffereſt is the laſt brunt, bear it patiently: Theſe enemies you now ſee, you will ſee them again no more. In the manſions above there is no pain nor crying: The inhabitants there ſhall never ſay they are ſick; and one hour with them will make thee forget all thy momentary afflictions. If the iſſue ſhall be life, you will be aſhamed when well, that you had not more patience whilſt ſick.

I ſhall cloſe this direction with the words of the apoſtle James, Jam. v. 10. 11. *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord, for* *an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

Direct. III. *Let believers be much employed in the praiſes of God, while they are under affliction by ſickneſs or otherwiſe.*

As we ſhould bleſs the Lord at all times, and keep up good thoughts of God on every occaſion; ſo eſpecially in the time of affliction. Hence we are commanded to glorify the Lord in the fires, Iſa. xxiv. 15. And this the three children did in the hotteſt furnace. So Job bleſſed God when he had taken away his greateſt comforts, Job i. 21. And this is agreeable to that command, 1 Theſſ. v. 18. *In every thing give thanks.* I grant indeed, we cannot give thanks for affliction as affliction, but either as it is the means of ſome good to us, or as the gracious hand of God is ſome way remarkable therein towards us. In this reſpect there is no condition on this ſide of hell, but we have cauſe to praiſe God in, even in the greateſt calamities. Hence it was that David, when he ſpeaks of his affliction, Pſal. cxix. 67. adds preſently, *Thou art good, and doſt good.* And he declares ver. 65. *Thou haſt dealt well with thy ſervant, O Lord, according unto thy word.* Hence Paul and Silas praiſed God when they were ſcourged and impriſoned.

Well then, O believer, obey the command of thy God, and imitate his worthies, by praiſing God under thy affliction. 1. This practice would be very pleaſant and acceptable to God; for as muſic is ſweeteſt on the waters, ſo praiſe is moſt agreeable to God from an afflicted ſoul on the waters of trouble. It is a ſign of a noble and generous ſpirit, to ſing the praiſes of God's goodneſs while his hand is afflicting us. Diſtreſs and danger will make the wickedeſt to pray; but it is a principle of love and gratitude that makes thy ſoul to praiſe. 2. It would bring credit to religion, to ſee ſaints thankful and praiſing God under the croſs: It would make people ſay, Surely they find ſweetneſs in God and his ways that we ſee not; they have meat to eat the world knows not of. And this would invite ſtrangers to come and try a religious life. The joyful praiſes of the martyrs at the ſtakes, and in the flames, made people go home with love to religion in their hearts. 3. If the iſſue of your affliction ſhould be death, this employment of praiſe would be a ſweet preparative to fit and diſpoſe you for the work of heaven. Uſe yourſelves much to this heavenly life, and be oft trying to ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb in time of ſickneſs and trouble; and this would ſweeten the thoughts of death, and make you incline to be there, where praiſe is their conſtant work.

Queſt. What ſhould be the ſubject of a believer's thankſgiving and praiſe under affliction?

Anſ. He hath manifold grounds of praiſe; as *1ſt*, Upon the account of God's mercies to him thro' the bypaſt part of his life. His mercies to thee, O believer, cannot be numbered; compare thy mercies with thy croſſes, and thou wilt ſoon ſee thy receivings are far greater than thy ſufferings. Thou haſt had many days of plenty for one day of ſcarcity, many days of liberty for one day of ſtraits, many days of health for one day of ſickneſs. And are not theſe to be remembred with praiſe?

2dly, And more particularly, in thy greateſt affliction, thou haſt ground to praiſe God, O believer that thou waſt born in a land of light, where thou hadſt the means of converſion to God, and acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt; and eſpecially that God of his free grace made theſe means effectual to work a ſaving grace in you, when others are paſt by. Is not this matter of praiſe, that he opened your eyes, humbled your ſoul, and renewed your heart; That he gave you Chriſt, forgave your ſins, and adopted you into his family, and made you an heir of heaven? Oh what a ſad caſe would it be, if you were yet in your ſins, and in the bondage of Satan? If you had converſion-work to begin to, if you had your faith and juſtification and intereſt in Chriſt all to ſeek, and all your preparation for heaven to make; if you had all this to do with a ſick and pained body, and a diſordered mind that cannot command one ſettled thought, with the terrible views of death and eternity before your eyes! This is the caſe that God in juſtice might have left you to. Well then, ought you not to praiſe God, that ſent his holy ſpirit in time to determine your hearts to cloſe with Chriſt, and be reconciled to that God you are ſhortly to appear before, and that theſe ſins, which now would have been your terror, are all forgiven and waſhed away thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt?

3dly, Is it not matter of praiſe in thy greateſt trouble, that thou haſt a great high-prieſt, that is paſſed into the heavens, to provide a manſion with the father for thee, and to receive thy ſoul when ſeparated from the body; *that, where he is, there you may be alſo?*

4thly, You have cauſe to bleſs God, that he ſends ſuch ſuitable harbingers, as ſickneſs and trouble, to tell you that death is approaching; and that he ſhould take ſuch pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone. Many of God's people, that have been averſe to dying at the beginni[illegible] a ſickneſs, by the increaſe and continuance of it, have been brought to be well ſatisfied to depart that they may be with Chriſt.

5thly, You have ground to bleſs God for timing your afflictions ſo well, that he ſent them not till he ſaw you ſtood in need of them; he ſaw a need be for them, as 1 Pet. i. 6. and he would not let you want what was needful.

6thly, Ye ought to praiſe God, that he mitigates your trials, and proportions your burdens for your back, that when he takes a rod to you, he hath not made it a ſcorpion; that when he deprived you of one comfort and enjoyment, he did not ſtrip you of all, and leave you wholly comfortleſs: That when you ſuffer in one thing, he hath not made you to ſuffer in every thing, in ſoul, body, eſtate, relations and all together; that inſtead of afflicting you for a few days, he hath not made your whole life a ſcene of miſery and affliction. Bleſs God, that he puniſheth you leſs, unſpeakably leſs, than your iniquities deſerve; that your ſickbed is not hell, your fever is not everlaſting burnings, your pain is not the gnawing of the worm that never dieth.

7thly, You have cauſe to praiſe God, that your affliction is not ſo great as that of ſome others, and even of ſome that were very dear to God, and had not grieved him ſo much as you have done. Remember the trials that ſome have endured, of whom, the world was not worthy, which I mentioned before as recorded, Heb. xi. Yours are nothing to theirs, nothing to Job's that eminent ſervant of God. Obſerve the difference with thankſgiving and praiſe.

8thly, You have reaſon to bleſs God for the ſtrength and ſupport he hath given you under affliction. You would ſoon ſink and ſuccumb under a ſmall burden if he did not ſupport you by his grace; but when he bears you up, the heavieſt trial ſhall not ſink you. Have you not met with ſome afflictions, you have thought at a diſtance you would never been able to bear up under them? Yet, when they have come, you have found them light and portable, by reaſon of the ſtrength God hath beſtowed on you.

9thly, You have ground of thankſgiving, that the mercies and bleſſings which God hath continued with you, are far greater than theſe he hath taken from you: For though he hath taken this and that temporal bleſſing from you, yet he hath not taken Chriſt from you, nor his holy Spirit from you; he hath not ſeparated you from his love, nor cut you off from all the hopes of heaven. However great your trials be, yet ſtill there is a mixture of mercy in your lot, which ſhould be matter of praiſe.

Laſtly, You have cauſe, O believer, to bleſs God that all the afflictions he brings on you are in love, and for your profit. All his ways are mercy and truth to you. If he ſmile; it is in mercy, and if he ſmite, it is in mercy. God may change his diſpenſation towards his children, but never his diſpoſition: His heart is ſtill towards them, and the cords wherewith he ſcourgeth them, are cords of love. Their profit is the great thing he aims at, in all their chaſtiſements, Heb. xii. 10. He deſigns thereby to reclaim them for their wanderings, cut off proviſions for their luſts, make them pant and long for a better ſtate, and cauſe them mend their pace towards it. Hence David ſaid, *It is good for me that I was afflicted: For before I was afflicted, I went aſtray, but now I have learned to keep thy word.* Pſal cxix. 67. 71. From all which it appears you have manifold ground of praiſe, even in the time of affliction.

DIRECT. IV. *Let the children of God, when viſited with ſickneſs, ſet about actual preparation for death and eternity.*

EVery believer hath his main work done, and is always in a gracious ſtate, by reaſon of his union with Jeſus Chriſt, his reconciliation with God through the merits of his blood, and the univerſal change that is wrought in him by regenerating and ſanctifying grace; upon which account every child of God hath habitual preparation for meeting with death. Yet becauſe frequently, when ſickneſs cometh, there are many things out of order with them that make death frightful and undeſirable, they muſt ſet about actual preparation for death, and ſeek to have their ſouls made ready for the bridegroom's coming. And here I ſhall ſhew wherein this actual readineſs of believers doth conſiſt, which ſhould be their proper work and exerciſe in time of ſickneſs, eſpecially when ſickneſs is lingering, and doth not deſtroy the uſe of reaſon. But beware of thinking that this ſhould be delayed till ſickneſs come: No, no, the time of health is the main working ſeaſon, and all ſhould be then put by hand as far as poſſible. But ſeeing even the beſt generally find much to do at the very laſt, I ſhall give the following advices for your actual preparation.

1ſt, Seeing ſickneſs is a mean appointed of God for his people's good, and particularly for fitting them for a better world; labour earneſtly to reap the benefit of ſickneſs, ſeek God's bleſſing upon it, that thereby you may be helped to diſcover more of the evil of ſin, that you may hate and abhor it the more, and that you may ſee more effectually the vanity and vexation of the world, and get your heart looſed from all the things of time, and brought to a willingneſs to be diſſolved that you may be with Chriſt.

2dly, Seeing a time of death and ſickneſs is the time of your greateſt need, beg earneſtly of God for your Redeemer's ſake, ſuch ſpecial aſſiſtances, influences and operations of his holy Spirit as he knows needful for you in your preſent low and weak condition in order to carry on and compleat your actual readineſs for meeting with himſelf at death, and entering into the inviſible world and being fixed unalterably in your everlaſting ſtate.

3dly, Renew the exerciſe of repentance, and of faith in the blood of Chriſt, for removing all grounds of quarrel and controverſy betwixt God and your ſoul. And in order thereto, review your bypaſt life, and look into your heart alſo, and ſearch out every predominant ſin and idol of jealouſy; for if there be any iniquity regarded in your heart, and unrepented of by you, it may occaſion no little anguiſh and bitterneſs of ſpirit in a dying hour. Well, when thou haſt diſcovered ſin, humbly confeſs and bewail it before the Lord, and aſk forgiveneſs for it thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, which cleanſeth from all ſin. Yea, make confeſſion of all thy ſins, and particularly reflect upon the fountain and ſpring of them, *viz.* thy original ſin. Know the plague of thy own heart and, mourn over it, mourn for the loſs and miſpending of ſuch precious time. Mourn for the unprofitableneſs of thy life. Now, when the ax is laid to the root of the tree by ſickneſs, it is high time to mourn for your unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace and waterings of the holy Spirit. Mourn for your ſinning againſt ſuch light and love as have been many days diſplayed to you in the glorious goſpel. And, in a ſpecial manner, mourn for your ſins of omiſſion, which commonly are but little minded by us. Thus mourn for all thy ſins till thou doſt water thy couch with thy tears. It is moſt ſuitable that death ſhould find every man, even every child of God, in the exerciſe of mourning and repentance, for they that thus ſow in tears, ſhall eternally reap in joy. But ſee that your tears run much in the goſpel-channel, and flow from the believing views of a crucified Chriſt, whom you have pierced by your ſins. And, in the midſt of your mourning, be ſtill aiming to take faith's grips of the clefts of this rock, for ſheltering thy ſoul from the guilt of bypaſt ſins; ſay, "Lord Jeſus, I have no refuge but thy wounds, no fountain but thy blood, no covert but thy righteouſneſs. And ſeeing thou freely makeſt offer of thy merits for my protection, and inviteſt even the chief of ſinners to come unto thee, ſaying, Look unto me, be ye ſaved; Lord, I embrace the offer, and flee to the to cover

“ me.” O believer do this, not once or twice, but do it a hundred times over; do it as long as thou haſt breath to draw in the world. Be ſtill breathing to the very laſt after a crucified Jeſus for relief againſt the guilt of ſin, which thou art always contracting, and wilt be, till the earthly houſe of this tabernacle be diſſolved.

4thly, In order to your actual readineſs to go forth to meet the bridegroom, when coming to you by death, you muſt do as the wiſe virgins, Mat. xxv. 7. *Ariſe and trim your lamps.* As it is not enough to have a fair lamp of profeſſion, ſo it is not ſufficient to have only the oil of grace in the lamp; nay, or to have it burning in ſome degree. There is more requiſite at this time, that the ſoul may be actually ready; the lamp muſt be trimmed, which imports, *1ſt*, A ſupplying it with more oil; you muſt ſeek to have your grace increaſed, to have degrees, new ſtrength, and new ſupplies of grace given from God, to fit you for the laſt conflict with your ſpiritual enemies, and eſpecially the laſt enemy, death.——*2dly*, It imports a ſtirring up of the oil, raiſing the wick ſome higher: So there muſt be an excitation of grace, which may be in a low declining condition: You muſt endeavour to ſtir it and raiſe it up to a more lively exerciſe, and more elevated acts. Stir up the gift that is in thee; make the oil burn clear and ſhine bright. Bring faith, love, repentance and holy deſires to a lively exerciſe.——*3dly*, This trimming imports the cleanſing of the lamp, by taking away the dead aſhes that hinder the light, or prevent its burning ſo clearly as otherwiſe it would. So you muſt labour to take away the dead aſhes of corruption, that hinder the ſhining of grace; remove all unbelief, earthlineſs, deadneſs, ſelf and formality, and whatever doth ſuppreſs the exerciſe of faith, love and heavenly mindedneſs: Let all theſe dead aſhes be ſnuffed away by repentance and mortification. As you ought to ſtrive earneſtly againſt all theſe heart evils in time of health, ſo now labour to give them a dead ſtroke when death's harbinger gives you a ſummons.

5thly, Be diligent in gathering and ſumming up all your evidences for heaven and eternal life, that ſo you may not venture into the dark valley at an uncertainty. The comfort of dying will much depend on the clearneſs of your evidences; it is therefore your wiſdom to examine them carefully, and ſee if you can ſay, “ I know in whom I have believed; I have conſented with my ſoul to the method of ſalvation laid down in the covenant of grace, I am deſirous that the glory of it ſhould be eternally aſcribed to the free grace of God, and the creature be wholly abaſed in his ſight. I have choſen God for my portion, and Chriſt for my only Saviour; and the happineſs which I aim at is, to enjoy God in Chriſt for ever. And in order thereto, I depend on the holy Spirit to apply the redemption which Jeſus Chriſt hath purchaſed to me, and to ſanctiſy me perfectly. There is no ſin but what I hate and deſire to part with. I'd rather have more holineſs than to have health, wealth, and all the pleaſures in the world. I earneſtly deſire the flouriſhing of Chriſt's kingdom, and prefer Jeruſalem to my chiefeſt joy.” If theſe your evidences be clear, you may chearfully take death by the cold hand, and welcome its grim meſſengers, and long to be gone that you may be with Chriſt. You may ſay as Pſal. xxiii. 4. *When I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.* You may go off the ſtage with the Pſalmiſt's words in your mouth, Pſal. xxxi. 5. *Into thine hand I commit my ſpirit, for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*

6thly, Labour earneſtly to overcome the love of life and fears of death, ſo as to be content to part with all things here at God's call. O believer, what is there in this earth to tempt thee to hang back, when God calls thee to depart? While you are here, you may lay your account with many loſſes, croſſes, diſappointments, griefs, and calamities, of all ſorts. Friends will fail you, enemies will hate you, luſts will moleſt you, Satan will tempt you, the world will deceive you. Death is the way that the deareſt of God's ſaints, and all the cloud of witneſſes have gone before you; yea, the Lord Jeſus your head hath trod this path, and hath taken the ſting out of death, and hath paved a way thro' its dark valley, that his people may ſafely follow him. Hath the captain of your ſalvation gone before you, and will any of his ſoldiers ſhrink to follow him? Are you content to remain always at the ſame diſtance from him, and to enjoy no more of his preſence than now you have? Are you ſatisfied to live for ever with no more knowledge, holineſs or heavenly-mindedneſs than at preſent you have? Do you not groan under your remaining ignorance, deadneſs, wanderings, pride, paſſion, unbeilf, ſelfiſhneſs, wordlineſs, and other ſins and luſts that here beſet you? And are you not deſirous to go to the place where you will be eternally free of them all, and where you ſhall never complain of a dull, dead or ſenſleſs frame of heart, or of any heart wearineſs, or wandering in duty any more; for the heart ſhall then be as a fixed pillar in the temple of God, and ſhall go no more out; the eternal adoration and praiſes of God ſhall be the ſoul's delight and element for ever. By ſuch conſiderations ſtrive to conquer the fears of death and deſires of life, which are often great clogs to the people of God in their preparations for flitting.

7thly, Be oft meditating upon the heavenly glory which ſhortly all believers will ſee and enjoy. Be much in the contemplation of the glorious company above, behold Chriſt upon his glorious throne at the right-hand of God, and Abraham, David, Peter, Paul, and all the reſt of the faithful ones, with their crowns of righteouſneſs, triumphing about their Redeemer. Think, O believer, how happy will that day be, when thou ſhalt meet with thy father and thy brethren, and when thou ſhalt ſee thy elder brother on the throne ready to paſs ſentence in thy favours. What melody will that ſentence ſound in thine ears, *Come ye bleſſed of my father*, &c. What frame wilt thou be in, when he ſets the crown of glory on thy head? O eternally free love! Wilt thou cry, “ O Saviour thou didſt wear a crown of thorns, that I might wear a crown of glory: thou didſt groan on the croſs, that I might now ſing. Wonderful free love, that chuſed me, when thouſands were paſt by; that ſaved me from ruin, when my companions in ſin muſt burn in hell for ever!” Think, how raviſhing it will be to meet with your godly acquaintances in heaven, with whom you prayed, and praiſed, and converſed here! Will you not then cry out, “ O my brethren, what a change is here! This glorious place is not like the poor dwellings we had on earth; this body, this ſoul, this ſtate, this place,

“ our clothes, our company, our language, our thoughts “ are far unlike thoſe we had then! The bad hearts, “ the body of death, the corruptions and temptations “ we then complained of, are all now gone. We have “ no more fears of death or hell, no more uſe for re- “ pentance or prayer, faith or hope, theſe are now “ ſwallowed up in immediate viſion, eternal love, joy “ and praiſe.” And for thy help, O believer, in meditating on theſe things, read ſome parts of the book of Revelation, or cauſe them to be read to you; and ſuppoſe with yourſelf, you had been a companion with John in the iſle of Patmos, and had got ſuch a view of the glorious majeſty, the bright thrones, the heavenly hoſts, and ſhining ſplendor which he ſaw; the ſaints in their white robes, with crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, and heard them ſinging the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb, and trumpeting forth their eternal Hallelujahs; what a heavenly rapture wouldſt thou have been in! Well then, O believer, thou ſhalt ſhortly have clearer and ſweeter ſights than all theſe, which John, or any of the ſaints, ever ſaw here upon earth. Surely that heavenly glory is a ſubject worthy of thy thoughts, and moſt ſuitable for thee to meditate on in time of ſickneſs, and when in the view of death.

8thly, It would be alſo very ſuitable at this time in order to your actual readineſs for death, to be frequently looking out and longing for Chriſt's coming: as Abraham ſtood in his tent door ready to go forth to meet the angels that were ſent unto him, ſo ſhould the believer keep himſelf in a waiting poſture at this time. He ſhould be like the loving wife, that longs and looks for the coming of her abſent huſband, according to his letters to her; by this time (thinks ſhe) he will be at ſuch a place, and againſt ſuch a time he'll be at another place, and ſo in a few days I'll ſee him. It is the character of believers, they are ſuch as love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. They deſire his coming, Cant. viii. 14. *Make haſte, my beloved; even ſo come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* Believers ſhould look upon themſelves as pilgrims here, wandring in a wilderneſs abſent from home, and at a diſtance from their father's houſe; and in time of affliction it is very proper for them to be crying as David doth, Pſal. lv. 6. *O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at reſt: I would haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt.* “ O When ſhall the “ time of my pilgrimage, and the days of my baniſhment “ be finiſhed, that I may get home to my country and “ friends above? Oh! my Lord is gone, my Saviour “ hath left the earth, and entered into his glory? My “ friends and brethren are gone to their bleſſed reſt, “ where they ſee God's face, and ſing his praiſe for e- “ ver: and how can I be willing to ſtay behind, when “ they are gone? Muſt I be ſinning here, when they “ are ſerving God above? Muſt I be groaning and “ ſighing, when they are triumphing and dividing the “ ſpoil? Surely I will look after them, and cry, O Lord, “ how long? When ſhall I be with my Saviour and my “ God?”

DIRECT. V. ***Let believers in time of ſickneſs endeavour all they can to glorify God, and edify thoſe that are about them, by their ſpeech and behaviour.***

If ever a child of God be active to promote the honour and glory of God, it ſhould be in time of ſickneſs, and when death may be approaching; and there is good reaſon for it, for, 1ſt, This may be the laſt opportunity that ever thou ſhalt have to do any thing for God, and therefore thou ſhouldſt ſtudy to improve it to the utmoſt. Heaven, to which thou art going, is the place where thou ſhalt receive thy reward; but thou canſt have no acceſs there to advance God's glory, by commending God and Chriſt and religion to ſinners, or weak believers. Upon this account many of God's children have been content to ſuſpend their heavenly happineſs for a while, and to ſtay upon the earth for ſome longer time. I have read of a certain martyr, when going to ſuffer, who expreſſed ſome ſorrow that he was going thither, where he ſhould do his God no more ſervice, to wit, in the ſenſe above explained. And of another, that ſaith, If it were poſſible there could be a place for any grief in heaven, it would ariſe from the Chriſtian's conſidering, that he did ſo little for God while he was upon earth. Now, is the working ſeaſon, O believer, be buſy while it laſts, according to the example of thy bleſſed Saviour, John ix. 4. *I muſt work the works of him, that ſent me, while it is day; for the night cometh wherein no man can work.* This conſideration ſhould make thee beſtir thyſelf with the greateſt activity, like Samſon before his death, who, when he could have no more opportunity to ſerve God and his church, he cried to God and ſaid, Judges xvi. 28. *O Lord God, remember me I pray thee and ſtrengthen me this once.* And then he bowed himſelf with all his might, to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple, being willing to ſacrifice his life to the ruin thereof.

2dly, The holy ſpeech and carriage of dying believers may, thro' the bleſſing of God, make deep impreſſion upon the hearts of unregenerate men that are witneſſes, to them. Theſe who derided the people of God for the ſtrictneſs of their lives, and deſpiſed their counſels and reproofs, as proceeding from humour or preciſeneſs; yet have begun to notice their words and actions, when they have ſeen them on ſick-beds, and on the borders of eternity, and to have other thoughts of religion and holineſs than formerly they had. Now they think the man is in good earneſt, and ſpeaketh the thoughts of his heart; and, if ever he can be believed, it muſt be now. It is moſt convincing to carnal perſons to ſee believers bearing up with patience in their ſickneſs; to hear them ſpeaking good of God, commending his ways, and rejoicing in God as their portion, in midſt of their ſharpeſt pains; to ſee them behaving as thoſe that are going to dwell with Chriſt, ſmiling and praiſing God, when friends are ſighing and weeping about them. This inclines them to think, ſurely there muſt be a reality in religion, there is a viſible difference betwixt the death of the righteous and of the wicked. Hence a wicked Balaam wiſhed to die the death of the righteous, and to have his laſt end like his. It left a conviction upon that young man's conſcience, who ſaid to his looſe companion, after they had viſited godly Ambroſe on his death-bed, and ſaw how chearful he was, and triumphing over approaching death, “ O that I “ might live with thee, and die with Ambroſe!” Nay, ſuch ſights might draw them not only to deſire to die the death of the righteous, but alſo to reſolve to live their lives. If carnal men ſaw believers going off the ſtage with ſuch confidence and joy, as becomes theſe that are entering into eternal reſt with Chriſt, and theſe that are going out of an howling wilderneſs to a glorious Canaan; it might be a powerful invitation to them to go and ſeek after the ſame felicity.

3dly, This likewiſe would be very edifying and confirming to all that fear God. How much would it contribute to eſtabliſh them in the practice of holineſs, and to quicken them in their diligence in ſerving and glorifying of God in the days of their health, to hear a dying believer ſay, " Of all the time which I have lived, " I have no comfort now in reflecting upon one hour, " but what I ſpent in the ſervice of God. Were I to " begin my life, I would redeem time more carefully " than ever. One hour in communion with God is far " ſweeter than many years ſpent in worldly pleaſures. " Come here, then, all ye that fear God, and I will " tell you what he hath done for my ſoul, O taſte and " ſee that God is good."

4thly, Conſider the examples of God's children in former ages, how uſeful and edifying their words have been, at ſuch a time, to all round about them. But this head I intend to inſiſt fully upon afterwards.

Queſt. But, how ſhall I behave ſo as I may glorify God and edify others, when I am ſick or dying; I would have ſome particular directions for it.

Anſw. 1. You may do this by your patience under pain, and ſubmiſſion to God's will with reſpect to the event, whether life or death. It is ſtumbling to others to ſee believers fretful in trouble, and unwilling to leave the world when God calls them. But it is moſt convincing and confirming to ſee them frankly reſigning themſelves to God's diſpoſal, ſaying, let God himſelf chuſe for me; he is wiſe, and knoweth beſt what is needful and moſt proper for me; I have no will, but God's will. For any man to deſire to live when God calls him to die, or to deſire to die when God calls him to live, is equally a ſign of cowardice: For he that deſires to live, is afraid to look death in the face; and he that deſires to die, would flee from ſome calamity, and take ſhelter in death. But he is the moſt valiant man that can die willingly when God would have him die, and live as willingly when God would have him live, this is true Chriſtian valour.

2dly, By pious exhortations and warnings to theſe that are about you. It may be the laſt occaſion you may have of glorifying God this way: O do not loſe the ſeaſon which may be uſefully improven for the good of ſouls. For thus a believer may bring more honour to God, and more advantage to precious ſouls by his ſickneſs and death than ever he did by all his health and life in the world; for their ſpeeches have more weight with people at ſuch a time, than at any other. Hence the patriarchs, knowing the prevalency of ſuch words, do urge Joſeph with Jacob's dying charge, Gen. l. 16. 17. *And they ſent a meſſenger unto Joſeph, ſaying, thy father did command before he died, ſaying, ſo ſhall ye ſay unto Joſeph, forgive, I pray thee now, the treſpaſs of thy brethren*, &c. And, as we ought to be ready to give good counſels to all when we ly on ſick beds, ſo, eſpecially we ſhould be concerned for children and near relations: They are more affected than others with our ſickneſs, and ſo will they be with our ſayings; our admonitions may do them good when we are rotting in the duſt.

Queſt. What ought to be the ſubject of our diſcourſes and exhortations to others at ſuch a time?

Anſ. 1ſt. It is very proper to be much in commending the Maſter you have ſerved, and the excellency of his ſervice, to theſe that are about you. Tell them of the equity and goodneſs of theſe laws which you have obeyed, and of the bounty and faithfulneſs of that lord whom you have worſhipped, loved and praiſed; and of the greatneſs and eternity of that reward you are going to poſſeſs. Let the children of God extol their Father, and his care of them and kindneſs to them. Let the ranſomed of the Lord magnify their Redeemer, and his wonderful love and ſufferings for them. Tell others what ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction you have found, in your own experience, in attending God's ordinances and in ſecret duties; what comfort you have found in Chriſt, and the promiſes of his covenant. And thus let your laſt breath be ſpent in exalting and commending Chriſt and his religion to others.

2dly, Be warning others of the vanity of the world, and of all it's wealth and pleaſures: Tell them that they may ſee by your caſe, that theſe things which people are bewitched with in the day of their health can ſignify nothing to a ſick or dying man; they cannot eaſe us in our pains, they can afford no peace to a troubled ſoul, they cannot lengthen our lives one hour, and far leſs can they ſave from the wrath of an angry God. Oh, may you ſay, " What a miſerable caſe had I been " in at this time, if I had no better portion than this " world, and nothing elſe to look to, but it's riches " and pleaſures! Wherefore, ſirs, ſet not your hearts " upon it, but forſake it before you be forſaken by it, " and make choice of that which will be ſupporting to " you in the evil day."

3dly, Be warning them of the evil of ſin, and what miſchief and deceitfulneſs you have found in it. Tell them, that tho' the devil and the fleſh would tempt you to look on ſin as a harmleſs thing, yet the pleaſure will ſoon be gone, and a ſharp ſting will be left behind. Sin will appear no light matter, when the ſoul is going hence into the awful preſence of a holy God. You would give a thouſand worlds then for Chriſt, and the blood of attonement to anſwer for your ſins.

4thly, Tell them of the great difference betwixt the godly and the wicked man's choice. The godly man chuſeth the better part which cannot be taken from him; he lays up his treaſure in heaven, where none can reach it, ſo that it yields rich ſupplies when ſickneſs and death come upon him. But O how fooliſh is the wicked man's choice, that, for a moment's fleſhly pleaſure, doth loſe his immortal ſoul and everlaſting happineſs; warn them to mind the one thing needful in time, and not to pamper their bodies for the worms, but to ſet themſelves preſently to cloſe with the offer of Chriſt, and make ſure an intereſt in his righteouſneſ to cover them in the evil day.

5thly, Be telling them of the evil of ſloth and negligence in the work of their ſalvation; and be exhorting them to mind it, and do it with all their might For however ſome may cenſure and deride God's people now for their ſtrictneſs, diligence and zeal for th matters of religion; yet, when they come to die, the will be ready to wiſh that they had been more diligent i ſalvation-work, that they had loved God, fled to Chriſ and had ſought and ſerved him with all their hearts an ſouls: And to cry, O for a little more time! O if Go would recover and try us once more with health, ho diligent would we be ! And tell them, that thoſe who have been moſt ſerious, and painful in ſalvation-work, yet, when they come to die, do much lament their ſloth and negligence : Yea, theſe that have been moſt reproached by the world for their diligence and fervency, do often wiſh at that time, O we that had been a thouſand times more diligent and laborious in God's ſervice.

6thly, Labour to perſwade others of the preciouſneſs of time, the wiſdom of improving the time of youth and of health ; and the great folly of delaying repentance, and putting it off to a ſick-bed. Say to them, 'I find now by experience, that a time of ſickneſs is a moſt unfit ſeaſon to do any thing to purpoſe for the ſoul ; my mind is ſo diverted and indiſpoſed for ſpiritual work by ſickneſs and pain that I cannot attain to any ſuitable compoſure for it. And, how miſerable were I, if I had all my work to begin at this time ! O take a warning, and improve precious time, and eſpecially the day of the goſpel, the time of the Spirit's ſtrivings, and the time of youth which is the moſt uſeful ſeaſon of the converſion of ſouls, and of bringing ſinners into acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt.'

DIRECT. VI. *Let God's Children, when ſick or dying be expreſſing a great concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Chriſt, and of true religion in the riſing generation.*

ZEAL and public-ſpiritedneſs for Chriſt's intereſt is very becoming his people in all the periods of their life, but more eſpecially at this time. When Chriſt is ready to take you into his kingdom in heaven. O be not unmindful of his kingdom on earth. It would be acceptable to God, and pleaſant in the ſight of men, to ſee you expreſſing a warm concern for the riſing age, and for promoting the welfare of the ſouls of your children, and others that ſurvive you : And ſeeing you can be no longer uſeful to theſe you leave behind, by your counſels, examples or prayers, as formerly ; do your utmoſt for them now. And this concern the children of God in time of ſickneſs may evidence ſeveral ways.

1ſt, By earneſt prayers to God, both for the proſperity of the church, and the flouriſhing of religion in general ; and alſo for your children and relations in particular, that they may be a holy ſeed, and a generation to ſerve God, and ſhew forth his praiſe in the world, when you are going off the ſtage.

2dly, By intruſting the care of your childrens education to ſuch tutors and guardians as will be much concerned for their ſouls, and will ſet before them godly examples and inſtructions in their young and tender years.

3dly, By filling your latter-wills and teſtaments with many pious advices and ſolemn charges to your children and relations, with reſpect to their ſerving of God, and worſhipping him in their families and in ſecret ; ſo as they can never look into your teſtaments, and the legacies left to them, but they will hear ſomething that may be affecting, upſtirring, and edifying to their ſouls.

4thly, By honouring the Lord with your ſubſtance and leaving ſomething of what God hath bleſt you with, to pious uſes ; particularly for the religious education of the children of the poor, for buying bibles to them, and other good books : And for the propagating of Chriſtian knowledge in ignorant places, ſuch as the highlands and iſlands, by erecting and maintaining of ſchools therein : Which glorious work is happily begun and pretty far advanced by that honourable ſociety at Edinburgh, whoſe treaſurer is ready to receive donations from all ſuch as the Lord pleaſeth to move to make a free-will offering for promoting that pious deſign. Many pious perſons have contributed already thereto ; and it were deſirable that others, whom God hath enabled for it, ſhould mind it before they die : For by fatal experience we may obſerve, that the moſt godly parents do not know how their children will employ the eſtate they leave them, whether as fuel for their luſts, or as oil to feed the lamps in God's ſanctuary. It is proper for themſelves then, before they go off the ſtage, to diſpoſe of ſome part of their ſubſtance, for the glory and ſervice of that God who gave it all unto them.

5thly, It might contribute to promote piety, and to make the deeper impreſſions upon the minds of your children and friends, if under the warnings of death you ſhould imitate the example of the prophet Elijah, who in his life time made a writing which he procured to be delivered to king Jehoram after his death, 2. Chron. xxi. 12. So in like manner, you might write letters, and leave them in the hands of your friends, and executors, full of advices, charges, admonitions, conſolations or threatnings, to be delivered to your children or friends, upon occaſion either of their good or bad converſation after your death : which probably would be more regarded by them, than the counſels you gave them in the time of their life ; for in ſome reſpect they would be received and read by them as if they were letters from heaven.

DIRECT. VII. *Let the children of God labour to fortify themſelves what they can againſt all Satan's temptations and aſſaults, which they may expect to meet with in time of ſickneſs and affliction.*

A Time of affliction is commonly a time of temptation : for the old ſerpent knows the fitteſt ſeaſons for aſſaulting the children of God ; and he will not be wanting to improve this opportunity of advantage for ſetting upon the poor ſoul. When Pharaoh heard that the people were intangled in the wilderneſs, he purſued them ; ſo, when Satan ſees a ſoul intangled with diſtreſs and troubles, he thinks it high time to make an attack. He ſeeks to winnow and ſift away the believer's grace, and therefore he comes when the corn is a threſhing by the rod. When Job was ſmitten in his eſtate, health, and other comforts, then this coward falls upon him, and tempts him to impatience, murmuring, and wrong thoughts of God.

At this time, O believer, you have ſpecial need to be on your guard, and look out. Reckon always, when ſickneſs or trouble cometh, the prince of this world cometh alſo. Stand then to your defence, and put on your armour, eſpecially the ſhield of faith, that you may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil. You have need at this time to put in practice our Lord's direction, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.* Pray for wiſdom and ſkill to counteract him, and that you may not be ignorant of his devices ; and pray particularly for grace to make you proof againſt all his falſe repreſentations of God and his providence to you; for he that durſt repreſent Job falſely to an all-ſeeing and all-knowing God, will with much boldneſs repreſent God falſely to you, who ſee and know ſo little. He will be ready to tempt you to think that God is angry with you, and dealing with you as an enemy; thus was Job tempted, Job xxxiii. 10. 11. *Behold he findeth occaſions againſt me, he counteth me for his enemy: He putteth my feet in the ſtocks, he marketh all my paths.* But obſerve what Elihu anſwers, *In this thou art not juſt: God is greater than man. Why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him? For he giveth not account of any of his matters.* But ſeeing I ſpoke before of the wrong thoughts of God, which we are apt to harbour in time of affliction Chap. II. Direct. III. I ſhall proceed to ſpeak of ſome other temptations wherewith Satan doth aſſault God's people when in diſtreſs; and furniſh anſwers thereto.

1. Saith the tempter, "Thou art nothing but a hypocrite; all thy religious performances have been done in hypocriſy, to be ſeen of men: Thou never haſt repented or believed ſincerely in the ſight of God."

Anſ. I acknowledge there hath been much hypocriſy in me, but I hope it is not allowed and reigning hypocriſy, I always wreſtled againſt it, wherefore I am not an hypocrite. I regarded the eſteem of men too much, but I hope I valued the eſteem of God much more. My faith and repentance are weak, but I hope they are ſincere. And, whatever defects and ſhort-comings have formerly cleaved to theſe graces in me, I do now unfeignedly repent of all my ſins, I look to him that I have pierced and mourn. I am heartily willing to be juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone, and to be cleanſed and ſanctified by his Spirit; and here I give up myſelf to Chriſt as my only Saviour. And this I hope is through grace, true repenting and believing, which God will accept, through Chriſt's ſake, whatever my former defects have been.

Tempt. 2. But ſaith the tempter, "Thy repentance cannot be true; for thy heart is not broken, and thine eyes do not ſhed tears for ſin."

Anſ. It is my very great burden, and conſtant complaint to God, that I cannot attain to a greater meaſure of ſorrow and contritition for ſin; but yet it is my comfort that repentance is not to be confined to ſuch degrees and ſymptoms of ſorrow as ſome do win at. I hope, I can ſay through grace, that my heart is ſet againſt all ſin great and ſmall, and I would give all I have in the world to be wholly delivered from ſin.

Tempt. 3. Saith the tempter, "But thy day of grace is paſt, it is too late for thee to think of repenting or believing; God will not accept of thee now."

Anſ. But I hope it is not ſo with me, ſeeing God gives me a heart that pants after God and Chriſt in the way of commanded duty. The offers of ſalvation thro' Chriſt are made to all who believe and repent; and late penitents are not excluded from the benefits of theſe gracious offers more than others.

Tempt. 4. But ſaith the tempter, "Thou art none of God's elect, and, if thou be not choſen to ſalvation, thou canſt not be ſaved."

Anſ. Secret things belong unto God, and it were preſumption in me to pry into his ſecret decrees; but one thing I am ſure of, that every ſoul that is choſen to faith and repentance, is alſo choſen to ſalvation; but I truſt God hath choſen me to the former, and therefore to the latter.

Tempt. 5. But ſaith the tempter, "You over-value your graces and duties, and ſo they cannot be true and real."

Anſ. But I count them all but loſs and dung in compariſon of Chriſt. I deſire always to be deeply humbled under a ſenſe of my ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs, and to abhor every motion that would carry me away from Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and would tempt me to rely on my graces or duties, or put them in the leaſt in Chriſt's room.

Tempt. 6. "The iſſue of thy ſickneſs may be death, and thou art not ready, for thou haſt no aſſurance of thy ſalvation."

Anſ. A perfect certainty is not to be expected here: There will be ſtill ſome queſtionings, ſome doubts and fears; but theſe I reſolve not to indulge now, but to break through all, that I may embrace Chriſt, and be found in him. The deſires of my ſoul are to Chriſt and the remembrance of his name; and ſuch, I believe, he will not ſuffer to periſh. *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.*

Tempt. 7. "But thou art a ſtranger to the inviſible world; how wilt thou adventure into that world of ſpirits, with which thou haſt ſo little acquaintance?"

Anſ. But Chriſt who is my head and beſt friend is no ſtranger to it; he is the Lord of that land, and provides manſions for all his people there; and he will receive every one of them home, and lodge them ſafely. *The ſpirits of juſt men made perfect,* were once what my ſpirit now is; they were ſtrangers to that world before they came to it, as well as I: But their head being in it, encouraged them to it: And now they rejoice in it as the kindly dwelling-place of all the ſaints.

Tempt. 8. 'But thou art vile, and God is infinitely pure and glorious; how canſt thou think of approaching ſo near him?'

Anſ. Tho' a weak eye be not able to look upon the ſun yet I hope to be fitted and ſtrengthened for that glorious ſight. Beſides, God doth now appear to us in his Son Chriſt, where his infinite glory is pleaſantly veiled ſo as ſaints may behold him. Theſe glorified ſouls above were once vile as well as others; but their Saviour did cleanſe them, and preſent them to the Father without ſpot or wrinkle. And, whatever be my unworthineſs, I am relieved by conſidering my union with Chriſt, and looking on the glory and dignity of my head. Surely God will not deſpiſe the members of his dear Son nor trample on any that are his fleſh and bones.

Tempt. 9. 'But, what will become of thy wife and children when thou art taken from them?'

Anſ. If I truſt God ſo willingly with my ſoul and my eternal concerns, why may I not truſt him with my relations alſo? Have I not ſeen how wonderfully he hath provided for others? Doth not every thing in the world depend on his will and pleaſure? How eaſy is it then for God to ſupply his own?

Tempt. 10. 'But ſtill death is terrible to nature even the king of terrors.'

Anſ. But my Redeemer hath taſted death for me, and taken out its fearful ſting; he hath conquered death, and keeps the keys of death and hell. Wherefore, thro' him will I ſing, *O death, where is thy ſting! O grave, where is thy victory?*

Temp. 11. 'But it is terrible to think of appearing 'before God's tribunal to be tried and judged.'

Anſ. But my friend and interceſſor will be the judge there. Will Chriſt condemn the members of his own body, and theſe he hath ſo often comforted?

But, beſides all theſe, a holy God may ſometimes ſuffer the tempter to aſſault his own people in time of their affliction with his fiery darts and his fierceſt battering engines, ſuch as temptations to atheiſm, blaſphemy, deſpair, &c. whereby their ſouls may be terribly ſhaken and ſore amazed.

Your relief in this caſe is to look to your head, and remember how he was himſelf buffeted by this enemy, and aſſaulted with the moſt odious temptations, that he might thereby get an experimental touch and feeling of your condition, in order to his ſympathizing with you, and relieving you from this enemy, whom he hath already conquered in your name. But for theſe things he will be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael. You muſt act faith on your exalted head.

CHAP. IV.

Containing ſome ſpecial directions to unregenerate perſons, when afflicted by ſickneſs or otherwiſe,

Direct. I. *Take a ſerious view of the miſerable condition of a Chriſtleſs perſon under ſickneſs or heavy affliction.*

1*ſt*, CONSIDER the vaſt difference betwixt your caſe, and that of a true believer; he hath ground of conſolation in the greateſt diſtreſs, but you have none. However ſharp the rod of correction be to him, yet it is in the hand of a father; but you have to do with an angry and ſin-revenging God; and, who may ſtand in his ſight if once he be angry; for he commands both the firſt and the ſecond death, and he can ſend you both into the grave and hell at once, Rev. vi. 8. *Hell followed the pale horſe.* Death is the king of terrors, but hell is a thouſand times more terrible. When God afflicts his children, he ſtands to them in the relation of a loving Father; but he deals with you as an incenſed judge. Tho' he ſees it neceſſary for their good to chaſtiſe them, yet he doth it with a relenting heart; yea, every ſtroke goeth as it were to his heart, Iſa. lxiii. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted.* But when he ariſeth to puniſh his enemies, he ſtrikes them with hatred and deteſtation, as a man would do a toad or venomous creature. Tho' they cry he hath no pity, Prov. i. 26. *I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.*

2*dly*, If your ſickneſs threaten you with death, what a dark and melancholly proſpect muſt you have of your approaching change? Why, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, it is what you are wholly unprepared for. The old houſe falls down about your ears, before you have another lodging provided. When death caſts you to the door, you have not where to lay your head unleſs it be on a bed of fire and brimſtone. O how ſurpriſing and fearful will the change be, that death will make on you! A change from earth to hell, from light to darkneſs, from comforts to terrors, from hope to deſpair, from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath, a change from the ſociety of the ſaints on earth, to the company of the damned in hell. Whatever fond hopes of ſalvation you have now, your hope ſhall lead you no further than to the king of terrors, and then *your hope ſhall be cut off, and your truſt, like a ſpider's web.* Job viii. 14. Tho' it coſt you much pains to weave and ſupport this web now, it will prove a weak and ſlender defence to your ſoul, when death comes with the beſom of deſtruction, and ſweeps both you and it away to hell. You will then be taken from all the means of grace you have abuſed, and be for ever deprived of an opportunity of buying oil; your lamp ſhall go out at death, and never be lighted any more.

3*dly*, In this extremity, you have no airth to look to for comfort. O Chriſtleſs ſinner, what will you do in the day of viſitation? To whom will you flee for help? Your houſes, your lands, your money, your honours, your companions, your relations, will all be miſerable comforters to you. Every thing will look black and diſmal round about you. If you look without you for help, you may ſee your friends weeping and lamenting your caſe; but this will do nothing but increaſe your vexation and miſery. If you look within you for relief, conſcience, that before you would not ſuffer to ſpeak, will meet you with bitter ſtings and upbraidings. It will bring to your view the ſins you had forgot, the time you have miſpent, the health you have mſimproven the offers of grace you have refuſed, the great ſalvation you have neglected. What folly was it for thee to provoke God and ſlight Chriſt, for a little worldly profit, or a little brutiſh pleaſure? Can theſe relieve thee when the arrows of the Almighty ſtick within thee, and the terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt thy ſoul? In the mean time the devil, that tempted you to your ſoul-ruining courſe will ſtep in and repreſent your ſins in their blackeſt colours and aggravations to render you altogether hopeleſs and deſperate. O ſinner, thou that refuſeſt reſt from Chriſt in the day of health and grace, ſhalt find no eaſe from the creature in the day of ſickneſs and death. Your ſickneſs will allow no reſt to your body, and your ſins will permit no eaſe to your ſoul. You may expect the fulfilling of that threatning, Deut. xxviii. 65. *The Lord ſhall give thee a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind. And thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee, and thou ſhalt have fear day and night. In the morning thou ſhalt ſay, would to God it were even? And at even, thou ſhalt ſay would to God it were morning,* becauſe of the pain of thy body, and anguiſh of thy ſpirit.

Direct. II. *Let unregenerate Perſons carefully improve their ſickneſs and affliction as means to further their converſion; and pray that God may bleſs it for that end.*

MANY have begun their acquaintance with God, and with themſelves in the time of affliction; the furnace is frequently the ſpirit's work-houſe where he forms his veſſels of praiſe. There are many who, while health and ſtrength continue, mind nothing but vain pleaſures; one day they go to their games and ſports, another day to their cups and laſcivious company, another day to viſiting their friends; and thus they ſpend the whole time of their health and proſperity in ſin and vanity. All the warnings, counſels and exhortations of parents, friends and miniſters do them no good. They cannot endure to entertain a ſerious thought of God or Chriſt, of death, of heaven, of hell or judgment to come. But, when God doth caſt them into ſickneſs or ſome great affliction, they, thro' the bleſſing of God, begin to come to themſelves, like the prodigal, and think of returning again to their father. Several inſtances to this purpoſe might be given. The earl of Rocheſter is a late one, whoſe life was notoriouſly lewd, profane and atheiſtical, and who had wickedly employed his wit and parts to the ridicule of religion; yet, when he was afflicted with pain and ſickneſs, and brought to the gates of death, he began to entertain quite other apprehenſions than he had done before; he profeſſed he had ſerious and reverent thoughts of religion and holineſs, which before he laugh'd at; he moſt earneſtly and affectionately warned others to abandon their evil courſes, and to live religiouſly and ſoberly, and to look upon religion as the greateſt reality in the world; he retracted all his impious and profane language, wherewith he uſed to reflect on the ways of godlineſs, and willingly atteſted all this under his hand.

Pray then for the divine bleſſing on your ſickneſs, that it may contribute to the converſion of your ſoul which it doth ſeveral ways; 1ſt, By opening mens eyes to get a true ſight of things, to behold religion in its true ſhape, and ſin in its proper colours; hence the rod is ſaid to give wiſdom, Prov. xxix. 15. They who have mocked at religion, and made light of ſin all their days, have been taught by bodily ſickneſs to change their tune. Then they begin to have an eſteem for the Bible, and to value and ſend for a pious miniſter, and to deſire the prayers of the people of God; now they preceive ſin to be bitter as gall and wormwood, they lothe and abhor that which they liked before; now the word of God makes a deep impreſſion on them, and particularly ſuch a word as that, Jer. ii. 19. *Know therefore and ſee that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God.*

2dly, Sickneſs helps to ſet the word preached home upon the heart. When God ſpeaks to us in the day of health and proſperity, we oft give him a deaf ear, Jer. xxii. 21. But when diſtreſs comes, it brings the word of God and of his miniſters to our remembrance, as it brought Joſeph's to the remembrance of his brethren, Gen. xlii. 1.

3dly, Sickneſs contributes to looſe a man's heart, from the world, and to cool his love thereto; whereby a great hindrance of converſion is removed out of the way, and the man is made to ſay, "How vain and "helpleſs are the world's comforts to me now! Theſe "things I delighted in formerly are taſteleſs to me at "this time. There is no portion can ſuit my ſoul's "need. but God himſelf."

4thly, It ſpurs a man on to prayer that formerly neglected it. When the prodigal is brought to diſtreſs, he ſays, *I will ariſe and go to my Father*. He forgot his father before, but now he will addreſs him, Hoſ. v. 15. *In their affliction they will ſeek me early*. Thus the Lord frequently begins and promotes the converſion of ſouls to himſelf. And O ſinner, if this be the fruit of thy ſickneſs, it will not be unto death, but the glory of God.

Direct. III. *Be careful to obey God's voice in the rod, and beware of ſlighting it.*

Every ſickneſs hath a meſſage from God, and his voice you ought to hearken to with reverence and attention, Mic. vi. 9. What ſaith he to you at this time? O ſinner, he ſaith, "Retire from the world, "think on death and eternity, abhor theſe luſts and "idols which God is ſmitting you for, flee ſpeedily to "the ſtrong hold; repent and be converted that your "ſins may be bloted out." This is God's voice to you, and conſider how provoking it will be to him, if you ſlight it.

1ſt, You will provoke God to ſlight your voice when you cry to him, and ſtop his ear againſt the voice of your ſupplications, Zech. vii. 13.

2dly, You will provoke God to ceaſe from being a reprover to you, ſo that he will ſpeak to you no more.

3dly, You will provoke him to bring heavier judgments on you, yea, ſo to draw his ſword of juſtice againſt you, that he will ſheathe it up no more, as he threatens, Ezek. xxi. 5.

4thly, God may break off all intercourſe and correſpondence with you, as with thoſe, Ezek. xx. 31. *As I live ſaith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you.*

5thly, He may ſeal you up for ever under your ſins, hardneſs and pollution; and ſay to you, as to ſome we read of, Ezek. xxiv. 13. Hoſ. iv. 7. Rev. xxii. 11. *Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee. Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone. He that is filthy let him be filthy ſtill.* He that is hardened againſt the voice of my rods, let him be hardened ſtill. Well then, O ſinners, while God is in ſpeaking terms with you, hearken to his voice, and obey it; ſay, Lord, *what wilt thou have me to do?*

Direct. IV. *Caſt back your eyes upon the ſins of your bypaſt life, and labour to be deeply humbled for them before the Lord.*

Seeing you are ſummoned to prepare for going to the judgment-ſeat of God, where your ſoul is to receive its final ſentence; labour to prevent the terror of that appearance, by your judging yourſelf before-hand. And this you moſt do, by ſummoning yourſelf before the bar of conſcience, examining narrowly into your ſtate, accuſing and condemning yourſelf for your ſins. And ſee that you be impartial in this work, willing to know the truth, and diſcover the worſt of your caſe. You muſt ſee and be duly ſenſible of your danger, otherwiſe you cannot think to eſcape it. Take a narrow view of your ſins in their nature, number, aggravations, and deſervings. And in order to this, if thou haſt any meaſure of ſtrength for it, let the expoſition of the ten commandments in our Larger Catechiſm be diſtinctly read over unto thee. Make a pauſe upon every queſtion, and ſay within thyſelf, "Have I not o"mitted what is here required by God? And, have I "not committed what is here forbidden by God? How "oft have I repeated theſe ſins? How long have I liv"ed in the practice of them? O! do not ſo many years "ſins need a very ſerious repentance, a very deep hu"miliation? O! doth not ſuch a vile ſinner as I, ſtand "greatly in need of Chriſt to be my cautioner and ranſomer for ſuch a vaſt number of ſins? Will not their weight preſs me eternally down to the loweſt hell, if they remain unpardoned, and be laid upon my back?" Wherefore view them cloſely, and confeſs them particularly before God.

1ſt, In the firſt place, bewail thy original ſin, the fountain of all thy actual tranſgreſſions, as did David, Pſal. li. 5. *Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.*

2dly, Acknowledge and mourn over the ſinful outbreakings of thy life, whereby thou haſt diſhonoured God, and grieved his holy Spirit; and eſpecially ſins againſt light.

3dly, Be humbled for thy ſins of omiſſion, for neglecting of commanded duties, particularly for the neglect of prayer in ſecret, and of family-religion.

4thly, Mourn for the loſs of precious time. Alas for the time of youth miſpent, many Sabbath-days trifled away!

5thly, Lament thy long ſlighting of Chriſt, and ſalvation thro' his righteouſneſs, which ſo preſſingly hath been offered to thee in the goſpel.

6thly, Bewail thy ſtifling the convictions, and quenching the motions of the Spirit, and thereby provoking him to depart from you.

7thly, Mourn for thy unthankfulneſs to God for mercies and deliverances, which might have allured you to repentance and newneſs of life.

8thly, Confeſs thy ſtubborneſs under former afflictions, which hath provoked God to ſend new trials upon you.

9thly, Be humbled for thy earthly-mindedneſs, in that thou haſt all thy days been careful and cumbred about many things, and haſt neglected the one thing neceſſary.

10thly, Mourn for the lateneſs of thy repentance and thy prodigious folly in delaying ſo long to bethink thyſelf, and turn to the Lord. "Oh how unwiſely have I acted, to miſpend the time of health, and delay ſo great a work till now, that I am laid on a ſick bed! And now, if I die before I am converted, I am loſt for ever. O Lord, I am aſhamed and confounded at my madneſs and folly, and have no excuſe to plead for myſelf, but muſt ſtand afar off with the poor publican, and ſmite upon my breaſt, and cry, God be merciful to me a ſinner."

DIRECT. V. *Flee preſently to Jeſus Chriſt by a true faith, and cloſe with him as offered to you in the goſpel.*

ART thou ſenſible, O ſinner, of thy grievous guilt and ill deſervings before God? Then do not deſpair; for Jeſus Chriſt, who hath offered to divine juſtice an all-ſufficient ſacrifice for ſin, is offering himſelf to thee, ſaying, O diſtreſſed ſinner, *Look unto me and be ſaved. Turn unto me, why will ye die? Come unto me, heavy laden ſoul, and I will give you reſt. He that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Will not ſo gracious words, ſuch moving calls, melt thy heart within thee, and make thee cry to him, "Lord Jeſus, I flee to thee as my refuge, for deliverance from ſin, and protection from the wrath to come: I look to thy wounds, I truſt in thy righteouſneſs. I depend on thy merit, I ly at thy feet, and this I am reſolved to do as long as I have a breath to draw in the world."

DIRECT. VI. *Call for the elders of the church that they may pray over you in your Sickneſs.*

THIS is the apoſtle James his direction to the ſick, James v. 14. He doth not ſay if any be ſick, let him ſend for the phyſicians, but for the elders or miniſters.

It is true, phyſicians are to be called, but not in the firſt place. It was Aſa's fault that in his diſeaſe, he ſought not to the Lord, but to the phyſicians; and, alas, how many follow his example? Miniſters are only called for in the laſt place, and very often when time is paſt, the ſick being at the point of death, and ſcarce capable to ſpeak or hear. But if you deſire to reap benefit by the inſtructions and prayers of miniſters, call for them timeouſly, and open your caſe unto them; ſeek their counſel, and beg for their prayers. It is their office to teach and pray for you, and they have authority to offer ſalvation to you thro' Chriſt, and to miniſter comfort to them that are caſt down; wherefore a bleſſing may be expected on their miniſtrations and performances more than others. Hence God ſaid to Abimelech of Abraham, Gen. xx. 7. *He is a prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee.* And to Job's friends concerning Job, Job xlii. 8. *Go to my ſervant Job, and he ſhall pray for you, for him will I accept; leſt that I deal with you after your folly.*

And, *laſtly*, Remember, that as the apoſtle James injoins the ſick to call for the elders to pray over them, ſo at the ſame time he directs you, Jam. v. 16. to confeſs your ſins one to another, Chriſtian to Chriſtian, one friend to another, the people to their miniſter. Not that this gives any warrant for the papiſts their Auricular confeſſion, which they force upon all men, to their prieſts, as a ſatisfaction for ſin, and whereby they rack their conſciences (when they feel no diſtreſs) to confeſs their moſt ſecret ſins, to enumerate them all under pain of damnation, and which they uſe as a politic to dive into the ſecrets of princes, ſtates, and all private perſons: But as Luther, Calvin, Beza, and many others of orthodox divines do teach, it is very profitable and neceſſary for theſe that are inwardly troubled with a ſenſe of their ſins, to eaſe and diſburden their conſciences, by confeſſing of them to the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, in order to their receiving ſuitable counſels and conſolations from them, ſuch as Chriſt hath left in his word for contrite-hearted penitents.

Thus let every man in ſickneſs uſe all appointed means for preparing his ſoul for a future ſtate. Thy preparation will by no means haſten death, but ſweeten it to you. Death moſt ſurely have a moſt formidable aſpect to an unprepared ſinner; he may ſalute it, as Ahab did Elijah. *Haſt thou found me, O my enemy?* Why? It brings heavy and doleful tidings to him. But a prepared ſoul may ſalute death, welcome, O my friend! Thou bringeſt me tidings of great joy; everlaſting deliverance from ſin, and all the bitter fruits of it. I ſhall never complain of theſe any more.

CHAP. V.

Containing directions to the people of God, when the Lord is pleaſed to recover them from ſickneſs and diſtreſs.

Direct. I. *It is very proper, both under ſickneſs and after it, to examine if the affliction be ſanctified to you, and hath come from the love of God.*

IT would be very comfortable for us to know that the afflictions which God viſits us with, are not the puniſhment of a judge, but the chaſtiſement of a father; that they do not proceed from wrath, but from love; that they are not curſes, but bleſſings to us. Now, the beſt way of knowing this is by the effects which they work and produce in us, thro' the bleſſing of God.

1ſt, Canſt thou ſay, that thy affliction hath humbled thee in the ſight of God, and made thee to confeſs and bewail thy ſins and ſtrayings from God as the procuring cauſe thereof? Hath it been like Moſes's rod, that ſmote the rock and fetched out much water? Did you water your couch with tears, and mourn humbly before God for all thy God-provoking ſins? Then it is a good ſign ſickneſs is ſanctified.

2dly, Doth thy affliction drive thee nearer God, and cauſe thee aim at cloſer communion with God in duty than formerly, ſaying, "However careleſs and overly "I have been in duty in time paſt, it is ſurely good for "me now to draw nigh to God?" Then thy ſickneſs is a bleſſing to thee.

3dly Affliction is ſanctified, when the corruption and deceitfulneſs of the heart is the more diſcovered and laid open to the view of the ſoul; ſo as the man is made to abhor himſelf in duſt and aſhes, and cry out as the leper, *Unclean, unclean.* I never could have thought my heart was ſo wicked as now I ſee it.

4thly, It is a ſanctified ſickneſs, that purgeth the heart and changeth the life, and gives a dead ſtroke to thy ſins and idols, and makes thee to lothe and abhor them more than ever, ſaying with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols.*

5thly, It is a bleſſed rod, when grace is more quickened and ſtirred up thereby, and the man turns more fruitful in holy duties and good works; when it is a budding and bloſſoming rod, like to Aaron's, Num. xvii. It is recorded there of Aaron's rod, that it brought forth buds, bloomed bloſſoms, and yielded almonds. So it is happy with us, when our rods and ſickneſſes do produce in us, not only the buds of profeſſion, or the bloſſoms or ſome beginnings of a reformation; but even cauſe us to yield almonds, fruit ſavoury to God. Is conſcience become more tender with reſpect to ſin? Are we more jealous over our hearts? Are we more fervent in prayer, more lively in praiſe, more mortified to the world, more deſirous of communion with God? Then may we ſay with David, "It is good for us we "have been afflicted;" and with Hezekiah, "Thou "haſt, in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit "of corruption."

Direct. II. *Make conſcience of offering to God the ſacrifice of thankſgiving, upon his recovering thee from ſickneſs or any diſtreſs.*

THE Pſalmiſt gives us this direction from God, Pſal. l. 14. 15. and he ſhews us that it was his own practice in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 17. Pſal. ciii. 1, 2, 3, *&c.* The command is juſt, let us obey it; the example excellent, let us imitate it. Praiſe is comely for the upright. Here I ſhall give ſome motives and advices.

1ſt, God, who is the author of all your mercies and deliverances, gives you tongues for this very end, that you may bleſs and praiſe him for theſe mercies, Jam. iii. 9. Hence man's tongue is called his glory above all the reſt of the creatures, Pſal. lvii. 8. There is none in the creation ſo endued and qualified for praiſing God as man is. Angels have reaſon and minds whereby they adore and admire God's goodneſs, and excellency, but have no tongues to praiſe him; beaſts have tongues, but without ſpeech or reaſon to uſe them: But man hath both reaſon and ſpeech, that he may both admire God's goodneſs, and with his tongue ſound forth God's praiſe. See then, O believer, that you uſe your tongues to anſwer the end of your creation. God loſeth his due rent of praiſe from the reſt of the world, but he expects it from his children, whom he hath formed for this end, and on whom he hath beſtowed many diſtinguiſhing favours.

2dly, The ſacrifice of thankſgiving is moſt pleaſing and acceptable to God. He loves your tears and prayers, O believer, but much more your praiſes. How well pleaſed was our Lord with the poor leper Samaritan, that returned and gave him thanks for curing his bodily diſtemper? Luke xvii. He diſmiſſed him with a ſpecial bleſſing, and cured him of his ſoul's diſeaſes, as well as of his body's. And therefore,

3dly, Conſider that thankfulneſs for any mercy received is a moſt profitable courſe for yourſelf; for it is the way to get more and better bleſſings beſtowed upon you, according to Pſal. lxvii. 5. 6. *Let the people praiſe thee, O God. Then ſhall the earth yield her encreaſe; and God even our own God, ſhall bleſs us.* Thankſgiving for former mercies is a kindly way of petitioning for new favours, and God will underſtand it in this ſenſe.

4thly, God is ſo well pleaſed with the duty of thankſgiving, that he honours it to be the eternal work of heaven. Whereas other graces, ſuch as faith, hope, and repentance, will then be melted into love and joy for ever; ſo other duties of worſhip, ſuch as reading, hearing and praying, will then be changed into that of praiſe and thankſgiving: The glorified company above will never weary of this work; and ſhall we not delight in it now; when God is calling us to it by ſo many new mercies.

In the next place, that thou mayeſt offer the ſacrifice of thankſgiving to God for thy recovery, with gracious acceptance, I ſhall lay before you the following advices.

1. See that your heart be touched with the ſenſe of the greatneſs of the mercy, and of the goodneſs of God manifeſted therein. We muſt put a due value upon our mercies, and have our hearts affected with God's kind dealings towards us in them, if we would be rightly thankful to God the author of them. Hence it was, that David called upon his heart and all within him to bleſs the Lord for his benefits, Pſal. ciii. 1. and in Pſal. cxxxviii. 1. he ſaith, *I will praiſe thee with my whole heart.* As, in an inſtrument of muſic, the more the ſound comes out of the belly of it, it is the ſweeter; ſo our praiſe is the more acceptable to God, when the heart is full of gracious affections.

2. Let your praiſe be the native reſult of faith and love in your ſoul, otherwiſe it will be but an empty ſound. Faith is neceſſary to draw by the veil, and ſhew us the perfections of the inviſible God, who is the ſpring and author of all our mercies; love gives a deep ſenſe of his goodneſs, enlargeth the heart towards God, and opens the lips to ſhew forth his praiſes.

3. Study to have a deep ſenſe of your own unworthineſs and ill-deſervings at the Lord's hand, upon the account of your ſins and ill improvement of former deliverances, ſaying with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies.*

4. Look above inſtruments and ſecond cauſes, and do not aſcribe your recovery to phyſicians or outward means, but to the Lord the prime author of it, whoſe bleſſing alone it is that gives efficacy and ſucceſs to the appointed means, and by whoſe mercy only we are ſpared and brought back from the gates of the grave. To this the apoſtle attributes Epaphroditus his recovery, Phil. ii. 27. *Indeed he was ſick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him.* Hence we are told, 1 Sam. ii. 6. *The Lord bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.*

5. Obſerve narrowly the remarkable circumſtances of the Lord's goodneſs, and the ſweet ingredients of thy mercies; as for inſtance, (1.) How diſcernable the Lord's hand was in thy deliverance, which obligeth thee to ſay, Surely this is the finger of God? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in mine eyes. (2.) How thy deliverance came to thee as the return of prayer, that makes thee ſay, ſurely he is a prayer-hearing God. (3.) How deliverance came when there was but little ground to hope for it. See how Hezekiah obſerved this ingredient in his recovery from ſickneſs, Iſa. xxxviii. 10, 11. *I ſaid in the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the reſidue of my years. I ſaid, I ſhall not ſee the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.* Verſe 15. *What ſhall I ſay? He hath both ſpoken to me, and himſelf hath done it.* Sometimes God ſends deliverances to his people when they are moſt hopeleſs, and ſaying with the captives in Babylon, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. *Behold our bones are dried, and our hope is loſt, and we are cut off for our parts.* (4.) Remember how the extremity of thy diſtreſs was God's opportunity of ſending relief. Abraham never forgot the ſeaſonableneſs of God's appearing for him in his extreme need upon mount Moriah, when he called the name of the place, Jehovah-Jireh, for preſerving the memorial of it: *In the mountain of the Lord it will be ſeen.* So doth David, Pſal. cxvi. *I was brought low and he helped me.*

6. Let the preſent deliverance bring all former mercies to thy remembrance, that ſo thou mayeſt praiſe God for them all, whether they be national or perſonal mercies, public or private, ſpiritual or temporal. New mercies ſhould revive the memory of the old, and all of them ſhould come above-board at ſuch a time; ſo doth the Pſalmiſt direct, Pſal. cv. 2. *Sing to the Lord, talk ye of all his wondrous works.* And what he directs others to, he practiſeth himſelf in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 12. *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?*

7. Be ready to communicate to others an account of the Lord's kind dealings towards you, and the ſweet ingredients of his mercies; and particularly of his ſending ſpiritual deliverance to your ſoul, as well as outward deliverance to your body, when he is pleaſed to do ſo: And do this in order to recommend the ſervice of God to others, and to engage and invite them to aſſiſt you in bleſſing and praiſing the Lord. We ſee how David obſerved his ſoul's deliverances, Pſal. cxvi. 7. 8. and declares his experience to others, Pſal. xxii. 22. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midſt of the congregation will I praiſe thee.* Pſal. lxvi. 16. *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my ſoul.*

Laſtly, Remember always to give thanks for mercies to the Father in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as directed, Eph. v. 20. Your ſpiritual ſacrifices are only acceptable to God, when you offer them up by Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As we muſt ſeek all our mercies in Chriſt's name, ſo we muſt give thanks for them alſo in his name. He is the Mediator of our praiſes as well as of our prayers. Believers have not one mercy, but what comes ſwimming to them in Chriſt's blood, and is the fruit of his death and purchaſe to them; and therefore he is to be owned and looked to in the receiving of every mercy. And as Chriſt is the only Mediator for conveying bleſſings and mercies from God to us, ſo he is the ſole Mediator for conveying all our ſervices and ſpiritual ſacrifices to God. God accepts of them only as they are perfumed by Chriſt's meritorious ſacrifice, and potent interceſſion.

DIRECT. III. *When the Lord is pleaſed to grant thee any ſignal mercy or deliverance from trouble, beware of forgetting the Lord's kindneſs towards thee.*

Forgetting of God's remarkable kind providences, is an evil we are naturally prone unto, when we are in a proſperous ſtate. Hence it is, that the Spirit of God gives ſo many cautions againſt it in his word; and the ſaints of God do ſo ſolemnly charge their own ſouls to beware of it, as in Pſal. ciii. 2. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits; who healeth all thy diſeaſes, who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction.* Forget not his benefits, but carefully preſerve and treaſure them up in thy memory. It was uſual for ſaints under the Old Teſtament to ſet up ſome viſible monument to remind them of God's ſingular favours to them; they erected ſtones, and built altars, to be memorials of the mercies they received, and put names on the places for this end. Let all this teach you to guard againſt this evil of forgetting the Lord's kind providences in recovering you from ſickneſs

You are guilty of this evil, when you do not duly value the mercy, but let it paſs as a turn of common providence. When you let the impreſſion of the mercy wear ſoon off your hearts; when you make a bad uſe of it, or do not rightly improve it to God's glory, and your own ſoul's good; when you do not put on new reſolutions to walk more exactly, live more fruitfully, and ſerve God more holily and humbly; then are you guilty of forgetting his benefits.

This is an evil moſt grievous and provoking to a good and gracious God, as is evident from the many heavy complaints he makes of his people for it, as in Judg. viii. 34. Pſal. lxxviii. 11. Pſal. cvi. 13. Wherefore watch and pray againſt it.

Direct. IV. *Enquire after theſe fruits of righteouſneſs, which are the genuine effects of affliction in the children of God, who are duly exerciſed thereby.*

THE apoſtle ſpeaks of theſe fruits, Heb. xii. 11. as natively following upon ſanctified afflictions, and a kindly exerciſe of ſpirit under them. And therefore it is your duty to enquire if they be produced in you.

1ſt, The increaſe of true repentance is one of theſe fruits which is the product of ſanctified trials. Job found it in himſelf on the back of his afflictions, Job. xlii. 6. *Now I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.* It would be happy if we could find our hearts more ſoft and melting upon the view of ſin, after we have been in the furnace of affliction.

2dly, Another fruit is the improvement of faith. The afflicted believer is taught to look to and depend more upon God for help in time of need, and leſs upon the creature. He now ſees that vain is the help of man in the day of calamity, and that God in Chriſt is the only proper object of the ſoul's truſt. This was the fruit of the apoſtle's affliction, 2 Cor. i. 8. 9. 10. *We were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life. We had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God that raiſeth the dead: Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver: In whom we truſt that he will yet deliver.*

3dly, Humility and low thoughts of ourſelves is one of the fruits of righteouſneſs which ſanctified affliction doth yield. How proud and lofty was Nebuchadnezzar before his affliction: Dan. iv. 29. 30. But afterwards he is made to own God, and humbly ſubmit to him as his ſupreme and incontroulable ſevereign, and to acknowledge, that theſe who walk in pride, he is able to abaſe, ver. 27. This was God's deſign in the various trials of his people Iſrael in the wilderneſs. Deut. viii. 16. *That he might humble thee, prove thee and do thee good at thy latter end.* See then, O believer, if this fruit be produced in thee.

4thly, Another fruit is the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication. This was viſible in the Pſalmiſt's caſe, after God had delivered him from the ſorrows of death, and heard his voice, Pſal. cxvi. 2. *Therefore, ſays he, will I call upon him as long as I live.* O, ſaith a true believer, God's mercy to me in trouble, and his ſending me relief when I cried to him, will make me love prayer the better, and engage me to be more diligent in it all my days; for I ſtill ſee I have daily need of his helping hand.

5thly, Heavenly-mindedneſs is a fruit of ſanctified affliction. Before the man was inclined to that language, It is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles in this lower world, but now he turns his tongue, and changeth his thoughts, and ſaith, with the Pſalmiſt, *It is good for me to draw nigh to God. Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt.* This world is nothing but the houſe of our pilgrimage, heaven only is our home.

6thly, Another fruit of ſanctified trials is greater love to God than formerly. How much was David's heart warmed with love and gratitude to God upon the back of his affliction, ſo that he wants words to expreſs the affections of his ſoul? Pſal. cxvi. 1. 8. 12. *I will love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, I was brought low, but he helped me. Thou haſt delivered my ſoul, from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.—What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?*

7thly, Learning and keeping of God's word is a fruit of ſanctified affliction, Pſal. cxix. 67. 71. Let us enquire if this fruit be produced in us after ſickneſs: Do we attend to the word more cloſly? Do we believe it more firmly? Do we embrace its offers more earneſtly? Do we rely on its promiſes more ſtedfaſtly? And do we live more in the expectation of that glory which the word doth reveal to us? *Then it is good for us that we have been afflicted, for we have learned more of God's word.*

8thly, Tenderneſs of conſcience is a happy fruit of ſanctified trouble, when the believer after it becomes exceedingly afraid of ſin, and of making new wounds in his conſcience. He cannot think of adventuring again upon any known ſin, for the ſmart of former wounds and the pain they occaſioned in his ſoul, when diſtreſs lay upon him, makes deep and laſting impreſſion on his mind, as it did on the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 19. 20. *Remembering mine affliction, and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall, my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled within me.* Now, ſuch fruits of righteouſneſs are an evidence we have been ſuitably exerciſed under affliction: O to find them produced in us after ſickneſs is over.

Direct. V. *Be careful to perform theſe reſolutions, engagements or vows, you have come under in the time of ſickneſs; and walk ſuitably to them.*

AS a time of ſickneſs and affliction is a proper ſeaſon for making vows to God, and binding our ſouls with reſolutions to mortify ſin in the heart, and purge it away from the life, and to be diligent in duty, and walk more humbly with God; ſo a time of recovery from ſickneſs is a proper ſeaſon for paying and performing theſe vows. This was the royal Pſalmiſt's practice in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 6. 16. 17. 18. ‘I was brought low, ‘ and he helped me. Truly I am thy ſervant, I am thy ‘ ſervant. I will offer to thee the ſacrifice of thankſ‘giving. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in ‘ the preſence of all his people.’ Now, for your aſſiſtance in this matter, I offer you theſe few advices.

1ſt, Defer not to pay your vows, but be ſpeedy, and take the firſt opportunity to pay them. Delays in this caſe are moſt dangerous; Solomon that wiſe man was ſenſible of this, which made him give thee this advice, Eccl. v. 4. *When thou voweſt a vow unto God, defer not to pay it.*

2dly, Be ſtill jealous of thy heart, which is prone to deal treacherouſly with God after affliction is over; the Iſraelites practice is a ſad inſtance of this truth, Pſal. lxxviii. 34. &c. *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and enquired early after God, &c. Neverthelefs they did flatter him with their mouths, and they lied to him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant.* The purpoſes of many in affliction are like the vows of mariners in a ſtorm; they are the firſt things which they forget and break when once they win ſafe aſhore. However penitent ſome ſeem to be in ſickneſs, yet when they recover from it, they ſoon return to their old ſins again. They are like metals in a furnace, they melt and turn liquid while in it, but when out, they ſoon return to their old hardneſs. There is good reaſon for that caution the Lord gives us, Mal. ii. 16. *Therefore take heed to your ſpirit, that ye deal not treacherouſly.*

3dly, Cry continually for ſtrength from above, to enable you to perform your vows. The Pſalmiſt took this courſe, and found it ſucceſsful, Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. *In the day when I cried to thee thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.* And forget not, O believer, that God has treaſured up ſtrength for thee in thy head and ſurety, Chriſt Jeſus; wherefore be ſtill borrowing from him, for the performing of all thy engagements, 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'My ſon, be 'ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.' Put thy treacherous heart in thy ſurety's hand; for tho' thou art weak, yet thy Redeemer is ſtrong. Whenever then you firſt perceive your heart begin to ſtart aſide from God, be ſure to check it, and look up to God in Chriſt for ſtrength to ſecure it againſt treachery and perfidious dealing: Cry with the Pſalmiſt, *Be ſurety for thy ſervant for good.*

4thly, Guard diligently againſt thy predominant ſin, the ſin that hath moſt eaſily beſet thee, the ſin that was moſt bitter and uneaſy to thee in the day of diſtreſs. Keep a narrow eye upon it now; for if once that ſin be got vanquiſhed, the reſt will the more eaſily be put to flight.

5thly, Be frequently meditating on thy vows, and on the condition thou waſt in when they were taken on, and ſtudy to keep alive in thy heart the ſame apprehenſion of things after ſickneſs, which thou hadſt in the time of it. How vain and comfortleſs did the world and its vanities then appear to thee! How awful were the truths of God on thy ſpirit! How far preferable was the loving kindneſs of God to thee, than life! How precious was Chriſt then in thy eyes! O that your judgment, thoughts and impreſſions of theſe things may continue ſtill the ſame!

6thly, Keep up the impreſſions of the preciouſneſs of time, that you may diligently improve it; and ſhake off ſloth and idleneſs. Remember what a view you got in the time of ſickneſs of long laſting eternity, and what a trouble it was to you to look back, and ſee how much time you had loſt in ſin and vanity. When ſometimes we are brought to the brink of eternity, the near views we then get of its vaſtneſs and unchangeableneſs are ſometimes ſo awful and amazing to us, that we are ready to think, tho' we had Methuſalem's years to live, it would be unreaſonable wilfully to miſpend one hour of them all. Well then, is ſickneſs over, our time ſo ſhort, and ſo little of it remaining behind? Will we be ſo fooliſh, as to be laviſh of it ſtill, and trifle it away as before.

7thly, Set a ſpecial mark upon all theſe ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, that made death to look grim and ghaſtly upon you in the time of ſickneſs, and againſt which you reſolved; and ſee to get every one of them amended and removed. Remember and conſider how ſad it will be for you, if ſickneſs find you again in the very ſame ſins which formerly ſtung you. What will you ſay to conſcience, when it ſhall challenge you? How will you look death in the face, if it ſhould find you living in the very ſame ſins you formerly mourned for, and promiſed againſt? Death would then be the king of terrors to thy ſoul indeed.

O then mind thy vows, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lvi. 12, 13. *Thy vows are upon me, O God; I will render praiſes to thee. For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living.*

CHAP. VI.

Containing directions to the unregenerate, when they are recovered from ſickneſs, and reſtored to health.

DIRECT. I. *Seeing the afflictions of the wicked are unſanctified, it is neceſſary you examine what ſort of affliction yours hath been, and what fruits it hath produced in you.*

I HAVE in the preceeding chapter ſhewed that the afflictions of believers are fatherly chaſtiſements proceeding from love; that they are ſanctified, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs. I have given the marks of ſanctified afflictions, and mentioned the happy fruits which they produce in the children of God.

On the other hand, it is neceſſary to let Chriſtleſs perſons know, that their afflictions are of a different kind; they are even puniſhments from God as a judge, proceeding from wrath: They are unſanctified to them, and produce no fruits, but what are bitter and unſavoury.

Well then, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, thou haſt reaſon to ſuſpect the worſt concerning thy ſickneſs, that it hath not been ſanctified, and its fruits are not good. O then, labour to know the truth of the matter, that thou mayeſt be humble under a ſenſe of thy miſery, and flee to Jeſus Chriſt for relief. And, for thy aſſiſtance in this enquiry; I ſhall give ſome marks of unſanctified afflictions.

1ſt, If ſickneſs hath not humbled thee under a ſenſe of thy ſins the procuring cauſe thereof, nor anywiſe hath weakned ſin in thee, nor reclaimed thee from it, but it remaineth in thee as ſtrong as ever; it is a ſign thy affliction is unſanctified. This was the caſe of thoſe of whom God complaineth, Jer. ii. 30. *In vain have I ſmitten your children; they received not correction.* As if he had ſaid, the phyſic I gave them did not purge out ſin; nor weaken corruption in the leaſt. They have been ſtricken, but not grieved for ſin: The fire hath burnt round about them, but they have not laid ſin to heart, that kindled the flame.

2dly, It is a mark of unſanctified affliction, when it hath no influence upon a ſinner to bring him to a ſerious communing with his own heart concerning the eſtate of his ſoul, and to enquire in what terms he ſtands with God that afflicts him. God's voice by affliction is that in Haggai, i. 7. *Now conſider your ways.* In the day of adverſity conſider where you are, what you are, what you have done, what is the meaning of the rod, what will be the iſſue of it thro' eternity, in caſe it hath a commiſſion to cut the thread of life. Now when a man remains ſtupid and careleſs about theſe important matters, and never noticeth the voice of affliction ſo as to enquire ſeriouſly about his ſoul's condition; "Am I "under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace?

" Am I a child of God, or an enemy of God? Have " I fled to the city of refuge, or am I ſtill in a ſhelterleſs ſtate? Am I ſtill under a cloud of wrath, or am " I brought under a banner of love?" I ſay, where there are no ſuch enquiries, the affliction is unſanctified.

3dly, It is a certain ſign of unſanctified affliction, when a perſon grows worſe by it, and revolts the more he is ſtricken, like theſe, Iſa. i. 5.

Queſt. When may it be ſaid that a perſon grows worſe by affliction?

Anſ. When the ſinner's heart turns harder than it was before; ſo every plague on Egypt increaſed the plague of hardneſs in Pharaoh's heart. It fares with many hearts as with iron that is often heated in the fire, and quenched in the water, it ſtill increaſeth in hardneſs. 2. When a perſon giveth way to impatience and murmuring againſt God while he afflicts him. 3. When the luſts of the heart grow more ſtrong and impetuous, and afterwards rage the more, that they have been ſtopt in their courſe by affliction. In ſuch caſes a perſon grows worſe by the rod.

Direct. II. *Conſider the great danger of not being bettered by ſickneſs, and of not complying with the voice of God's rod.*

GOD's voice by his rod doth loudly call ſinners to repentance, and fleeing to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for refuge from wrath. Now, when this voice is not hearkened to, but men go on in their ſecure and ſinful courſe as before, God is highly provoked, and the iſſue will be terrible: For,

1ſt. Tho' ſickneſs be removed, and the furnace of affliction be cooled for the time; yet the wrath that kindled it continues ſtill to burn. And you have ground to fear leaſt you be ranked among theſe who are the generation of God's wrath, againſt whom he will have indignation for ever.

2dly, If leſſer rods do not awaken you, you may expect greater and ſorer judgments are coming on you. Yea, God may cauſe them to come rolling thick upon you, as waves and billows in a ſtorm, one upon the neck of another. The great depths, both above and below, may be opened together; the diſpleaſure of God, and wrath of men, may conſpire and meet to pour out themſelves as water-ſpouts upon you at once; and, to whom then will ye look for help?

3dly, The Lord may give over dealing with you, or uſing any further means to reclaim you; he may refuſe to correct you any more, or beſtow a rod upon you for your good, and ſay of you, as of Ephraim, Hoſ. iv. 17. *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone*.

4thly, The Lord may give you up to ſpiritual plagues and judgments, and indeed this commonly is the reſult of obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſs under outward rods. When Iſrael would not hearken to God's voice, he gave them up to their own hearts luſts, Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12. Now, theſe plagues are the ſevereſt of all others. External judgments are God's rods, but ſpiritual judgments are his ſwords, which pierce the very ſoul. Blindneſs of mind, hardneſs of heart, ſearedneſs of conſcience, vile affections, and a reprobate ſenſe, are the very forerunners of hell and damnation. Theſe who are impatient and unfruitful under outward afflictions, have cauſe to tremble, leſt God be provoked to inflict theſe ſpiritual judgments.

5thly, Be aſſured, though God ſpare you long, yet the glaſs of his forbearance will at length run out. God's prtience towards ſinners hath a term and bound, over which it will not paſs. The time will come, when a long-ſuffering God will at laſt ſay, My Spirit ſhall no longer ſtrive; and the angel will cry, as Rev. xiv. 7. *The hour of God's judgment is come*. You that abuſe God's patience, and preſume upon it, his treaty of peace will end with you in a little, and the maſter of the houſe will riſe up and ſhut to the door. Then patience will come down, and juſtice will aſcend the ſtage, and trample upon, and triumph over all that abuſe divine patience. Sodom was a wonder of God's patience for a long time, but now it is a laſting monument of his anger.

6thly, If you be not bettered by God's rods or ſparing mercies, then your preſervation at preſent will be nothing but a reſervation for the days of God's wrath. And the longer your cup of ſin is a filling, the fuller ſhall the cup of God's wrath be for you: By your impenitence and abuſe of God's patience, you treaſure up wrath for yourſelves againſt the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 4. And though you be delivered from ſome judgments, you are reſerved for worſe, yea, ſeven times worſe, according to Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. Nay, there is a ruining blow deſigned againſt you, both ſoul and body, aſſoon as your cup is full; and the ax is already laid to the root of the tree, Mat. iii. 10. One blow of God's ax will cut you off for ever.

Remember this, O ſinner, though God's hand be lifted off you at preſent, and his meſſenger death be for a little recalled, yet he will quickly return, and knock ſo loud at your door, as not to be refuſed. And, what will you do in the day of viſitation? How ghaſtly muſt the pale horſe be, when hell follows him at his heels? And, how hot and fiery muſt that hell be, which is inflamed and blown up by ſo long impenitence and abuſe of patience?

Direct. III. *Wonder at the patience of God in ſparing ſuch hell-deſerving ſinners as you are, and be thankful for it.*

HATH a long-ſuffering God preſerved the thread of your life, when it was almoſt ſnapt aſunder by the violence of ſickneſs? Hath he freed you from racking pains under which you were groaning? Nay, ſaved you from the grave and hell, into which you were falling? And have you not cauſe of wondering and thankſgiving? To move you to it, conſider theſe few things.

1ſt, How miſerable had you been through all eternity, if your ſickneſs had carried you off to another world in your ſins? You had been howling with damned ſpirits, under endleſs and eaſeleſs torments, and for ever cut off from theſe hopes and offers of mercy now you have. Then the maſter of the houſe would have had the door ſo barred againſt you, as it could never been opened again to you, knock as you would, Luke xiii. 25.

2dly, Conſider how heavily you had burdened his patience with your heinous ſins, and frequent relapſes thereinto: And that after convictions, calls and various rods ſent to reclaim you: So that he was put to ſay, as in Amos ii. 14. *Behold, I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves.* He was overburdened with your ſins, ſo that the axle-tree of patience was ready to break, and let you fall into hell; and yet, behold he bears with you ſtill.

3*dly*, Conſider how ſoon he could have eaſed himſelf of the load, and ſhaken you off into the pit of deſtruction. In a moment could he have done it, and yet he bears many years with your ſins that are ſo grievous to him. Yea, it is with a ſort of reluctancy that he eaſes himſelf of ſinners, after he gets the utmoſt provocation, Iſa. i. 24. *Ah, I will eaſe me of my adverſaries.*

4*thly*, How ready is he to turn away his anger and reprive ſinners from deſtruction, when in their diſtreſs they make but a ſhew of repentance and turning unto God! As we ſee in Pſal. lxxviii. 36. 38. He, like a tender-hearted prince, calls back the warrant for their execution after it was gone forth.

5*thly*, Conſider how much many Chriſtleſs ſinners are beholden to Jeſus Chriſt for ſparing mercy. He is repreſented by the dreſſer, Luke xiii. interceeding that the fruitleſs fig-tree might be ſpared and tried ſome time longer, after orders given to cut it down. Were it not for Jeſus Chriſt, O ſinner, however much you forget and ſlight him, you had ſurely been in hell long ere now. How oft doth he obtain another year, and after that another, for the unfruitful ſinner, and unthankful abuſers of divine patience!

6*thly*, Conſider how ſparing mercy hath diſtinguiſhed you from many others, who lived not ſo long, nor ſinned ſo much as you have done. God hath wounded the hairy ſcalp of many, and taken them away in their youth; when he hath continued you to manhood, and perhaps to old age; tho' your ſins and ill-deſervings be greater than theſe of many, on whom he hath long ſince taken vengeance, God hath left many alſo toſſing and groaning on beds of pain, when he hath eaſed and helped you up. O then return, like the thankful leper, and magnify the God of your health. Hath God diſtinguiſhed you from others by his goodneſs? It becomes you to diſtinguiſh yourſelves from others by your thankfulneſs. O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs! Undeſerved and diſtinguiſhing goodneſs!

To move you to this, let me ſet the example of Hezekiah before you, Iſa. xxxviii. and there ſee how thankfully and affectionately he remembered the Lord's mercies in recovering and delivering him from the bitter affliction he had been under. "I ſaid, I am deprived of the reſidue of my years, I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Like a cran or ſwallow, ſo did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove. Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs; but thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it from the pit of corruption. The living ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day." Yea he was ſo overcome with a ſenſe of the Lord's patience and mercy toward him, that he is at a loſs how to expreſs it, ver. 15. *What ſhall I ſay? He hath both ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it.*

Let all, who are recovered from ſickneſs, ſtudy to imitate that good king in holy admiration and thankfulneſs to the God of their life.

DIRECT. IV. *Study to improve the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God to you in a right and ſuitable manner.*

O Sinner, hath God brought you back from the gates of death and brink of hell, reſtored you to health, and given you a new offer of mercy and ſalvation thro' Chriſt in a preached goſpel, which you formerly deſpiſed? Strive now to improve the Lord's patient and kind dealings towards you with the utmoſt care, and abuſe his patience no longer. And in order thereunto, take the following counſels.

I. Be deeply humbled for your former obſtinacy and impenitency, notwithſtanding of God's gracious and patient dealing. O let the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God toward thee lead thee to repentance, which is the native deſign of it, according to Rom. ii. 4. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, forbearance and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?* As if he had ſaid, "Doſt thou not ſee, O man, the kind providence of God in ſparing and recovering thee from ſickneſs, taking thee by the hand, and pointing out to thee to go to thy cloſet and to mourn and weep for all thy bypaſt ſins, and particularly for thy miſpending the time of health, and abuſing of the Lord's patience?" The conſideration of David's goodneſs and forbearance towards Saul melted Saul's heart, for as hard and rugged as it was, and made him to lift up his voice and weep, and ſay to David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 17. &c. *Thou art more righteous than I; for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou haſt ſhewed this day, how that thou haſt dealt well with me; foraſmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not. For* (ſays he) *if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?* Oh far more reaſon haſt thou, O man, to weep and cry, "God hath found me his enemy, yea, in my enmity and ſins, fighting againſt himſelf, he had me on a ſick bed, and on the very brink of hell, and the leaſt touch of his hand would have thruſt me in: But yet he hath ſpared his enemy and let me go well away. Oh, will not theſe cords of love draw me, and his matchleſs goodneſs invite and hire me to repent? Can any conſideration in the world be more powerful than this to melt my hard heart into tears of holy ſhame and ſorrow for my ſtiff-neckedneſs and rebellion againſt a gracious and long-ſuffering God? Away with theſe curſed God-provoking ſins of mine! Down with theſe weapons of rebellion! Let me never lift them more againſt ſuch a merciful ſovereign!

II. Zealouſly improve the time, which God in his long-ſuffering hath lengthened out to you, in working out the ſalvation of thy ſoul. Have you ſo long been loading the patience of God with your ſins? Have you many a day been grieving his holy ſpirit, by trifling away your time, ſlighting his motions, and venturing on ſins againſt light? O then, beware of burdening his patience any more; but diligently hearken to every motion of God's Spirit and of your own conſcience for the time to come. You have much work to do, and but little time to do it in; therefore lay hold on every opportunity for carrying it on. The conſideration of the much time you have already loſt and miſpent, ſhould make you the more diligent in what remaineth. How much of it have you loſt in youth! How much in ignorance? How much in negligence? How much in worldlineſs? How much in paſtimes? How much in idle words? How much in actual ſins and provocations againſt God? And now it may be near the evening of your day. And will you not ſpend the evening (which God is mercifully lengthening out) with extraordinary care and diligence? If a traveller loſe the beginning of the day, he muſt travel the faſter, in the evening, otherwiſe he may fall ſhort of his journey, and have his lodging to ſeek when night comes. Paul had miſpent much of the beginning of his life; and this conſideration (when his eyes were opened) did ſtir him up to be the more diligent in the ſervice of God, ſo that he was more zealous than any of the reſt of the apoſtles. O man, follow his example, and trifle no longer in the work of God. Art thou not convinced thou haſt ſquandered away enough of this precious treaſure of time already? And, wilt thou alſo miſpend and throw away the little that remains? Oh be not fooliſh.

III. Be careful to raze all falſe foundations, and build your hopes of ſalvation upon the only ſure rock, Jeſus Chriſt. Let it not diſcourage thee to dig to the foundation, that ſo much of thy days is loſt; for it is better to do it late than never. Remember how miſerable is the condition of that houſe which is built upon the ſand, Mat. vii. 27. *For when the flood comes, and the ſtorm ariſeth and beats upon it, great and diſmal will the fall of that houſe be.* Do not build your hopes of heaven upon God's abſolute mercy, upon your convictions, upon your freedom from groſs ſins, upon your prayers or tears, upon your morality and juſt dealings with men: Though theſe be neceſſary and excellent in themſelves, yet they are falſe foundations for you to build the hopes of your juſtification and ſalvation upon, ſeeing they are wholly inſufficient to bear ſuch a weight. However much theſe things have been eſteemed and valued by you formerly, in the matter of juſtification; yet if you reſolve to be a wiſe builder, you will let them all now go, yea, count them all but loſs and dung that you may win Chriſt, (our only hope) build on him alone, and be found in him, not having on your own righteouſneſs, which is but filthy rags.

Well then, raze and tear up every falſe foundation, dig deep, till you win to the rock Chriſt. Dig deep into the holy law and nature of God; dig till you ſee the infinite ſtrictneſs of divine juſtice, the unſpeakable evil that is in ſin, the hidden vileneſs and abominations of the heart, your own inability to do any thing for your help and relief. Dig yet further, till you ſee the infinite fulneſs and freeneſs of God's grace in Jeſus Chriſt, that ſuitable remedy that anſwers all a poor ſinner's needs. Dig deep, and dig ſtill on, till you win to this rock; let your cry be ſtill to God, Lord lead me to the rock Chriſt and his all-ſufficient righteouſneſs, only. Act faith upon this rock, rely on it, build all your hopes on it, and ſay, 'This is my reſt for ever; here will I dwell, for I have deſired it. Lord, the deſire of my ſoul is only to Chriſt, and to the remembrance of his name. His name is as ſweet ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love him.'

IV. If you would rightly improve the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God, let it lead you to repentance and reformation of life. Turn from all theſe ſins whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, now in the day of health, which conſcience challenged you for in the time of ſickneſs. Mind Chriſt's caution and warning to healed ſinners, John v. 14. *Behold thou art made whole; ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing befal thee.* O let ſin die with thy ſickneſs; and do not relapſe into thy former ſecurity and ſinful ways. Beware of returning with the dog to thy vomit, and like the ſow that is waſhed to the wallowing again in the mire of thy former ſins and uncleanneſs; leſt being intangled and overcome again with the filthineſs which thou now haſt eſcaped, thy latter end prove worſe than thy beginning.

Laſtly, And to ſum up all I ſhall ſay in this chapter, be careful to redeem time, and active in providing for an eternal ſtate. O prize and value the mercy of health and ſtrength more than ever. Sympathize with theſe who are ſtill lying on ſick beds, and under languiſhing diſtempers; neglect not to pity and pray for them. Remember the diſtreſſed caſe you were in yourſelves, when you had no reſt in your bones, when wearifom nights were appointed to you, and you were full of toſſings to the dawning of the day. Conſider how ſlippery is your ſtanding. Tho' the late ſtorm of trouble be over, yet the clouds will return after rain.

CHAP. VII.

Containing directions to theſe ſick perſons, who are apparently in a dying condition, and drawing near to another world.

I Have already in the firſt, third and fourth chapters, given ſeveral directions concerning our ſubmiſſion to the will of God, making preparation for death, calling for miniſters, edifying others by our diſcourſe, ſettling our worldly affairs, &c. which are very proper for dying perſons; and therefore I ſhall not repeat them, but proceed to ſpeak of other things. Only let me add this word, if you have hitherto neglected to make your wills, ſettle your worldly affairs, ſend for miniſters to diſcourſe with, and pray over you; delay it not longer, but do it ſpeedily, while you have the uſe of your reaſon and underſtanding. And what I have more to ſay, take it in the following directions.

DIRECT. I. *Conſider, when death ſtares you in the face, that now is the time, if ever, to exert the utmoſt activity in preparing to meet with it.*

ALAS, it is to be regreted that the moſt part of men neglect their ſouls, miſpend their life, miſimprove their health, and leave undone the work for which they were created, preſerved, and enjoyed the goſpel. Surely a near proſpect of death and judgment cannot but be uneaſy to ſuch perſons. What a melancholly thought muſt it be for a dying man? 'Oh! I had all my time given me to make preparation for endleſs eternity; and alas, I never minded it till now, that I muſt leave the ſtage of this world. Is there any hope for ſuch a careleſs and miſerable ſinner.' I acknowledge the caſe is ſad, but yet it is not remedileſs nor deſperate; ſeeing there is an all-ſufficient Saviour in your offer, who never did caſt out any humbled ſoul that came to him for mercy. You have great reaſon indeed to abhor and condemn yourſelf before God for your ſin and folly; yet deſpair not, but believe, what ever be your ſins, your dangers, your fears, and temptations, that Jeſus Chriſt is both able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him, and that his grace aboundeth more than your ſin aboundeth. O how glad would devils and damned ſouls in hell be, if they were but in your caſe, and had your offers and hopes! How diligently would they improve the time of mercy! O be perſuaded then to ſpend the little time that now remains with the utmoſt care, in making penitent confeſſion of ſin to God, and applying the blood of Chriſt for pardon. Nay, even the beſt of God's people have need to be diligent at this time in making actual preparation for dying. God is now ſaying to you, as Joſhua did to the Iſraelites, Joſh. i. 11. *Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye ſhall paſs over Jordan, to go in to poſſeſs the land which the Lord your God giveth you.* Lay in proviſions for your paſſing over this Jordan of death: You know not how rough this paſſage may be.

I ſhall give ſome motives to preſs this diligent and active preparation; and therefore conſider,

1ſt, The ſhort time of your life that remains is all the time you have for working out your ſalvation. What you do for attaining heaven, or avoiding hell, muſt be done now, or never; for there is no work nor device in the grave whether thou goeſt, nor is there any coming back to this world to amend what hath been done amiſs. Dying is a thing you cannot get a trial of, it is what you can only do once, and no more, Heb. ix. 27.

2dly, Be diligent now; for aſſoon as death gets commiſſion to cut you off, it will execute it: It will not ſpare you, nor allow you one minute more time to prepare for eternity. The moſt mercileſs enemies have ſometimes been overcome by the prayers and tears of ſuch as on their knees do beg a little more time to prepare for another world; and do hearken to their requeſts: But this enemy, death, will not grant one moment's reſpite.

3dly, Conſider, that your eternal ſtate and condition will be according to the ſtate in which you die. Death will open the doors either of heaven or hell to you, in one of which you ſhall take up your eternal abode. As the tree falls at death, ſo will it ly thro' eternity.

4thly, Conſider, what a ſerious and awful matter it is to die, and go into another world, for then you will have immediately to do with God your judge; there will be no veil then betwixt him and your ſoul. You will then enter into a world of ſpirits, wherewith you are ſo little acquainted: You are frighted now to go into a room alone, that is ſaid to be haunted by a ſpirit; how frightful then muſt the caſe of theſe be, who are hurried into a world of ſpirits, not knowing but devils muſt be their companions for ever! Surely then it is your intereſt to give all diligence now, to make your acquaintance with the Lord of that world, before you enter into it.

5thly, Put forth thy utmoſt activity for thy ſoul now; for, to be ſure, Satan will put forth his utmoſt againſt it. If thou be in a Chriſtleſs ſtate at this time, he will uſe all his efforts and ſtratagems to keep thee from Chriſt; either by flattering thee that thy ſtate is good, thereby to lull you aſleep in ſin and ſecurity, or by telling thee, it is out of time to help matters with thee, thereby to drive you into deſpair. The devil will leave no method unattempted to ruin thy ſoul, when death is near: For he knows his time is ſhort; And, if he catch not the ſoul then, he will never get it: and neither can he hurt it hereafter: For, if once it enter heaven, he can trouble it no more.

If thou art a believer in Chriſt, Satan thy malicious enemy will not fail to attack thee, at this time, with all his might, for tho' he may know he cannot keep thee out of heaven, yet he will labour to render thy paſſage towards it, as dark, tempeſtuous and uncomfortable as poſſible he can. But it is the believer's happineſs, this cruel enemy is under a ſtrong chain, and cannot do all he would; for Jeſus Chriſt is the good ſhepherd that hath undertaken for all his ſheep. Nevertheleſs, by his wiſe permiſſion, this adverſary may ſometimes give great diſturbance to a dying ſaint; which calls thee to the greateſt diligence and watchfulneſs at this time. It is the obſervation of one, that as the devil is moſt buſy at the concluſion of a duty, as of prayer, that the Chriſtian may be moſt diſturbed and diſtracted, when he is to cloſe up all in the name of Chriſt, and ſo all his deſires be fruſtrated; ſo he is moſt buſy in the concluſion of our days, and when death is at hand, ſeeking by temptations, diſtractions, and falſe imaginations, to do us all the miſchief he can, and all becauſe he knoweth his time is ſhort; according to that word, Rev. xii. 12. *The devil is come down having great wrath, becauſe that he knoweth he hath but a ſhort time.* He may fitly be called, the wolf of the evening, mentioned in Jer. v. 6. in regard he comes forth moſt fiercely in the evening of men's lives, to ſet upon their precious ſouls. Yea, ſo buſy is he ſometimes with believers under dangerous ſickneſs, ſeeking to overthrow their faith and aſſurance, that it is the obſervation of a good man, that he ſeldom ſeeth a ſick ſaint, followed cloſe with temptations, recover of that ſickneſs; for Satan, knowing he hath but a little time, proves as uneaſy to him as he can. Hence that great man of God, Mr. Knox ſaid, when he came to die; "In my lifetime, the devil tempted me to deſpair, caſting my ſins in my teeth; but now, in my ſickneſs, he tells me, I have been faithful in the miniſtry and ſo have merited heaven: But bleſſed be God, who brought thoſe texts into my mind, *Not I, but the grace of God in me. What haſt thou that thou haſt not received?*" The children of Iſrael had never ſuch hot work from their enemies, as when they juſt came to enter into the promiſed land.

What need then haſt thou, O believer, to be diligent in thy preparations on a dying bed, to quicken grace, put forth thy utmoſt ſtrength, bring all the aſſiſtance thou canſt from the captain of thy ſalvation, when thou haſt ſuch a cruel enemy to encounter with! Now is the time for action, tho' yet it will be your wiſdom to leave as little to be done at this time as poſſible.

DIRECT. II. *Continue to the laſt in the exerciſe of true repentance and humiliation for ſin.*

POſſidonius, who wrote the life of Auguſtine, ſaid that he often heard him ſay in his health, that repentance was the fitteſt diſpoſition both for dying Chriſtians and miniſters; and for himſelf, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for ſin. When death approacheth neareſt, we ſhould thus ſtir up ourſelves to give ſin the moſt deadly blow of any we have given it all our life. As it is laudable to die forgiving ſinners that have wronged us, ſo alſo taking revenge upon ſin that hath injured a gracious God. The apoſtle tells us, 2 Cor. vii. 11. that indignation and revenge attend true repentance. Wherefore, as Samuel took vengeance on Agag a little before his death, and Moſes (at God's command) avenged the children of Iſrael of the Midianites juſt before he was gathered to his people, Numb. xxxi. 2. and dying Samſon gave the moſt fatal blow to the Philiſtines, of any he had given them before; ſo a dying Chriſtian ſhould take the ſevereſt revenge on ſin at laſt, which hath ſo oft thro' his life diſhonoured God, pierced Chriſt, and grieved his holy Spirit. It is the laſt opportunity you will have to ſhew your indignation at it, and therefore do it effectually.

Again, conſider, it is old ſins unmourned for, that many times keep believers ſo much in the dark, when they come to die. Theſe do raiſe many thick clouds about their evening ſun, and hinder them from going off the ſtage with ſuch comfortable aſſurance of God's love as otherwiſe they might attain to. Theſe did very much hinder Job's peace and ſettlement, in the day of affliction, as he complains, Job xiii. 26. *He makes me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth.* It is a ſad thing when young ſins and old bones meet together. O that young people would mind this in time! You are doing that now, which will abide with you to age, if not to eternity. Sin muſt be bitter ſome time or other, for God calls it a root that bears gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix. 18. Iſrael could not have peace nor ſucceſs while there was an Achan in the camp; ſo neither can you have conſolation or aſſurance while any ſin lies unreckoned for in the conſcience. Make a thorough ſearch then into old ſins, and mourn over them. We find Paul frequently calling over the ſins of his life, and even theſe he was guilty of before converſion; *I was injurious, a blaſphemer,* &c. whereby he maintained much inward peace and conſolation. Be oft looking back to old ſins, in inward ſorrow and faith in Chriſt's blood, if you would have a death-bed eaſy and ſoft to you.

DIRECT. III. *Be mindful of all acts of juſtice and charity which may be incumbent upon you at this time.*

IT is great wiſdom in men to ſettle their worldly affairs in time of health, that ſo their minds may be free for ſpiritual exerciſes, and not diſturbed with earthly cares and buſineſs when they come to a dying-bed; but, if this hath been neglected hitherto, it muſt not be omitted now. I have given directions about it, Chap. I. Direct. VI. ſo that I ſhall ſay little here, only be careful to do juſtice to every man, as much as in you lieth; and particularly, 1. By making a juſt and rational proviſion for your wife and children. 2. By ordering the payment of all your juſt debts, without defrauding any of your lawful creditors. 3. By making reſtitution, in caſe you have wronged any man. If juſtice be not done in theſe matters, how can your ſouls be diſburdened of guilt?

In the next place, forget not the acts of charity, which God requires of all the profeſſors of the goſpel.

1ſt, Seek reconciliation with your neighbours, where any difference or miſtakes have fallen in; that ſo you may die in peace and charity with all about you.

2dly, Be ready from the heart to forgive theſe that have done you any wrong. If the natural ſun ſhould not go down upon our wrath, much leſs ſhould the ſun of our lives; if you carry an unforgiving ſpirit with you into another world, how can you expect to meet with a forgiving God there? When he hath expreſly declared, Mat. vi. 15. *If you forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your father forgive your treſpaſſes.* O then, imitate your glorious Saviour, and his martyr Stephen, who at their death begged mercy from God, for thoſe that mortally hated them, Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60.

3dly, If the Lord hath given you ſubſtance, honour the Lord with it, by leaving ſome part of it to the poor, and to pious uſes. I have preſſed this once and again before; but I mention it frequently, becauſe it is much forgotten by dying perſons in our age. Remember, it is not left arbitrary to you to give or not, as you pleaſe: No, for God doth charge it upon you as a duty, yea, a debt that you owe to him, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. *Charge them that are rich in this world,* &c. *that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute.* And he pronounceth them bleſſed who conſider the poor, Pſal. xli. 1. I grant that people are not to leave all their works of charity to a death-bed; theſe ſhould alſo be minded in our lifetime, ſo as to make our own hands our executors, and our own eyes our overſeers of our charitable projects: But ſurely it is a proper ſeaſon for ſhewing charity to God's poor, when we are leaving them, and cannot have occaſion for ſhewing it more. Remember what is recorded of Dorcas after her death, Acts ix. 36. that ſhe was a woman full of good works and alms-deeds. And her friends, ver. 39. ſhewed the effects of her charity to Peter after her death. Surely it is a ſign of the degeneracy of the age, and that religion is on the declining hand, when people generally fall ſo ſhort of the zeal and piety of their fathers in theſe matters.

4thly, It would be a commendable work of charity in dying perſons, to be giving many good counſels to their relations and children, and to be putting up many fervent prayers to God for them. So Chriſt, when near to death, committed his ſpiritual children to his Father, and earneſtly begged his protection and care of them, John xvii. 11. *I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world: Keep them through thy name, keep them from the evil,* &c. In like manner, cry to God for your children, "Lord, thou haſt graciouſly given them to me, I now reſtore them back to thee. They were born to me once, O that they may be born to thee a ſecond time! I am leaving them in the midſt of ſnares and temptations, O that it may be their happineſs to be the preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus! Keep them by thy power through faith unto ſalvation. O take them within the bond of thy covenant, and be thou their Father to protect, direct and provide for them. Give them a name in thy houſe better than of ſons and daughters, that I may meet with them at thy right hand with everlaſting joy."

Laſtly, Be ſuitably concerned alſo for the whole church of Chriſt, and eſpecially for theſe that are in affliction, that God may looſe their bonds, ſend them liberty and proſperity in his due time. "Do good in thy good pleaſure unto Zion, build up the walls of Jeruſalem. Peace be within her walls, and proſperity within her palaces."

Direct. IV. *Labour what you can to overcome the love of life, and fears of death: that you may attain to willingneſs to die and to leave the world when God calleth you to it*

It is no wonder that a wicked man, or one that hath no intereſt in Chriſt, be unwilling to die: Why? He is affrighted with the guilt of paſt ſins, and the fears of future torments; and it is impoſſible to be rid of theſe till he become a true believer in Chriſt. No man hath ground to welcome death but the believer; yet it is to be regreted, that ſo many of them ſhould appear unwilling to leave this world, which is nothing to them but a wilderneſs and weary land. Lot's ſoul was vexed and troubled in Sodom, and yet he was loth to leave it; ſo ſome believers, when called to leave a vexing world, do ſhew much hankering towards it, and would linger behind. This proceeds partly from nature, which dreads a diſſolution, and partly from the weakneſs of grace. But O let all God's children labour to overcome this averſion, and go forth to meet death halfway, and bid it welcome. And, for their help in this matter, I ſhall lay before them the following arguments.

1ſt, Conſider how little reaſon a believer hath to be much in love with this preſent life. 1. 'Tis a ſinful life; ſin dwells in your nature, breaks out in your life, and pollutes all your duties. How oft have you groaned under this burden; and ſhould you not be glad to be eternally delivered from it? 2. It is a life of diſeaſes and infirmities; and ſhould you not be willing to be cured of them all at once? 3. It is a life of temptation: Satan is ſtill harraſſing thee; and ſhould you not be deſirous to be out of his reach? 4. It is a life of perſecutions from the wicked: They hate, reproach and injure you many ways. And is it not deſirable to be, *where the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and where the weary be at reſt?* 5. It is a life of clouds and darkneſs; your ſun is often veiled, and your evidences obſcured, which occaſions many bitter complaints. And ſhould you not deſire that time, when the day ſhall break, and all ſhadows fly away? 6. It is a life of calamities and fears: It is like a a ſtormy ſea, where one wave rolls upon the back of another; and when one calamity is paſt, we many times fear a greater is coming; and ſometimes the heavens turn ſo black and gloomy, that we fear a hurricane of judgments is ready to blow. And, ſhould you not bleſs God, when he comes by death to houſe your ſouls, and ſet you out of harm's way? It is in mercy that God takes away the righteous from the evil to come, Iſa. lvii. 1. So dealt he with Joſiah, 2 Kings xxii. 20. *I will gather thee to thy father, and thou ſhalt be put into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes ſhall not ſee all the evil which I ſhall bring upon this place.* So it is obſervable, that Methuſalah died the very year before the flood; Auguſtine a little before the ſacking of Hippo; Pareus juſt before the taking of Heidelberg. Luther obſerves, that all the apoſtles died before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. And Luther himſelf died before the bloody wars broke out in Germany. Thus God frequently hides his people from the temptations and troubles that are coming on the earth. Why? He ſees many of them not in caſe to endure them; and therefore, he in mercy takes them away from a tempting and ſinning world, to a land of holineſs and reſt. While we are here, we live in a world that lies in wickedneſs; every ſenſe of the body betrays the ſoul into ſin; the poor ſoul can ſcarce look out at the eye, and not be infected, nor hear by the ear, and not be diſtracted, nor ſmell at the noſtrils, and not be tainted, nor taſte by the tongue, and not be allured, nor touch by the hand, and not be defiled.

O believer, what is this life that thou art fond of? It is but a living death, or a dying life. It is full of grief for things paſt, full of labour for things preſent, and full of fears for things future. The firſt part of our life is ſpent in folly, the middle part is overwhelmed with cares, and the latter part of it is burdened with infirmities and age. And, what gain we by the prolonging of this life? Nothing but to do more evil, ſee more evil, and ſuffer more evil. And ſhould a Chriſtian be unwilling to be rid of thoſe grievances?

2dly, Conſider that dying is appointed as the way, and the only way to glory: There is no way to enter the promiſed land, but by paſſing the Jordan of death. And ſhould not a ſtranger deſire to be at home with his friends, tho' he hath a rough way and ſtormy ſea to paſs? Is there any home like heaven, where your incomparable friend Chriſt is? O what a happineſs is it to be with Chriſt, and to ſee him as he is! How happy do you think Peter, James and John were, in being taken up to mount Tabor, to be eye-witneſſes of their Saviour's transfiguration. But, O believer, death procures a greater happineſs to you; it uſhers you to mount Zion where you ſhall not only ſee your Saviour whiter than the ſnow, and brighter than the ſun, but yourſelf transfigured with him, made like him and eternally ſecured of his preſence. The three apoſtles ſaw but two prophets; but you ſhall ſee all the prophets, all the apoſtles, all the patriarchs, all the martyrs, all the holy perſons you once converſed with on earth, and in general all the ſaints in heaven, each of them ſhining as the ſun; and how ſweet will their company be? O how ſoon will the trifles of the world evaniſh, and its pleaſures be forgot, when once the believer gets a view of that captivating glory above! When the ſhepherds heard but ſome few notes of the angels ſongs, who praiſed God at the nativity of our Saviour, they preſently left their flocks, and ran to Bethlehem to behold the child Jeſus lying in the manger; but much more cauſe hath a believer to leave all the pleaſures of the world, and run to behold an exalted Jeſus ſitting on the throne of his glory, with all his ſaints and angels ſinging praiſes around him.

If Cato and Cleombrotus, two heathens, after reading Plato's book of the immortality of the ſoul, did volantarily, the one fall on his ſword, the other break his neck from a precipice, that they might the ſooner come (as they fancied) to partake of theſe joys; what a ſhame is it for Chriſtians, who have a far ſurer and clearer diſcovery of theſe things from God's own book, to be found unwilling to enter into theſe heavenly joys, when their bleſſed Redeemer calls for them thither?

3dly, Conſider how willing Chriſt was to come from heaven to earth for you; and, ſhould you be unwilling to remove from earth to heaven for him? Yea, for yourſelves, for the gain is yours. O did Chriſt aſſume your nature, become obedient to death, and purchaſe an inheritance for you with his blood; and, will you be backward to go and take poſſeſſion of it? O for a Chriſt-like obedience at death!

Laſtly, Conſider what a reproach is caſt on Chriſtianity by a believer's unwillingneſs to die. For Chriſtians to pray, and ſpeak much of Chriſt, of heaven and glory, and yet be unwilling to enter into that glory; what is it but a miſbelieving of God and a tempting of ſtrangers to think there is no reality in religion?

Queſt. 'Since death is not eaſy to grapple with, how ' ſhall I attain to this bleſſed diſpoſition, a willingneſs ' to die?'

Anſ. 1ſt, Be frequently putting forth the acts of faith upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and believe that Chriſt died to bring in a perfect righteouſneſs for believers, that they all might be compleat in him. Now, why ſhould a believer be afraid to appear before God in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is ſo pleaſing and acceptable to him? Rev. xiv. 4. 5. They are ſaid to be without fault before the throne of God. If a believer were to appear before God in his own righteouſneſs, clothed with his own duties and performances, it would be dreadful to think of dying: But to have the white garment of an elder brother to put on, gives another view of death. Alas, it is our neglecting the daily exerciſe of faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, that makes the thoughts of death ſo unwelcome.

2dly, When you attain to peace and reconciliation with God, labour to preſerve it. Be ſtating and clearing counts with God every day, and watch againſt theſe ſins that wound conſcience, waſte comfort, and grieve the ſpirit of adoption. When we think God is diſpleaſed with us, we will be afraid of going to him.

3dly, Study to be more denied to the enjoyments of this life, and to uſe them with a holy indifferency; otherwiſe there will be an unwillingneſs to leave theſe things.

4thly, Labour to be deeply ſenſible of the burden of indwelling ſin and corruption, and the working thereof in your hearts; and this will make the thoughts of death welcome, becauſe it eternally delivers you from it.

5thly, Seek further diſcoveries of the lovelineſs of Chriſt, and the daily exerciſe and increaſe of your ſoul's love to him: For it is the nature of love to long after communion with the perſon that we love.

6thly, Make death familiar to you, by the frequent forethoughts of it. Retire oft from the world to think of dying, when you are in beſt health.

7thly, Be much taken up in the ſweet employment of praiſing God, and exalting the worthy Lamb that was ſlain; and this will incline you to be there, where this is the continual work.

Laſtly, Be oft thinking of theſe warnings and forerunners of death, which God ſends to wean your heart from the love of life, and diſpoſe you to a willingneſs to die. For this end, God ſends manifold diſeaſes, pains, infirmities, wants, ſtraits, loſſes, croſſes, diſappointments, &c. And, in a ſpecial manner, let old people view the the forerunners and harbingers of death, which God ſends to prepare his way: Such as the decays and infirmities of old age, which we have elegantly deſcribed in figurative expreſſion, Eccleſ. xii. 2. *Then the light of the ſun, moon and ſtars ſhall be darkned; i. e.* In old perſons, the intellectual powers and faculties, which are as lights in the ſoul, ſhall be weakned. 'And ' then do the clouds return after rain;' *i. e,* Their diſtempers are frequent, like a continual dropping in a very rainy day; and the ending of one is but the beginning of another.—Ver. 3. *Then the keepers ef the houſe do tremble; i. e.* The head and hands, which were employed for the preſervation of the body, do ſhake.—*The ſtrong men do bow themſelves; i. e.* The legs and thighs, which are the pillars of the houſe become weak and feeble.—*The grinders ceaſe, becauſe they are few; i. e.* the teeth, which like the upper and nether milſton, do grind our meat, and prepare it for concoction, then ceaſe to do their part.—*Thoſe that look out of the windows are darkned; i. e.* The eyes wax dim, whereby God calls us to turn them away from beholding vanity, and to look after the things that are not ſeen.—Ver. 4. *The daughters of muſic are brought low: i. e.* They have neither voice nor ear; they can neither ſing themſelves, nor take pleaſure in the voice of ſinging men or ſinging women. Then death pulls us, as it were by the ear to think on the muſic above.—Ver. 5. *The almond tree flouriſheth; i. e.* The hair grows white, like an almond-tree in the bloſſom. And, as the outward parts of the body do weaken and decay, ſo alſo do the inward parts; Therefore it is ſaid, Ver. 6. *The ſilver cord ſhall be looſed, the golden bow brokenl ,the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the ciſtern; i. e.* The ſilver cord of the ſinews is looſed, which carries the faculty of ſenſe and motion from the head, thro' the body. The head, which, like a golden bowl or box, contains the brain, that is the fountain of ſenſe and motion, thro' age is broken, and turns crazy. The many pitchers of the veins, which carry the nouriſhing blood from the well of the liver unto each part of the body, become like broken veſſels. And the wheel of the arteries, which convey the vital ſpirits from the heart to the ſeveral members for quickning them, begin to turn faint and languid. All theſe things do warn old perſons to take their affections off time's things, and ſet them upon things above, that they may be helped to ſay, we *deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt.*

But after all, ſome believers will have objections againſt willingneſs to die, ſome whereof I ſhall conſider.

Object. I. "I am threatned to be cut off in the " flower of mine age."

Anſ. Inſtead of fretting on this account, you ought rather to adore and praiſe a gracious God, that is willing to beſtow the reward of the whole day upon thee, who haſt only laboured ſome hours of it. Praiſe him, that is willing to take you ſo ſoon home; whereby you will prevent much ſin and ſorrow in the world.

Object. II. "I have houſes and lands, and a comfort" able dwelling on the earth."

Anſ. Theſe are only needful in your paſſage thro' the world; above there is no uſe for theſe comforts. There God provideth manſions for his people, a thouſand times more comfortable, John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. v. 1. Surely houſes of God's building, and of Chriſt's furniſhing are preferable to the cottages built by mens hands.

Object. III. "But I am loth to leave God's ordinan" ces, and the ſweet communion I have had with him " therein."

Anſ. Above there will be no need of ordinances, ſacraments, bibles or miniſters; for the Lamb will be the light of the heavenly temple, and all hid things in religion will be diſcovered in Chriſt's face. There you will celebrate an eternal Sabbath, drink the fruit of the vine new with Chriſt, be ever with the Lord, without any cloud or interruption of your communion with him. Is it any loſs to be taken from the ſhallow ſtreams, and ſet by the fountain that is ever full and running over?

Object. IV. "I am loth to leave the company of "godly friends and relations."

Anſ. Death will take you to your friend Chriſt, that is far better than them all. And for one friend you loſe upon earth, you ſhall find an hundred in heaven; and theſe godly relations you leave here, you ſhall ſoon meet with them, again there; where you will have far ſweeter communion than poſſibly you can have upon earth with them or the beſt of men, who, while here, have ſeveral infirmities and paſſions, that many times make their converſe uncomfortable.

Object. V. "But I would fain ſee the glory of Zion "upon earth, when God's promiſes to her ſhall be "accompliſhed.

Anſ. So Moſes would fain have ſeen Iſrael's happineſs in the promiſed land: But his dying in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promiſes to them there, was more acceptable to God, than his beholding the performance. And the glory of the church militant is a ſight nothing comparable to that of the church triumphant above.

Object. VI. "But I would incline to ſtay to do God "more ſervice in his church below, whoſe neceſſities "are clamant."

Anſ. 1*ſt*, You will not want opportunity for ſerving and glorifying God above, and where you will be in a far better caſe for it. Here our hearts are oft out of tune for God's work, and we are forced to hang our harps upon the willows; but above there are no willows to hang them on; no ſaint there will ever complain of any indiſpoſition of heart or tongue.

2*dly*, God knows the neceſſities of his church, and is more concerned for them than thou canſt be; and it is eaſy for him to raiſe up inſtruments to carry on his work when thou art gone.

Object. VII. *I am afraid of the pain and pangs of death. The thoughts of theſe make me ſhrink back.*

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Many die without much ſeeming ſenſe of pain, and it is probable have leſs pain at the hour of death, than they have felt under ſeveral former diſeaſes.

2*dly*, If they be ſharp, they are ſoon over; and each pang of death will ſet ſin a ſtep nearer the door, and thy ſoul a ſtep nearer home: And therefore it becometh a Chriſtian to die cheerfully, and to be glad when he can find the grave.

Now, what I have ſaid in this chapter is to the believing ſoul: For it is no wonder tho' the ſouls of the ungodly, at death, ſhrink back into the body, and tremble to go forth, when they can have no proſpect of any better lodging than utter darkneſs.

DIRECT. V. *Study to imitate the ancient worthies, by dying in faith.*

THIS was the character and epitaph of the Old Teſtament ſaints, Heb. xi. 13. *Theſe all died in faith.* As they had lived by faith, ſo they died in faith. They not only continued true believers to the laſt, dying in the ſtate of faith, but they died in the exerciſe of faith alſo. Now, the exerciſe of faith in dying includes ſeveral things, worthy to be imitated by all dying believers.

1*ſt*, An open and profeſſed adherence to the doctrine of faith, and truths of Chriſtianity. This faith all Chriſtians ſhould zealouſly own in the view of death, and perſevere in to the laſt without wavering. This would be to die like martyrs, tho' we die in our beds. How ſtedfaſtly did old Polycarp adhere to Chriſt and his truths to the laſt, and ſo died in faith? When he was urged by the Proconſul to deny Chriſt, he anſwered, *Theſe fourſcore and ſix years have I ſerved him, and he never once offended me: And how ſhall I now deny him?*

2*dly*, Dying in faith imports an inward, hearty and firm belief of the fundamental articles of the Chriſtian faith; and improving them ſo, as to make them the foundation of our comfort and hope at the hour of death. As for inſtance, we muſt yield our departing ſouls, in the firm belief of their living and exiſting in a ſeparate condition after this life, and of that future ſtate of bleſſedneſs and reſt which God hath prepared for all believers. Again, we muſt diſmiſs the body to the grave, in a firm belief and hope of a joyful reſurrection at the laſt day. Thus that holy man Job both lived and died in faith, Job xix. 25, 26. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh I ſhall ſee God.* A Chriſtian then dies in faith, when he believes theſe truths ſo, as cheerfully to obey God's call, and venture into the inviſible world, upon the teſtimony which God hath given concerning it; as Abraham did in going out to an unknown land, Heb. xi. 8. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

3*dly*, The believer dies in faith, when he makes freſh application to Chriſt as his only hope and Saviour, takes him in his arms of faith, as old Simeon did before his death, ſaying, *In the Lord Chriſt I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength;* though I have neither righteouſneſs nor ſtrength in myſelf, yet I have both in him, my bleſſed ſurety and redeemer. We have many uſes for faith in Chriſt at the hour of death. By faith we muſt depend upon Chriſt's blood for making the atonement, and waſhing away the guilt of all our bypaſt ſins. By faith we muſt put on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for covering our naked ſouls, when they are to appear and ſtand before God. By faith we muſt rely on Chriſt for ſtrength to ſuffer pain, reſiſt temptations, and conquer death and all our enmies. By faith we muſt look to Chriſt as our leader, and truſt him for ſafe conduct through the dark valley of death, and for ſafe landing on the ſhore of glory.

4*thly*, The believer dies in faith, when he truſts his departing ſoul with confidence in his Redeemer's hand, ſaying with Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him againſt that day.* This was the Pſalmiſt's practice, Pſal. xxxi. 5. *Into thy hand I commit my ſpirit; for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* So the man that dies in faith, commits the jewel of his ſoul to his Redeemer's keeping, and confides in his care of it. Why? He made it, he hath redeemed it, he loves it, it is his own, a member of his body, and he will not hate his own fleſh. He loves his dying ſaints much better than we love an eye, a hand, or any other member of our body, which, to be ſure, we will not loſe, if it be in our power to ſave it.

5thly, Dying in faith imports, that the dying ſaint confides in God's faithfulneſs and truth for making good all theſe promiſes to his church and people after his death, which are not yet accompliſhed. We ſhould go off the ſtage in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promiſes concerning the proſperity of his church, the calling of the Jews, the deſtruction of Antichriſt, and the ſecond coming of our Lord; and likewiſe concerning our families, that God will be as good as his word, and be a father to the fatherleſs, and a huſband to the widow.

Would we then be ſo happy as to die in faith, let us take theſe advices.

1ſt, Let us be careful to get faith before-hand; for death is a time to uſe faith, not to get it. They were fooliſh virgins, who had their oil to buy when the bridegroom was come.

2dly, Study to live every day in the exerciſe of faith, and be ſtill improving and making uſe of Chriſt in all his offices, and for all theſe ends and uſes for which God hath given him to believers.

3dly, Be frequently clearing up your evidences for heaven, and beware of letting ſin blot them to you.

4thly, Record and lay up the experiences of God's kind dealings with you, and be often reflecting upon them, that you may have them ready at hand in the hour of death.

Laſtly, Meditate much on theſe promiſes, which have been ſweet and and comfortable to you in the time of ſtraits; and beg that the Lord may bring them to your remembrance when you come to die.

DIRECT. VI. *Set the example of other dying ſaints before you, and ſtudy in like manner to ſhine in grace, and be examplary in piety and heavenly diſcourſe, for the glory of God and good of ſouls, when you are going off the ſtage.*

THIS is the laſt opportunity you have of doing ſervice to God, and the intereſt of religion; wherefore ſtrive to improve it diligently for the honour of God, and the edification of thoſe that ſurvive you. How pleaſant is it to ſee God's people leaving the world, commending Chriſt and his ſervice, and perfuming the place they lie in with their laſt breath? I have, Chap. III. Direct. V. and VI. adduced ſeveral motives to preſs this point, and given directions concerning the ſpeech and behaviour of the children of God when on ſick-beds, which I ſhall not repeat.

That which I deſign here is, to ſet before you the examples of ſome eminent ſaints, and their exemplary, pious and holy ſpeeches and ſayings, when they were a-dying; and that in order to confirm and eſtabliſh others in religion, and alſo to excite them to imitate theſe ſhining worthies when they alſo come to die. Surely it is for this very end, that God hath ordered us to be compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, Heb. xii. 1. Thus doth the apoſtle improve their example, Heb. xi. 1. And, how earneſt is he in this matter? Heb. vi. 11, 12. *And we deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.*

I ſhall begin with ſome examples from the ſacred hiſtory; and, in the firſt place, with the King of ſaints, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. O how ſweet and comfortable were his diſcourſes unto his diſciples when his death drew nigh! And, what a heavenly prayer did he make for them and all his elect ones at that time! Theſe we have recorded in the xiv, xv, xvi, and xvii chapters of John; which are moſt ſeaſonable at all times for us to read and meditate upon, but eſpecially when death is approaching. And likewiſe let us read the hiſtory of our Lord's paſſion, in which we may obſerve the wonderful expreſſions of his faith in God, his patience under ſufferings, his pity to his enemies, his love to his mother and his diſciples, his concern for his Father's glory, his obedience in his death, and his willingneſs to be offered up. Thus the bleſſed Sun of righteouſneſs did ſhine forth moſt glorioufly at his ſetting, with the radiant beams of his heavenly graces and virtues: And herein he hath ſet himſelf a pattern to all dying ſaints to the end of the world.

Jacob, when he was on his death-bed, called his ſons together, and gave them many ſpecial charges and bleſſings, we have his excellent words recorded in Gen. xlviii. and xlix chapters. And in particular, how ſweetly doth he ſpeak of the coming of the Meſſiah to them? Gen. xlix. 10, 18. and, how affectionately doth he commend God's goodneſs and kind providence towards him thro' his life? Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. *The God which fed me all my life long unto this day*, &c.

Joſeph, when he was a-dying, ſpoke lovingly to his brethren, who had dealt cruelly with him; and aſſured them of the Lord's faithfulneſs in keeping his promiſe to their fathers, Gen. l. 20. *I die, and God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you out of this land.*

Moſes, when he was to go up to mount Nebo to die there, left many bleſſings, and gave many weighty charges to the children of Iſrael; we have his holy and raviſhing words recorded, Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii chapters. And particularly, how pleaſantly doth he commend God, and his ways to the people! Deut. xxxii. 4. *He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: A God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.*

Joſhua, when he was near his end, gave many ſolemn charges and exhortations to the people, which we have narrated, Joſh. xxiii. and xxiv. chapters. And there we may ſee the remarkable methods he takes to rivet impreſſions and convictions upon them, now when he can inſtruct them no longer. And particularly, he appeals to their conſciences concerning the faithfulneſs of God in keeping his word to them, that ſo he might engage them to fidelity to him, Joſh. xxiii. 14. *And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you.*

David, when his end was near, aſſembled the people, and ſolemnly charged them, as in the audience of God, to keep his commandments, 1 Chron. xxviii. 8, 9. And particularly, he charged his ſon and ſucceſſor Solomon, to *know the God of his father, and to ſerve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.*

The apoſtle Paul, when taking his laſt farewel of the elders of Epheſus, moſt ſolemnly charges them, to *take heed to themſelves, and the flocks over which the holy Ghoſt had made them overſeers*, Acts xx. 26. And, how ſweetly doth he ſing, in the view of approaching death, 2 Tim. iv. 6. 7. 8. *I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them alſo that love his appearing.*

In imitation of theſe ſcripture-ſaints, the people of God in all ages have ſtudied to glorify God and edify men at their death, by commending God and godlineſs to their friends and families. Theſe we ought to teach by our example, both how to live and how to die, as others have done before us. Thus ſaid once a dying ſaint to his family, 'I have formerly taught you how 'to live, and now I teach you how to die.'

Now, becauſe in all ages the ſpeeches of dying Chriſtians have been much obſerved, that God hath remarkably bleſſed them to the eſtabliſhment and confirmation, quickning and exciting of others to imitate them; I ſhall bring ſeveral examples from human hiſtories and writings, and moſtly from Clark's lives, of ſundry eminent ſaints, whoſe graces have ſhone brighteſt, and their ſpeeches were moſt heavenly, when the ſun of their life was at the ſetting.

1. That old diſciple, Polycarp, when he came to the ſtake at which he was burnt, deſired to ſtand untied, ſaying, *Let me alone; for he that gave me ſtrength to come to the fire, will give me patience to endure the flame without your tying.*

2. So holy Cyprian triumphed over death, ſaying, 'Let him only fear death, who muſt paſs from this 'death to the ſecond death.' When he heard the ſentance of death pronounced againſt him, he ſaid, 'I 'thank God for freeing me from the priſon of this 'body.'

3. Baſil, when the emperor Valens ſent his officers to tempt him with great preferments to turn from the faith, he rejected them with ſcorn, ſaying, *You may offer theſe things to children.* And, when they threatned him with ſufferings, he ſaid, *Threaten your purple gallants with theſe things, that give themſelves to their pleaſures.*

When Modeſtus the Prefect threatned Baſil, to confiſcate his goods, to torment him, to baniſh him, or kill him, he anſwered. *He need not fear confiſcation, that had nothing to loſe; nor baniſhment, to whom heaven only is a country; nor torments, when his body would be daſhed with one blow; nor death, which is the only way to ſet him at liberty.* The Prefect telling him he was mad, he ſaid, *Opto me in æternum ſic delirare*, I wiſh I may for ever be thus mad.

4. Ignatius being led from Syria to Rome to be torn in pieces of wild beaſts, he expreſt his fear leſt it ſhould happen to him as to ſome others, that the lions out of a kind of reverence, would not dare to touch him. And therefore he oft wiſhed, *That their appetites might be whetted to diſpatch him. For (ſaid he) the lions teeth are but like a mill, which, tho' it bruiſeth, yet waſteth not the good wheat, only prepares and fits it to be made pure bread. Let me be broken by them, ſo I may be* [illegible] *pure manchet for heaven.*

5. The great Mr. Knox, our reformer, when he lay a-dying, was much in prayer, ever crying, 'Come; 'Lord Jeſus; ſweet Jeſus, into thy hands I commend 'my ſpirit.' Being aſked by thoſe that attended him; if his pain was great? He anſwered, 'That he did not 'eſteem that a pain, which would be to him the end of 'all trouble, and the beginning of eternal joys.' Oftimes, after ſome deep meditations, he ſaid, 'O ſerve 'the Lord in fear, and death ſhall not be terrible to 'you: Bleſſed is the death of thoſe that have part in 'the death of Jeſus.'

After a ſore temptation from Satan (which I formerly mentioned) over which he triumphed at length, he ſaid, "Now the enemy is gone away aſhamed, and "ſhall no more return. I am ſure now my battle is at "an end, and that without pain of body or trouble of "ſpirit, I ſhall ſhortly change this mortal and miſerable "life, with that happy and immortal life, which ſhall "never have an end." After one had prayed for him, he was aſked, whether he heard the prayer? He anſwered, "Would to God you had heard it with ſuch "an ear and heart as I have done! adding, Lord Je"ſus receive my ſpirit." With which words, without any motion of hands or feet, as one falling aſleep, rather then dying, he ended his life.

6. Dr. Gouge, when he was old and dying, was ſore afflicted with the ſtone, and other painful maladies; yet though by reaſon of his pains he was oft heard to groan, he never once grumbled againſt the diſpenſations of God. He never cried out, *A great ſufferer*, but oft, *A great ſinner*: Yet ſtill comforted himſelf, that there is a great Saviour. In his greateſt torments he would ſay, "Well, yet in all theſe there is nothing of hell, or "of God's wrath. O my ſoul, be ſilent, be patient: "It is thy God and Father that thus orders thine eſtate. "Thou art his clay; he may tread and trample upon "thee as he pleaſeth, thou haſt deſerved much more. "'Tis enough that thou art kept out of hell; tho' thy "pains be grievous, yet they are not intollerable, thy "God affords ſome intermiſſions; he will turn it to "thy good, and at length put an end to all; and none "of theſe comforts can be expected in hell." In his greateſt pains, he oft uſed holy Job's words, *ſhall we receive good from the hands of the Lord, and not evil alſo?* When any of his friends would have comforted him, with telling him of his eminent gifts and ſervice in the miniſtry, he would anſwer, "I dare not think of any "ſuch thing for comfort: only Jeſus Chriſt, and what "he hath done and endured, is the ground of my ſure "comfort." The thoughts of death were pleaſant to him, which he often termed, his beſt friend, next unto Jeſus Chriſt. And he would bleſs God, that he had nothing to do, but to die.

7. I have read of another miniſter under the like extreme pains. When he was aſked, how he did? His frequent anſwer was, "The buſh always burning but "not conſumed; though my pains are above the "ſtrength of nature, yet they are not above the ſup"ports of grace. He would pray, Lord, drop com"fort into theſe bitter waters of Marah. Let the blood "of ſprinkling, which extinguiſheth the fire of thine "anger, allay my burning pain. Oh, if my patience

“ were more, my pains would be leſs; Lord, give me patience, and inflict what thou wilt. This is a fiery chariot, but it will carry me to heaven. O my God, break open the priſon door, and ſet my poor captive ſoul free: I deſire to be diſſolved, but enable me willingly to wait thy time.” He would cry again, When ſhall the time come, that I ſhall neither ſin more, nor ſorrow more: Lord, keep me from diſhonouring thy name by impatience. Oh, who would not, even in burnings, have honourable thoughts of God! Lord, thou giveſt me no occaſion to have hard thoughts of thee. Bleſſed be God, for the peace of mine inward man, when my outward man is ſo full of trouble. This is a bitter cup, but it is of my Father's mixing; and, ſhall I not then drink it?”

8. Mrs. Jane Aſkew, who was a martyr in king Henry's reign, to her confeſſion in Newgate ſhe thus ſubſcribed; written by me Jane Aſkew, that neither wiſheth death, nor feareth its might, and as merry as one bound towards heaven. When the chancellor ſent her letters at the ſtake, offering her the king's pardon, if ſhe would recant; ſhe refuſing to look upon them, gave this anſwer; ‘ That ſhe came not thither to deny her Lord and maſter.’

9. Mr James Bainham, when he was at the ſtake in the midſt of the burning fire which had half conſumed his legs and arms, ſpake theſe words; ‘ O ye Papiſts! behold ye look for miracles, and here now ye may ſee a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain, than if I were on a bed of down, it is to me as a bed of roſes.’

10. John Lambert, as he was burning in Smithfield, and his legs were quite conſumed with the fire, he lift up his hands, his fingers flaming like torches, but his heart abounding with comfort, crying out, *None but Chriſt, none but Chriſt.*

11. Mr Robert Glover, a little before his death, had loſt the ſenſe of God's favour, for which he was in great heavineſs and ſorrow; but when he came within ſight of the ſtake at which he was to ſuffer, he was on a ſudden ſo filled with divine comfort, that clapping his hands together, he cried out to his ſervant, *He is come, he is come*; and ſo died moſt cheerfully.

12. It was a ſaying of Auguſtine, ‘ Boughs fall off trees, and ſtones out of buildings; and, why ſhould it ſeem ſtrange that mortal men die!’

13. Mr John Dod had a violent fever, that there was but little hope of his life; yet at length his phyſician coming to him, ſaid, now I have hope of your recovery. To whom Mr Dod anſwered, ‘ You think to comfort me with this, but you make my heart ſad. It is as if you ſhould tell one, who had been ſore weather-beaten at ſea, and conceiving he was now arrived at the haven where his ſoul longed to be, that he muſt go back again to be toſſed with new winds and waves.’

He would often ſay in his laſt ſickneſs, ‘ I am not afraid to look death in the face. I can ſay, Death where is thy ſting; death cannot hurt me.’

He uſed to ſay, ‘ The knowledge of two things would make one willing to die, viz. What heaven is, and that it is mine.’ Yes, ſaid one, if a man were ſure of that. To whom he anſwered, ‘ Truly aſſurance is to be had; and, what have we been doing all this while?’

Some others of the ſayings of this holy man were ſo pithy and remarkable, I cannot paſs them here.

Once Mr Dod coming to viſit a godly miniſter on his death-bed, who was much oppreſſed with melancholly, and complained to him, ſaying, O Mr Dod, what will you ſay of him, who is going out of the world, and can find no comfort? To whom Mr Dod anſwered, ‘ What will you ſay of our Saviour Chriſt, who, when he was going out of the world, found no comfort, but cried out, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?——He ſaid of afflictions they are God's portions, which we may ſweeten by faith and faithful prayer; but we, for the moſt part, make them bitter, putting into God's cup the evil ingredients of our impatience and unbelief.—He called death the friend of grace, though it be the enemy of nature; for, whereas the word ſacraments and prayer do but weaken ſin, death kills it.’ He uſed to ſay, ‘ A man is never in a hard condition, unleſs he have a hard heart, and cannot pray.’—He inſtructed Chriſtians how they ſhould never have a great nor laſting affliction, and that was, by looking upon the things that are not ſeen, which are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 18. For, what can be great to him, that counts the world nothing? And, what can be long to him, that accounts his life but a ſpan long?——When he ſaw a Chriſtian look ſad, he would ſay as Jonadab did to Amnon, art thou a king's ſon, and lookeſt ſo ill? And, when ſuch complained to him of their croſſes and loſſes, he would uſe the words of Eliphaz to Job, ‘ Do the conſolations of God ſeem ſmall unto you? God hath taken from you your children, your goods &c. but he hath not taken from you himſelf, his Chriſt, nor his Spirit, nor heaven, nor eternal life.’

To a friend of his that roſe from a mean to a great eſtate, he ſent word, ‘ That this was but as if he ſhould go out of a boat into a barge or ſhip; but he ought ſeriouſly to remember, that, whilſt he was in this world, he was but upon the floating ſea.’

He oft ſaid, that if it were lawful to envy any, he would envy thoſe that turn to God in their youth, whereby they eſcape much ſin and ſorrow, and are like Jacob, that ſtole the bleſſing betimes.——He uſed to compare reproofs given in paſſion, to ſcalding potions, which the patient could not take down; in reproofs we ſhould labour for meekneſs of wiſdom, uſing ſoft words, and hard arguments.

He was a moſt popular miniſter, but much perſecuted. Once he took a journey to ſee his father-in-law, Mr Greenham, and to bemoan himſelf to him, upon account of his croſſes and hard uſage. Mr Greenham, having heard all he could ſay anſwered him thus; ‘ Son, ſon, when affliction lieth heavy, ſin lieth light.’ Mr Dod uſed oft to bleſs God for this ſpeech, ſaying, if Mr Greenham had bemoaned him as he expected, he had done him much hurt. He forgot not this ſaying in his old age, but made excellent uſe of it for himſelf and others.

14. Oecolampadius, that famous divine of Switzerland, when lying on his death-bed, and being aſked, whether the light did not offend him? He anſwered, pointing to his breaſt, *Hic ſat lucis*, Here is abundance of light, meaning of comfort and joy. He aſked one of his friends, what news? His friend anſwered, none. Then ſaith he, I will tell you ſome news; I ſhall preſently be with my Lord Chriſt.

15. A certain godly man paſſing through his laſt

ſickneſs with extraordinary calmneſs of conſcience, being aſked by ſome of his friends anent it, he anſwered, that he had ſtedfaſtly fixed his heart upon that ſweet promiſe, Iſa. xxvi. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee; becauſe he truſteth in thee.* And my God (ſaid he) hath graciouſly made it fully good unto my ſoul.

16. Mr Robert Bolton miniſter at Broughton, well known by his writings, in time of his laſt ſickneſs which was long and ſharp, often breathed out theſe words: "Oh, when will this good hour come? When ſhall "I be diſſolved? When ſhall I be with Chriſt?" Being told, that to be diſſolved was indeed better for him, yet it would be better for the church that he would ſtay here; he anſwered, "If I ſhall find favour in the "eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew "me both it and his habitation; but if otherwiſe, lo, "here I am, let him do what ſeemeth good in his eyes." Being aſked by another, If he could not be content to live, if it pleaſed God? He anſwered, *I grant that life is a great bleſſing of God, neither will I neglect any means that may preſerve it; and do heartily ſubmit to God's will; but of the two, I infinitely deſire more to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt.* He bade all that came to ſee him, make ſure of Chriſt before they came to die, and look upon the world now as a lump of vanity. He encouraged the miniſters that came to him, to be diligent and courageous in the work of the Lord, and not to faint nor droop for any affliction that ſhould ariſe thereupon.

When he found himſelf very weak, he called for his wife and children. He deſired her to bear his diſſolution, which was now at hand, with a Chriſtian fortitude, a thing he had been preparing her for by the ſpace of twenty years; and bade her make no doubt but ſhe ſhould meet him again in heaven. He exhorted his children to remember theſe things he had frequently told them before; adding, 'That he hoped 'and believed, that none of them durſt think to meet 'him at that great tribunal in an unregenerate ſtate.'

Some of his pariſh coming to watch with him, it was moved, that as by his doctrine he had diſcoved to them the exceeding comforts that were in Chriſt, ſo now he would tell them what he felt in his own ſoul. "Alas (ſaid he) do you look for that of me now, that "wants breath and ſtrength to ſpeak? I have told you "enough in my miniſtry; but yet, to ſatiſfy you, I am, "by the wonderful mercies of God, as full of comfort "as my heart can hold; and I feel nothing in my ſoul "but Chriſt, with whom I heartily deſire to be."—And obſerving ſome weeping, he looked to them, and ſaid, Oh, what a deal ado there is before one can die.

When the pangs of death were upon him, being told that ſome of his dear friends were about him to take their laſt farewel, he cauſed himſelf to be raiſed up in his bed: And, after a few gaſpings for breath, he ſaid, "I am now drawing on apace to my diſſolution; hold "out, faith and patience, your work will ſpeedily be at "an end." And then, ſhaking them all by the hands, prayed heartily and particularly for them; and deſired them to make ſure of heaven, and to bear in mind what he had formerly told them in his miniſtry; proteſting to them, that the doctrine he had preached to them for the ſpace of twenty years was the truth of God, as he ſhould anſwer it at the tribunal of Chriſt, before whom he ſhould ſhortly appear.

When he was ſtruggling with death, a very dear friend taking him by the hand, aſked him, if he felt not much pain: Truly no (ſaid he) the greateſt I feel is your cold hand.

17. Mr John Holland, a godly miniſter, continued his uſual practice of expounding the ſcripture in his family to the laſt; and, the day before his death, he called for the Bible, and, cauſing another read the eight chapter of the Romans, he diſcourſed upon it verſe by verſe; but on a ſudden, he ſaid, "O ſtay your "reading; what brightneſs is this I ſee! Have you "lighted up any candles?" A ſtander-by ſaid, no, it is the ſun-ſhine (for it was about five o'clock in a clear ſummer's evening.) "Sun-ſhine! ſaith he, nay, it is "my Saviour's ſhine. Now, farewel world; welcome "heaven; the day-ſtar from on high hath viſited my "heart: O ſpeak it when I am gone, and preach it at "my funeral; God dealeth familiarly with man, I feel "his mercy, I ſee his majeſty; whether in the body, "or out of the body, I cannot tell, God he knoweth; "but I ſee things that are unutterable." And in this rapture he continued till he died.

18. I knew not long ago an eminently godly man G. M. that fell into ſeveral ſuch extraordinary raptures ſometime before his death, ſuch as his bodily ſtrength and ſpirit were not able to ſupport under, though he had no ſickneſs. Sometimes he was ſo ſwallowed up and overcome by the manifeſtations of God's love to his ſoul, that his words could not be well underſtood; his natural colour, heat and ſtrength would ſo go off, that all about him would conclude him to be dying: But, when he was able to get words uttered, they were ſo heavenly and raviſhing concerning the love of Chriſt and freedom of grace, that by-ſtanders could not hear him without weeping. Sometimes miniſters, when they came to viſit him, and found him in theſe raptures, were forced to turn all their prayers in his behalf into praiſes; except ſome petitions they would put up to God, 'That he might graciouſly ſpare and be tender 'of his weak body, and enable him to bear that load 'of loving-kindneſs God was pleaſed to let out to him, 'and which his preſent bodily ſtrength was not ſufficient 'for.' Yea, they would be put to cry, 'Lord, if it 'be thy will, hold thy hand, for he is but a clay veſſel; 'this new wine will burſt the old bottle; preſerve him 'in life, as a monument of the rich grace of God, for 'the conviction of Atheiſts and carnal people, and for 'the confirmation of the faith of the children of God.' —Sometimes he would cry in abrupt expreſſions, 'O 'angels, help me to praiſe him! O ſaints, admire his 'love, and wonder at him.—Again, O flames of love! 'My ſoul ſeeth Chriſt! The heavens open! I ſee a 'throne, and the Lamb in the midſt of the throne! O 'what think ye of Chriſt? My ſoul breathes, breathes 'towards him! My ſpirit is exhaled out of me by the 'manifeſtations of God."—He uſed frequently to ſay with a heavenly air to his friends, O what think ye of Chriſt!—When his extaſy did ſomewhat abate, ſo that he attained a pleaſant calmneſs of thought, and freedom of ſpeech; he would diſcourſe of the myſteries of religion, the electing love of God, the freedom of grace, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and the glorious contrivance of redemption through his death and ſacrifice; I ſay, he would talk of theſe things more like an angel than a man. For ſuch was his heavenly

eloquence, fluency of words, and facility of ſpeaking upon theſe ſubjects, (which otherwiſe was not natural to him) that theſe who came to ſee him were exceedingly ſurpriſed and aſtoniſhed to hear him. His body gradually weakened under theſe raptures of ſpirit, and he longed much to be off the world, becauſe he thought he could be ſo little uſeful in it for advancing God's honour. He reckoned himſelf bound to improve the ſhort time he was like to have here, in commending Chriſt and religion to all that he had acceſs to, and alſo to admoniſh them of any thing he knew amiſs in them, which he did moſt convincingly. And having occaſion to ſee ſome who vilipended the eſtabliſhed church, and the ordinances diſpenſed in it; he highly commended the ordinances, and told them, that from his own ſweet experience he could ſay, that God was to be found in them:—He ſeemed to have ſin wonderfully mortified; for he complained of no other heart-plague but ſelf, and it was his great exerciſe to get ſelf wholly ſubdued; he purſued it thro' many of its windings and lurking places, and after all he would regret his little ſucceſs againſt it.

"For (ſaid he) when I am in my moſt elevated frames, and admitted to the neareſt acceſs to my Redeemer, that ſubtile enemy ſelf will enter in with me, and offer to pull the crown off his head before my face."

Once after hearing a ſermon on Pſal. lxxxv. 8. I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak, he broke out in rapturous diſcourſe to one that came to ſee him bleſſing God that had ſpoke to him in that ſermon. 'O (ſaid he) what am I, that the rock of Iſrael ſhould have ſpoke to me theſe three ſermon-days bygone, aſſuring me that all my ſins are forgiven? What am I, a vile worm, that he ſhould be ſo kind and condeſcending, as to diſcover Chriſt and heaven in ſuch a manner to me, and aſſure me that I'll ſhortly be with him? Oh, I thought that I had ſinned him away from me, but I ſee he will not bide away! O admirable free grace! O help me to praiſe him!'

When death drew near, there was ſome alteration in his caſe; yet he never queſtioned his intereſt in Chriſt; but ſtill aſſerted, *I know he is my God and my Redeemer, and I ſhall ſhortly be with him.* And once when he was ready to complain for want of God's wonted manifeſtations, he ſaid, the Lord knew his body was now weak, and could not bear what formerly he had met with, yet (ſaid he) glory to his name, he hath given me three blinks ſince my laſt illneſs began,

19. Dr. Harris, head of Trinity-college in Oxford, in his laſt ſickneſs uſed to exhort all about him to get faith above all things. 'It is (ſaid he) your victory, your peace, your life, your crown, and your chiefeſt piece of ſpiritual armour. Howbeit, get on all other pieces, and go forth in the Lord's might: Stand to the fight, and thy iſſue ſhall be glorious. Only forget not to call in the help of your general: Do all from him, and under him.'—On the Lord's day he would not have any kept from the ordinances on his account; and, when they returned from the ſermons, he would ſay to them, 'Come, what have you for me?' And, when any gave him account of what they had heard, he would reſume the heads thereof, and ſay. 'O what excellent truths are theſe! Lay them up carefully, for you will have need of them.—When friends came to viſit him, he would ſay, I cannot ſpeak, but I can hear.' Being aſked, where his comfort lay? He anſwered, 'In Chriſt, and in the free grace of God.'

One telling him that he might take much comfort in his labours, and the good he had done; his anſwer was, 'All is nothing without a Saviour, without him my beſt works would condemn me. Oh, I am aſhamed of them, they are ſo mixed with ſin. I have done nothing for God as I ought.——Oh, loſs of time ſits very heavy upon my ſpirit. Work, work apace; aſſure yourſelf nothing will more trouble you when you come to die, than that you have done no more for God, who hath done ſo much for you.'

Sometimes he uſed thus to breathe out himſelf, 'I never in all my life ſaw the worth of a Chriſt, nor taſted the ſweetneſs of God's love in that meaſure as now I do.'—Being aſked by miniſters, what they ſhould chiefly requeſt for him? He anſwered, 'Do not only pray for me, but praiſe God that he ſupports me, and keeps off Satan from me, in my weakneſs; beg that I may hold out. I am now a good way home, near the ſhore, I leave you toſſing on the ſea; Oh, it is a good time to die in.

In all his latter-wills which he made, he took care this legacy ſhould ſtill be inſerted; 'Item, I bequeath to all my children, and to their children's children, to each of them a Bible, with this inſcription, None but Chriſt.' He uſed to ſay, 'It is a hard thing for a ſaint to forgive himſelf ſome faults, when God hath forgiven them.'

20. David Chitræus, when he lay a dying, lift up his head from the pillow to hear the diſcourſes of his friends that ſat by him, and ſaid, 'That he ſhould die with the greateſt comfort, if he might die learning ſomething.'

21. Mr. Cooper, when a-dying ſaid, 'I ſaw not my children when they were in the womb, yet there the Lord fed them without my care or knowledge. I ſhall not ſee them when I go out of the body, yet ſhall they not want a father. Again, death is ſomewhat driry, and the ſtreams of that Jordan between us and our Canaan run furiouſly, but they ſtand ſtill when the Ark comes.'

22. The reverend Mr. Halyburton, that ſhining light in St Andrews, when a-dying, commended Chriſt and godlineſs with great earneſtneſs to all that came to ſee him. He exhorted his brethren to diligence in the miniſtry. 'It was the delight of my heart (ſaid he) to preach the goſpel: I deſired to decreaſe that the bridegroom might increaſe, and to be nothing, that he might be all. I repent I did not more for him. O that I had the tongues of men and angels, to praiſe him.' When he was adviſed to ly quiet, he ſaid, 'Whereon ſhould a man beſtow his laſt breath, but in commending the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God clothed in our nature, dying for our ſins.'

He cauſed read one of Mr. Rutherford's letters, *viz.* that to Mr. John Mein, and thereafter ſaid, 'That is a book I would commend to you all, there is more practical religion in that letter, than in a book of a larger volume.'

He exhorted ſome miniſters that came to ſee him to faithfulneſs. 'As for the work of the miniſtry (ſaid he) it was my deliberate choice: Were my days lengthened out much more, and days as troubleſome as they

‘ are like to be, I would rather be a contemned miniſter ‘ of God, than the greateſt prince on earth.’—He ſaid, when taking farewel of his wife, children and ſervants, ‘ Here's a demonſtration of the reality of religion, that ‘ I a poor, weak, timorous man, as much afraid of death ‘ as any, am now enabled by the power of grace, compoſedly and with joy to look death in the face. I dare ‘ look it in the face in its moſt ghaſtly ſhape, and hope ‘ within a little to have the victory. I cannot but commend the Lord Jeſus. As far as my word will go, I ‘ muſt proclaim it, he is the beſt maſter that ever I ſaw,’ To his ſon who was a child he ſaid, ‘ If I had as many ‘ ſons as there are hairs in your head, I would beſtow ‘ them all on God.’—To ſome preſent he ſaid, ‘ O ſirs, ‘ I dread mightily that a rational ſort of religion is ‘ coming in among us, I mean by it, a religion that conſiſts in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godlineſs: And thence ‘ people ſhall fall into a way of ſerving God, which ‘ is meer Deiſm, having no relation to Chriſt Jeſus and ‘ the Spirit of God.’—He expreſſed his fears of a ſtorm coming on the church of Scotland ; but he ſaid, the day would break, and the Lord would ariſe, and he hoped the church would be made a wonder, and the Lord will ſay, Lo this people have I formed for myſelf; he can make a nation to be born at once.—He cried often with the ſpouſe in the Song. *When ſhall the day break, and the ſhadows fly away ? Turn my beloved, and be thou as a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether.*

He ſaid, ‘ Shall I forget Zion ? Nay, let my right ‘ hand forget her cunning, if I prefer not Jeruſalem to ‘ my chiefeſt joy. O to have God returning to this ‘ church, and his work going on in the world ! If every ‘ drop of my blood, every bit of my body, every hair ‘ of my head, were all men ; they ſhould all go to the ‘ fire to have this going on.’—He ſaid, ‘ If I ſhould ‘ ſay that I would ſpeak no more in the name of the ‘ Lord, it would be like a fire within me. I am calling ‘ you to ſee a miracle, God is melting me down into ‘ corruption and duſt, and yet he is keeping me in a ‘ calm.—I could not believe that I would have born, ‘ and born cheerfully this rod ſo long ; this is a miracle, ‘ pain without pain ; and this is not a fancy of a man ‘ diſordered in his brain, but of one lying in full compoſure. O bleſt be God, that ever I was born. I have ‘ a father and mother, and ten brethren and ſiſters in ‘ heaven, and I ſhall be the eleventh. I ſhall ſhortly ‘ be at that glory I have been long expecting : Tho' I ‘ come not near Mr Shield's glory, nor Mr Anderſon's, ‘ yet I'll be well enough if I win in. Worthy is the ‘ Lamb to receive glory.’

23. Mr Hugh Mackaill, in his ſpeech before his death, ſaid, ‘ I have eſteemed the ſolemn engagements of this nation to the Lord's pregnant performances of that promiſe, Iſa. xliv. 5. where it is evident, that where church reformations come to any ‘ maturity, they arrive at this degree of ſaying, I am ‘ the Lord's, and ſubſcribing with the hand unto the ‘ Lord. So was it in the days of the reforming kings ‘ of Judah, and after the reſtoration from the captivity ‘ of Babylon in the days of Nehemiah. This ſame ‘ promiſe did the Lord Jeſus make yea and Amen to ‘ us, when he redeemed us from ſpiritual Babylon.— ‘ I glorify him that he hath called me forth to ſuffer ‘ for his name and ordinances, and the ſolemn engagements of the land to him. Hereafter I will not walk ‘ with fleſh and blood, nor think on the world's conſolations. Farewel all my friends, whoſe company hath ‘ been refreſhful to me in my pilgrimage. I have done ‘ with the light of the ſun and moon. Welcome eternal life, everlaſting love, everlaſting praiſe, everlaſting glory. Praiſe to him that ſits upon the throne, ‘ and to the Lamb for ever.’

24. The famous Mr Durham being viſited by a miniſter in his laſt ſickneſs, which was long and lingring, who ſaid to him, Sir, I hope you have ſo ſet all in order, that you have nothing elſe to do but die. ‘ I bleſs ‘ God (ſaid Mr Durham) I have not had that to do ‘ neither theſe many years.’

25. Mr Rowland Nevet his dying prayer for his children was, that the meditator's bleſſing might be the portion of every one of them. Adding to them, I charge you all, ſee to it, that you meet me on the right hand of Chriſt at the great day. When he was ſometimes much ſpent with his labours, he would appeal to God, that, tho' he might be wearied in his ſervice, he would never be weary of it.—Being oft diſtempered in his body, he would ſay, he was never better than in the pulpit, and that it was the beſt place he could wiſh to die in.

26. Mr Philip Henry, when a-dying, his pains were very ſharp ; he ſaid to his neighbours who came in to ſee him, O make ſure work for your ſouls, by getting an intereſt in Chriſt, while you are in health ; for if I had that work to do now what would come of me. A little before his laſt illneſs he wrote to a reverend brother, ‘ Methinks it is ſtrange, that it ſhould be ‘ your lot and mine to abide ſo long on earth by the ‘ ſtuff, when ſo many of our friends are dividing the ‘ ſpoil above ; but God will have it ſo ; and to be willing to live in obedience to his holy will, is as true an ‘ act of grace, as to be willing to die when he calls.’ ‘ One aſking him how he did, he anſwered, ‘ I find ‘ the chips fly off apace, the tree will be down ſhortly.’ He was ſometimes taken with fainting fits, which when he recovered from he would ſay, ‘ Dying is but a little ‘ more.’ Once he ſaid, after a little recovery, ‘ Well, ‘ I thought I had been putting into the harbour, but I ‘ find I muſt yet to ſea again.’

27. Mr Matthew Henry his death was ſomewhat ſudden ; he ſaid a little before it to ſome about him, *You have been uſed to take notice of the ſayings of dying men ; this is mine, that a life ſpent in the ſervice of God and communion with him, is the moſt comfortable and pleaſant life, that any one can live in this world.*

28. Holy and learned Mr Rutherfoord, a little before his death, left a written teſtimony to our covenanted work of reformation; and therein he proves the warrantableneſs of nations entering into covenant with God under the new Teſtament times, and ſhews that this practice is the accompliſhment of ſeveral old-Teſtament propheſies, ſuch as Jer. l. 4. 5. Iſa. ii. 3. Zech. viii. 2. Iſa. xix. 23. 24. 25. which relate to goſpel-times. And when he was dying, he ſent ſeveral meſſages to the preſbytery of St Andrews, deſiring them to adhere to God's cauſe and covenant.—In his ſickneſs he oft broke out in ſacred raptures, extolling and commending the Lord Jeſus, whom he often called his bleſſed Maſter, his kingly King. When his death drew

near he ſaid, ‘ I ſhall ſhine, I ſhall ſee him as he is, I ‘ ſhall ſee him reign, and all his fair company with him, ‘ and I ſhall have my large ſhare : My eyes ſhall ſee ‘ my Redeemer, thir very eyes of mine, and no other ‘ for me.’——When exhorting one to be diligent in ſeeking God, he ſaid, ‘ It is no eaſy thing to be a ‘ Chriſtian ; but for me, I have gotten the victory, ‘ and Chriſt is holding out both his arms to embrace ‘ me.’——He was wonderfully ſtrengthned againſt the fears of ſuffering and of death ; for, ſays he, ‘ I ſaid ‘ to the Lord, if he ſhould ſlay me five thouſand times ‘ five thouſand times, I would truſt in him, and I ſpoke ‘ it with much trembling, fearing I ſhould not make ‘ my put good. But as really as ever he ſpoke to me ‘ by his Spirit, he witneſſed unto my heart, that his ‘ grace ſhould be ſufficient for me.”—He ſaid to ſome miniſters that came to ſee him, ‘ My Lord and Maſter ‘ is the chief of ten thouſand of thouſands, none is ‘ comparable to him in heaven, or in earth. Dear ‘ brethren, do all for him, pray for Chriſt, preach for ‘ Chriſt, feed the flock committed to your charge for ‘ Chriſt, viſit and catchiſe for Chriſt ; do all for Chriſt, ‘ and beware of man-pleaſing. Feed the flock out of love, ‘ the chief ſhepherd will appear ſhortly.’—Once when he recovered from a fainting fit, he ſaid, ‘ I feel, I feel, ‘ I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice, I feed on manna.’—As he took a little wine in a ſpoon, Mr Robert Blair ſaid to him, you feed on the dainties of heaven, and think nothing of our cordials on earth. He ſaid, ‘ They are all but ‘ dung, yet they are Chriſt's creatures, and in obedience to his command, I take them.”——After ſome diſcourſe Mr Blair ſaid to him, What think you now of Chriſt ? To which he replied, I ſhall live and adore him, glory, glory, to my Creator, and to my Redeemer for ever. Glory ſhines in Emmanuel's land.—Afterwards he ſaid, ‘ O that all my brethren ‘ did know what a Maſter I have ſerved, and what ‘ peace I have this day ? I ſhall ſleep in Chriſt, and ‘ when I awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with his likeneſs.’— ‘ Then he ſaid, this night ſhall cloſe the door, and put ‘ my anchor within the veil, I ſhall go away in a ſleep ‘ by five o'clock in the morning :’ Which exactly fell out. That night, tho' he was very weak, he oft had this expreſſion, O for arms to embrace him ! O for a well tuned harp !

When ſome ſpoke to him of his former painfulneſs and faithfulneſs in the work of God ; he ſaid, ‘ I diſclaim all that ; the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveneſs of ſins through his blood.’— ‘ His laſt words were, ‘ Glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land.

29. Hugh Kennedy provoſt of Air, when he was a-dying, a miniſter ſaid to him ; you have cauſe, Sir, to be aſſured that the angels of God are now waiting at the ſtoops of this bed to convey your ſoul to Abraham's boſom ; to whom his anſwer was, ‘ I am ſure ‘ thereof ; and if the walls of this houſe could ſpeak, ‘ they could tell how many ſweet days I have had in ‘ fellowſhip with God, and how familiar he hath been ‘ with my ſoul.’—He was one of the greateſt wreſtlers with God that was in the age wherein he lived, and had moſt remarkable returns of prayer. The great Mr Welſh, in a letter from France, ſaid of him, ‘ Happy ‘ is that city, yea, happy is that nation, that hath a ‘ Hugh Kennedy in it, I have myſelf certainly found ‘ the anſwers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalf.’

30. The great Mr Robert Bruce, miniſter of Edinburgh, when dying through weakneſs and old age, being aſked by one of his friends, how matters ſtood now betwixt God and his ſoul ? anſwered, ‘ When I was ‘ young I was diligent, and lived by faith in the Son of ‘ God, but now I am old, and not able to do ſo much ; ‘ yet he condeſcends to feed me with lumps of ſenſe.’ That morning before he died, he came to breakfaſt at his table, and having eat, as he uſed, one ſingle egg ; he ſaid to his daughter, I think I am yet hungry, you may bring me another. But preſently he fell into a deep meditation ; and having muſed a while, he ſaid, ‘ Hold daughter, hold, my Maſter calls me.’ With theſe words his ſight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible : But finding his ſight gone, he ſaid, ‘ Caſt me up the eight chapter of the epiſtle to the Romans, and ſet my finger on theſe words, I am perſuaded that neither death nor life, angels, *&c.* ſhall ‘ be able to ſeparate me from the love of God, which is ‘ in Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.’ Now, ſaith he, is my finger upon them ? They told him it was. Then, without any more, he ſaid, ‘ Now God be with you my children, ‘ I have breakfaſted with you, and ſhall ſup with my ‘ Lord Jeſus Chriſt this night.’ And ſo gave up the ghoſt.

31. John Stewart provoſt of Air, was a ſingularly pious man, yet when he lay a-dying, he ſaid to ſome about him, ‘ I go the way of all fleſh, and it may be ‘ ſome of you doubt nothing of my well-being : yea, I ‘ teſtify, that except when I ſlept, or was on buſineſs, ‘ I was not theſe ten years without thoughts of God, ſo ‘ long as I could be in going from my houſe to the ‘ croſs ; and yet I doubt myſelf, and am in great agony, ‘ yea at the brink of deſpair.’ But a day or two before he died, he turned his face to the wall from the company for two hours. Then Mr Ferguſon the miniſter coming in, aſked what he was a-doing : Upon which he turned himſelf, with theſe words, ‘ I have been ‘ fighting and working out my ſalvation with fear and ‘ trembling ; and now I bleſs God, it is perfected, ſealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone.’

32. Luther when he fell ſick, made his will, in which he bequeathed his deteſtation of Popery to his friends, and to the paſtors of the church, having before made this verſe.

Peſtis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua Papa.

In his laſt will, he ſaith, ‘ O Lord God, I thank ‘ thee that thou wouldſt have me live a poor and indigent perſon upon earth. I have neither houſe nor ‘ lands, nor poſſeſſions, nor money to leave. Thou, ‘ Lord, haſt given me a wife and children ; them, Lord, ‘ I give back to thee. Nouriſh, inſtruct, and keep ‘ them. O thou, the Father of orphans and judge of ‘ the widow, as thou haſt done to me, ſo do to them.’

In his laſt prayer, Feb. 18th 1546, he hath theſe words, ‘ I pray God to preſerve his goſpel among us ; ‘ for the Pope and the council of Trent have grievous ‘ things in hand. O heavenly Father, I give thee ‘ thanks that thou haſt revealed to me thy Son Jeſus ‘ Chriſt, whom I believe, whom I profeſs, whom I ‘ glorify, and whom the Pope and the rout of the wicked perſecute and diſhonour.’ Mr Fox ſaith of Luther, 'That a poor friar ſhould be able to ſtand againſt 'the Pope was a great miracle; that he ſhould prevail 'againſt the Pope was a greater; and after all to die 'in peace, having ſo many enemies was the greateſt 'of all."

33. Mr Joſeph Allen, a moſt painful laborious miniſter, being deprived of the uſe of his arms and legs before his death, was aſked by a friend, how he could be ſo well contented to lie ſo long in that condition? He anſwered, 'What! is God my Father, Jeſus Chriſt 'my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit my ſanctifier and 'comforter; and, ſhall I not be content without limbs 'and health? He is an unreaſonable wretch that can'not be content with a God, though he had nothing 'elſe.'

When his people of Tanton came to Dorceſter to ſee him, where he lay; he was much revived, and would be ſet up in his bed, have the curtains drawn by, and deſired them to ſtand round about the bed; and cauſed take out his hand and hold it out to them, that they might take it as he uſed formerly to do, when he had been abſent from them. And though very weak, yet he ſpoke to them thus: 'O how it rejoiceth my heart 'to ſee your faces, and to hear your voices, though I 'cannot ſpeak as heretofore unto you. Methinks, I 'am now like old Jacob, with all his ſons about him. 'Now you ſee my weak eſtate, thus I have been for 'many weeks ſince I parted with you, but God hath 'been with me. My friends, life is mine, death is 'mine; in that covenant of which I preached to you, 'is all my ſalvation and all my deſire: Although my 'body do not proſper, I hope through grace my ſoul 'doth. I have lived a ſweet life by the promiſes, and 'I hope through grace can die by a promiſe. It is the 'promiſes of God that will ſtand by us. Nothing but 'God in them will ſtead us in a day of affliction. My 'dear friends, I feel the power of theſe doctrines I 'preached to you on my heart, the doctrines of faith, 'of repentance, of ſelf-denial, of the covenant of grace, 'of contentment, *&c.* O that you would live them 'over, now I cannot preach them to you. It is a ſhame 'for a believer to be caſt down under afflictions, that 'hath ſo many glorious privileges, juſtification, adop'tion, ſanctification and eternal glory.—We ſhall be as 'the angels of God in a little while; nay, to ſay the 'truth, believers are, as it were, little angels already, 'that live in the power of faith. O my friends, 'live like believers, trample this dirty world under 'your feet; be not taken with its comforts nor diſ'quieted with its croſſes, you will be gone out of it 'ſhortly.'

When they came to take leave of him, he would needs pray with them as his weak ſtate did ſuffer him. —Then he ſaid, 'Farewel, my dear friends; go home 'and live over what I have preached to you, and the 'Lord provide for you when I am gone. Now I can'not preach to you, but let my waſted ſtrength and 'uſeleſs limbs be a ſermon to you. I am afraid of 'ſome of you, after all I have ſpoken to you. There 'are many profeſſors who can pray well and talk 'well, whom we ſhall find at the left hand of Chriſt 'another day. You have your trades, your e'ſtates, your relations, be not taken with theſe, but 'with God; O live on him. For the Lord's ſake, go 'home, and take heed of the world, worldly cares, 'worldly comforts, worldly relations, &c. Oh! let 'not my labours and ſufferings, let not my waſt'ed ſtrength, and uſeleſs limbs, riſe up in judg'ment againſt you at the great day of the Lord.' —Then he ſaid, 'The Lord having given authority to 'his miniſters to bleſs his people, accordingly I bleſs 'you in his name," (uſing the words he always uſed after a ſacrament.) *The Lord bleſs you and keep you, the Lord cauſe his face to ſhine upon you, and give you peace. And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, thro' the blood of the everlaſting covenant; make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, thro' Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

In the mornings, his firſt ſpeeches would be (which he alſo uſed in his health) 'Now we have one day more; 'this is one more for God; now let us live well this 'day, work hard for our ſouls; lay up much treaſure 'in heaven this day, for we have but a few to live.'

Being taken to the bath, where he met with extraordinary kindneſs from ſtrangers, for many reſorted to him, to ſee him and hear him ſpeak, having heard what a monument of mercy he was: He did delight himſelf much in the conſideration of the Lord's kindneſs to him, and the tokens of ſtrangers, their love, and would often ſay, *I was a ſtranger, and mercy took me in: In priſon, and it came to me; ſick and weak, and it viſited me.* N. B. He had been much perſecuted, and put in priſon, for no other crime but preaching the goſpel.

He had a moſt pious and affectionate wife that waited cloſely upon him, to whom he ſaid, *Now my dear heart, my companion in all my tribulations and afflictions, I thank thee for all thy pains and labours for me at home and abroad, in priſon and liberty, in health and ſickneſs.* And he prayed that the Lord would requite her, fill her with all manner of grace and conſolations, and ſupport and carry her thro' all difficulties.

He had ſome conflicts with Satan a little before death; once he uttered theſe words, 'Away, thou foul fiend, 'thou enemy of all mankind, thou ſubtile ſophiſter, art 'thou come now to moleſt me? Now I am juſt going! 'Now I am ſo weak, and death upon me! Trouble me 'not, for I am none of thine! I am the Lord's; Chriſt 'is mine, and I am his, his by covenant; I have ſworn 'myſelf to be the Lord's, and his I will be; therefore 'be gone.' Theſe laſt words he repeated often, as pleading his covenanting with God, as a mean to reſiſt the devil and his temptations. When he looked on his weak conſumed hands, he would ſay, 'Theſe ſhall be 'changed, this vile body ſhall be made like to Chriſt's 'glorious body. O what a glorious day will the day of 'reſurrection be? Methinks I ſee it by faith: How will 'the ſaints lift up their heads and rejoice? And how 'ſadly will the wicked world look then? O come let 'us make haſte, our Lord will come ſhortly! If we 'long to be in heaven, let us haſten with our work; 'for when that is done, away we ſhall be fetch'd. O 'this vain, fooliſh, dirty world; I wonder how rea'ſonable creatures can ſo dote upon it! What is in it 'worth the looking after! I care not to be in it longer 'than while my maſter hath either doing or ſuffering 'work for me; were that done, farewel to earth.'

This eminent ſaint had this teſtimony given him by one; it may be ſaid of him in as high a degree as of moſt ſaints on earth, that each thought was to him a prayer, each prayer a ſong, each day a ſabbath, each meal a ſacrament, and ſo his life on earth a foretaſte of the eternal repaſt, to which he hath now arrived.

34. The noble Marquis of Argyle, being a zealous friend of our covenanted reformation, was put to death, May 27th 1661. His friends contrived methods for making his eſcape out of the caſtle of Edinburgh, but he thanked them, and told them, he would not diſown the good cauſe he had ſo publicly eſpouſed, but reſolved to ſuffer the utmoſt. When the ſentence of death was paſt by the parliament, on Saturday May 25th, he ſaid, 'I had the honour to ſet the crown upon 'the king's head, and now he haſtens me to a better 'crown than his own.' Then he was ſent to the tolbooth. His excellent Lady embracing him when he entered, wept bitterly, ſaying ſeveral times, the Lord will require it. Not any in the room could reſtrain from tears; but the Marquis himſelf was perfectly compoſed, and ſaid, 'Forbear, forbear; truly I pity them, 'they know not what they are doing: They may ſhut 'me in where they pleaſe, but they cannot ſhut out 'God from me. For my part, I am as content to be 'here as in the caſtle, and as content in the caſtle as in 'the tower of London,' (where he was firſt put) 'and 'as content upon the ſcaffold as any of them all.'—He added, that he remembered a ſcripture cited to him lately by an honeſt miniſter in the caſtle, and endeavoured to put it in practice, when Ziklag was taken and burnt, and the people ſpoke of ſtoning David, *he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God*. All his ſhort time, till Monday, he ſpent with the greateſt ſerenity and cheerfulneſs, and in the proper exerciſes of a dying Chriſtian. He ſaid to ſome miniſters, allowed to be with him in the priſon, that ſhortly they would envy him who was got before them.—And added, 'Mind that I 'tell you, my ſkill fails me, if you who are miniſters 'will not either ſuffer much, or ſin much: For tho' 'you go alongſt with theſe men in part, if you do it not 'in all things, you are but where you were, and ſo 'muſt ſuffer; and, if you go not at all in with them, 'you ſhall but ſuffer.'

The Marquis was naturally timorous, but he deſired thoſe about him to obſerve, as he could not but do, that the Lord had heard his prayer, and removed all fears from him. And indeed his friends work was to reſtrain and qualify his fervent longings after his diſſolution, and not to ſupport him under the near views of it. The Lord was exceeding kind to him at this time, for upon Monday morning, that day he ſuffered, when he was in the midſt of company, and thronged in ſubſcribing papers relating to his eſtate, he was ſo overcome with a ſingular manifeſtation from God, that he broke out in a rapture and ſaid, 'I thought to have 'concealed the Lord's goodneſs, but it will not do; I 'am now ordering my affairs, and God is ſealing my 'charter to a better inheritance, juſt now ſaying to 'me, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.*' After he had retired ſometime alone, when he opened the door, Mr. Hutcheſon, one of the miniſters that attended him, ſaid to him, what cheer, my lord? He anſwered, good cheer, ſir, the Lord hath again confirmed and ſaid to me, from heaven, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee*. And he guſhed out in abundance of tears of joy, ſo that he retired to the windows and wept there. Afterwards he ſaid in a perfect rapture to Mr. Hutcheſon, *I think his kindneſs overcomes me; but God is good to me that lets not out too much of it here, for he knows I could not bear it: Get my cloke and let us go.* But being told that the town clock was kept back, ſo that the hour was not yet come; he anſwered, they are far in the worng; and preſently kneeled down and prayed before all preſent, in a moſt ſweet and heavenly manner, to the raviſhment of all that were there.

When he was going out to the ſcaffold, he ſaid, *I could die like a Roman, but I choice rather to die as a Chriſtian. Come away gentlemen, he that goes firſt goe cleaneſt.*———When going down he called Mr. Jame Guthrie to him, and embracing him in the moſt endearing way, took his farewel of him. Mr. Guthrie at parting addreſſed the Marquis, 'My lord, God hath 'been with you, he is with you, and God will be with 'you; and ſuch is my reſpect for your lordſhip, tha 'if I were not under the ſentence of death myſelf, I 'could cheerfully die for your lordſhip.' So they parted for a very ſhort ſeaſon, in two or three days to mee in a better place.

The Marquis in his ſpeech on the ſcaffold hath theſe words, 'God hath laid engagements upon Scotland, 'we are tied by covenant to religion and reformation. 'Thoſe that were then unborn are engaged to it, and i 'paſſeth the power of any under heaven to abſolve a 'man from the oath of God.'

35. Mr. John Welſh, miniſter of the goſpel at Air, whom Mr. Rutherfoord (in his preface to his ſurvey of Antinomianiſm) calls that apoſtolic, heavenly and prophetical man of God, and there tells us, that he ha it from thoſe that were witneſſes of his life, that of every twenty four hours he gave uſually eight to prayer, and that he ſpent many nights in prayer to God, interceeding for ſuffering Proteſtants abroad as well as fo his mother-church. This holy man when priſoner i the caſtle of Blackneſs, and in the view of death (being condemned to it for maintaining the liberties of thi church, tho' afterwards the ſentence was changed int baniſhment) in his letter to a Chriſtian lady hath theſ words;

'I long to eat of that tree which is planted in th 'midſt of the paradiſe of God, and to drink of th 'pure river, clear as cryſtal, that runs thro' the ſtree 'of the new Jeruſalem. I long to be refreſhed wit 'the ſouls of them that are under the altar, who wer 'ſlain for the word of God, and the teſtimony tha 'they held; and to have theſe long white robes give 'me, that I may walk in white raiment with thoſe glorious ſaints, who have waſhed their garments an 'made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Wh 'ſhould I think it a ſtrange thing to be removed fro 'this place, to that where my hope, my joy, my crown 'my elder brother, my head, my father, my comforte 'and all the glorious ſaints are, and where the ſong o 'Moſes and the Lamb is ſung joyfully; where we ſha 'not be compelled to ſit by the rivers of Babylon an 'hang up our harps on the willow-trees, but ſhall tak 'them up, and ſing the new hallelujah, bleſſing, honou 'glory and power, to him that ſits upon the throne 'and to the Lamb for ever and ever? What is the 'under the old vault of the heavens, and in this ol 'worn earth which is groaning under the bondage 'corruption, that ſhould make me deſire to remain here? I expect that new heaven and new earth, wherein righteouſneſs dwelleth, wherein I ſhall reſt for evermore. I look to get entry into the new Jeruſalem at one of theſe twelve gates, whereupon are written the names of the twelve tribes of Iſrael. I know that Jeſus Chriſt hath prepared them for me. Why, may I not then, with boldneſs in his blood ſtep into that glory, where my head and Lord hath gone before me? Jeſus Chriſt is the door and the porter; who then ſhall hold me out? O thou faireſt among the children of men, the delight of mankind, the light of the Gentiles, the glory of the Jews, the life of the dead, the joy of angels and ſaints, my ſoul panteth to be with thee. I refuſe not to die with thee, that I may live with thee; I refuſe not to ſuffer with thee, that I may rejoice with thee. O when ſhall I be filled with his love! Surely, if a man knew how precious it is, he would count all things but droſs and dung to gain it. I long for that ſcaffold, or that ax, or that cord, that might be to me that laſt ſtep of this my weariſom journey, to go to thee, my Lord. Who am I, that he ſhould firſt have called me, and then conſtitute me a miniſter of the glad tidings of the goſpel of ſalvation theſe many years, and now laſt of all to be a ſufferer for his cauſe and kingdom? Theſe two points, *firſt*, That Chriſt is the head of his church: 2*dly*, That ſhe is free in her government from all other juriſdiction, except Chriſt; yea, as free as any kingdom under heaven, not only to convocate, hold, and keep her meetings and aſſemblies: But alſo to judge of all her affairs amongſt her members and ſubjects: Theſe are the cauſe of our ſufferings. I would be moſt glad to be offered up as a ſacrifice for ſo glorious a truth; but, alas! I fear that my ſins, and the abuſe of ſo glorious things as I have found, deprive me of ſo fair a crown: Yet my Lord doth know, if he would call me to it, and ſtrengthen me in it, it would be to me the moſt glorious day, and gladeſt hour I ever ſaw in my life; but I am in his hands, to do with me whatſoever ſhall pleaſe him, *&c.*'

This eminent ſaint ſpent much of his time in the mount of prayer and wreſtling with God, was admitted to very intimate nearneſs with him, and had many ſecret things revealed to him from God. He uſed to ſay, 'He wondred how a Chriſtian could ly in bed all night, without riſing to ſpend ſome of the night in prayer, and praiſe.'

In his laſt illneſs he had a great weakneſs in his knees, cauſed by his continual kneeling at prayer, the fleſh thereof became inſenſible, and hard like a ſort of horn; but, when in his weakneſs he was deſired to remit ſomewhat of his former painfulneſs, his anſwer was, he had his life of God, and therefore it ſhould be ſpent for him. During his ſickneſs he was ſo filled with the ſenſible enjoyment of God, that he was ſometimes overheard in prayer to have theſe words; 'Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy ſervant is a clay veſſel, and can hold no more.'

36. Mr. Chriſtopher Love, miniſter of Laurence-jury in London, who was beheaded on Towerhill, Aug. 22d 1651. in time of Cromwell's uſurpation, and for ſuſpected plotting againſt his government, his words on the ſcaffold were moſt pathetic and weighty.—'Although (ſaid he) there be but little between me and death, yet this bears up my heart, there is little between me and heaven. It comforted Dr. Taylor the martyr, when he was going to execution, that there were but two ſtiles between him and his Father's houſe: There is a leſſer way between me and my Father's houſe, but two ſteps between me and glory. It is but lying down upon that block, and I ſhall aſcend upon a throne. I am this day ſailing towards the ocean of eternity, thro' a rough paſſage to my haven of reſt, thro' a red ſea to the promiſed land. Methinks I hear God ſay to me, as he did to Moſes, Go up to Mount Nebo, and die there: So to me, go up to Towerhill and die there. Iſaac ſaid of himſelf, that he was old, and yet he knew not the day of his death: But I cannot ſay ſo. I am young, and yet I know the day of my death, and I know the kind of my death, and the place of my death alſo. I am put to ſuch a kind of death, as two famous preachers of the goſpel were put to before me; John the Baptiſt, and Paul the apoſtle, they were both beheaded. I read alſo in Rev. xx. 4. *The ſaints were beheaded for the word of God, and teſtimony of Jeſus.* But herein is the diſadvantage which I ly under in the thoughts of many; they judge that I ſuffer not for the word of God, or for conſcience, but for meddling with ſtate-matters. To this I ſhall briefly ſay, That it is an old trick of Satan, to impute the cauſe of God's peoples ſufferings, to be contrivements againſt the ſtate; when, in truth, it is their religion and conſcience they are perſecuted for. The rulers of Iſrael would have put Jeremiah to death upon the civil account, tho' indeed it was only the truth of his prophecy that made the rulers angry with him: And yet upon a civil account, they pretend he muſt die, becauſe he fell away to the Chaldeans, and would have brought in foreign forces to invade them. The ſame thing is laid to my charge, of which I am as innocent as Jeremiah was. So Paul, tho' he did but preach Jeſus Chriſt, yet his enemies would have him put to death, under pretence that he was a mover of ſedition. Upon a civil account my life is pretended to be taken away; whereas it is, becauſe I purſue my covenant, and will not proſtitute my principles and conſcience to the ambition and luſt of men. I had rather die a covenant-keeper, than live a covenant-breaker. Behold, I am this day making a double exchange: I am changing a pulpit for a ſcaffold, and a ſcaffold for a throne: And I might add a third, I am changing the preſence of this numerous multitude on Towerhill, for the innumerable company of ſaints and angels in heaven, the holy hill of Zion; and I am changing a guard of ſoldiers for a guard of angels, which will receive me, and carry me to Abraham's boſom. This ſcaffold is the beſt pulpit, that ever I preached in: In my church-pulpit, God thro' his grace made me an inſtrument to bring others to heaven; but in this pulpit, he will bring me to heaven.' Afterwards he ſaid,——'Tho' my blood be not the blood of nobles, yet it is Chriſtian blood, miniſters blood, yea more, it is alſo innocent blood. I magnify the riches of God's mercy and grace towards me, that I who was born in Wales, an obſcure country, and of obſcure parents, ſhould be ſingled out to honourable ſufferings. For the firſt fourteen years of my life I never heard a ſermon preached; yet in the fifteenth year of my life it pleaſed God

to convert me. Bleſſed be God, who not only made me a Chriſtian, but alſo a miniſter, judging me faithful and putting me into the miniſtry, which is my glory. I had rather be a preacher in a pulpit, than a prince upon a throne; I had rather be an inſtrument to bring ſouls to heaven, than that all nations ſhould bring tribute to me.—Formerly (ſaid he) I have been under a ſpirit of bondage; yea, ſometimes I have had more fear in drawing out a tooth, than now I have for cutting off my head. When fear was upon me, death was not near; now, when death is near to me, my fear is evaniſhed.—I am comforted in this, tho' men kill me they cannot damn me; tho' they thruſt me out of the world, yet they cannot ſhut me out of heaven. When I have ſhed my blood, I expect the full declaration of the remiſſion of ſins thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. I am going to my long-home, and ye to your ſhort homes; but I ſhall be at my home, before you be at yours.'—He prayed, that ſeeing 'he was called to do the work which he never did, he might have the ſtrength which he never had.'

Dr. Wild in his elegy hath theſe lines;

Methinks I heard beheaded ſaints above
Call to each other, Sirs, make room for LOVE.
Who when he came to tread the fatal ſtage,
(Which prov'd his glory, and his en'mies rage)
His blood ne'er runs to's heart; Chriſt's blood was there,
Reviving it; His own was all to ſpare;
Which, riſing in his cheeks, did ſeem to ſay,
Is this the blood you thirſt for? Tak't I pray.
Spectators in his looks ſuch life did ſee,
That they appear'd more like to die than he.
Lightenings, which fill'd the air with blazing light,
Did ſerve for torches at that diſmal night;
In which, and all next day, for many hours,
Heav'n groan'd in thunder, and did weep in ſhow'rs;
Nor do I wonder that God thunder'd ſo,
When Boanerges *murder'd lay below.*

37. Mrs Joyce Lewis, being condemned to be burnt for the proteſtant religion in queen Mary's reign, when ſhe heard that the writ for her execution was come, ſhe ſaid to her friends, 'As for death, I fear it not; for, when I behold the amiable countenance of Jeſus Chriſt my dear Saviour, the ugly face of death doth not much trouble me.'

38. Bullinger of Zuruch, in his ſickneſs ſaid to his friends, 'If the Lord will make any further uſe of me and my miniſtry in his church, I will willingly obey him; but if he pleaſe (as I much deſire) to take me out of this miſereable life, I ſhall exceedingly rejoice, that he pleaſeth to take me out of this corrupt and wretched age to go to my Saviour Chriſt. For (ſaid he) if Socrates was glad when his death approached, becauſe (as he thought) he ſhould go to Homer, Heſiod, and other learned men whom he expected to meet with in the other world; how much more do I joy, who am ſure that I ſhall ſee my Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, as alſo the ſaints, patriarchs, prophets, apoſtles, and all the holy men who have lived from the beginning of the world? Now when I am ſure to ſee them, and to partake of their joys, why ſhould I not willingly die to enjoy their perpetual ſociety and glory?'

39. Mr Theodore Beza, a famous paſtor in Geneva, when he apprehended the approach of death, reviſed his will, and ſo, eaſing himſelf of all worldly thoughts, wholly betook himſelf to expect the time of his departure, which he had much longed for. He oft uſed the apoſtle's ſaying, *We are his workmanſhip, created in Jeſus Chriſt unto good works.* And that of Auguſtine, *Domine, quod cæpiſti perfice ne in portu naufragium accidat. Lord perfect that which thou haſt begun, that I ſuffer not ſhipwreck in the haven.* And that ſaying of Bernard; *Domine, ſequemur te, per te, ad te. Te, quia veritas; Per te, quia via: Ad te, quia vita. Lord, we will follow thee, by thee, to thee. Thee, becauſe thou art the truth: by thee, becauſe thou art the way; to thee, becauſe thou art the life.*

40. Melancton of Wittemberg, Luther's dear companion, ſaid, 'That he much longed to be diſſolved, and that for two reaſons: Firſt, that he might enjoy the much deſired preſence and ſight of Chriſt, and of the heavenly church; Secondly, That he might be freed from the cruel and implacable diſcords of divines.

41. Mr John Bradford, a miniſter and martyr in queen Mary's reign, when the keeper told him, that the next day he was to be burnt in Smithfield, he put off his cap, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, ſaid, *I thank God for it, it comes not now to me on a ſudden, but as a thing waited for every day and hour; the Lord make me worthy thereof.* One Creſſwel offering to interpoſe for him, and deſiring to know what his requeſt was; he ſaid, 'I have no requeſt to make; if the queen give me my life, I will thank her; if ſhe will baniſh me, I will thank her; if ſhe will burn me, I will thank her; if ſhe will condemn me to perpetual impriſonment, I will thank her.' The chancellor preſſing him to do as others had done, in hopes of the queen's mercy; he ſaid, 'My lord, I deſire mercy with God's mercy, that is, without doing or ſaying any thing againſt God and his truth. But mercy with God's wrath, God keep me from.—God's mercy (added he) I deſire, and alſo would be glad of the queen's favour, to live as a ſubject without clog on conſcience: But otherwiſe the Lord's mercy is better to me than life. Life in his diſpleaſure is worſe than death, and death in his favour is true life.'

In his letter to Dr Cranmer, Dr Ridley, and Dr Latimer, he hath theſe words; 'Our dear brother Rogers hath broken the ice valiantly. This day, or to-morrow at the uttermoſt, hearty Hooper, ſincere Saunders, and truſty Taylor, will end their courſe, and receive their crown. The next am I, who hourly look for the porter to open me the gates after them to enter into the deſired reſt. God forgive me my unthankfulneſs for his exceeding great mercy. Tho' I ſuffer juſtly (for I have been a great hypocrite, unthankful, &c. the Lord pardon me, yea, he hath done it, he hath done it indeed) yet, what evil hath he done? Chriſt whom the prelates perſecute, his truth which they hate in me, hath done no evil, nor deſerved death. O what am I, Lord, that thou ſhouldſt thus magnify me? Is it thy wont, to ſend for ſuch a wretched hypocrite in a fiery chariot, as thou didſt ſend for Elias?

In one of his meditations, after confeſſing of ſin, he ſaith, 'O what now may we do! Deſpair? No, for thou art God, and therefore good; thou art merci ful, and therefore thou forgiveſt ſin: With thee there is mercy and propitiation, and therefore thou art worſhipped. When Adam ſinned, thou gaveſt him mercy before he deſired it; and, wilt thou deny us mercy, who now deſire the ſame? Adam excuſed his fault, and accuſed thee; but we accuſe ourſelves, and excuſe thee: And, ſhall we be ſent empty away? How often in the wilderneſs didſt thou ſpare Iſrael, and defer thy plagues at the requeſt of Moſes, when the people themſelves made no petition to thee? Now we do not only make our petition to thee, but alſo have a Mediator, far above Moſes, to appear for us, even Chriſt Jeſus thine own Son; and, ſhall we, (dear Lord) depart aſhamed?—O merciful Lord, for thine own glory, ſuffer not the enemy of thy Son Chriſt, the Romiſh Antichriſt, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from thee our poor brethren, for whom thy dear Son once died, &c. Suffer him not to ſeduce the ſimple ſort with his fond opinion, that his falſe gods, his blind, mumbling, feigned religion, or his fooliſh ſuperſtition, doth give him ſuch conqueſts, ſuch victories, and ſuch triumphs over us. But, O Lord, this is thy righteous judgment, to puniſh us with the tyrannical yoke of blindneſs, becauſe we have caſt away from us the ſweet yoke of the wholeſome word of thy Son our Saviour.'

In his letter to Mrs Anne Warcup, he ſaith, 'My ſtaff ſtandeth at the door. I look continually for the ſheriff to come for me; and I bleſs God I am ready for him.—Now go I to climbing up the hill; it will cauſe me puff and blow before I come to the cliff. The hill is ſteep and high, my breath is ſhort, and my ſtrength is feeble. Pray therefore to the Lord for me, that, as I have now thro' his goodneſs even almoſt come to the top, I may by his grace be ſtrengthened, not to reſt till I come where I ſhould be.'

He was ſingular for humility and ſelf-abaſement, tho' a moſt eminent ſaint. He ſubſcribed ſome of his letters, The moſt miſerable, hard-hearted, unthankful ſinner, John Bradford. A very painted hypocrite, John Bradford. *Miſerrimus peccator*, John Bradford. The ſinful John Bradford.

42. Mr Edward Deering, a little before his death ſaid to his friends, 'As for my death, I bleſs God I feel and find ſo much inward joy and comfort to my ſoul, that, if I were put to my choice whether I would die or live, I would a thouſand times rather chooſe death than life, if it may ſtand with the holy will of God.'

43. Mr Robert Rollock, when a-dying, prayed; 'Lord, I have hitherto ſeen but darkly in the glaſs of thy word; now grant that I may enjoy the eternal fruition of thy countenance, which I have ſo much deſired and longed for. Haſte, Lord, and do not tarry; I am weary both of nights and days: Come, Lord Jeſus, that I may come to thee. Break theſe eye-ſtrings, and give me others; I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with thee; haſte, Lord Jeſus, and defer no longer. Go forth, my weak life, and let a better ſucceed. O Lord Jeſus, thruſt thy hand into my body, and take my ſoul to thyſelf. O my ſweet Lord, ſet this ſoul of mine free, that it may enjoy her huſband.'

44. Galeacius Carracciolus marquis of Vico, when a-dying, took his leave of his wife and all his Chriſtian friends, telling them that he would lead them the way to heaven. And he cried to Jeſus Chriſt, that 'As he had ſought him all his life, ſo now he would receive and acknowledge him as his own.'

45. The famous Lord Dupleſſis in France, when a-dying, was much concerned for the Church of God in diſtreſs, praying earneſtly for her deliverance. He particularly bleſſed ſuch of his grand-children as were following the ſtudies of learning, ſaying, that 'He was aſſured they ſhould be bleſſed with the bleſſings both of heaven above, and of the earth beneath.' When a miniſter ſpoke of the ſervice he had done the church by his writings, he ſaid, 'Alas, what was there of mine in that work? Say not, that it was I, but God by me.' Then, lifting up his hands above his head he cried three times, 'Mercy, mercy, mercy.' Adding, that he did it, to ſhew that it was the alone mercy of God to which he had recourſe.—And declared, That his faith was altogether founded upon the goodneſs of God in Jeſus Chriſt, who by the Father had been made unto him, as to all others that believe in him, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.—'Away, ſaid he, away with all merit; I call for nothing but mercy, free mercy,' When one was bleſſing God for giving him ſuch peace and comfort at his end, he ſaid I feel, I feel, what I ſpeak. As to his faith of the truths of God, 'He ſaid he was entirely perſuaded thereof, by the demonſtration of God's holy Spirit, which was more powerful, more clear, and more certain than all the demonſtrations of Euclid.' When ſecretly praying he was overheard ſaying in broken ſentences, 'I fly, I fly to heaven. Let the angels carry me to the boſom of my Saviour.' Afterwards, he ſaid, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I ſhall ſee him with theſe eyes, *Hiſce occulis*;' which words he repeated four or five times.

46. Jerome of Prague, when he was faſtned to the ſtake, and the executioner began to kindle the fire behind him, he bade him kindle it before his face. 'For (ſaid he) if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had ſo many opportunities offered me to eſcape it.'

47. Mr. Hooker a miniſter in new England, when one that ſtood weeping at his bed-ſide, when he lay a-dying, ſaid to him, Sir, you are going to receive the reward of all your labours; he replied, 'Brother, I am going to receive mercy.

48. Mr. Heron another miniſter there, when dying and leaving a family of many ſmall children; his poor wife fell a-weeping, and ſaid alas! what will become of all theſe children? He preſently and pleaſantly replied, 'Never fear; he that feeds the young ravens, won't ſtarve the young Herons.' And indeed it came to paſs accordingly. It was an ancient obſervation concerning the Engliſh martyrs under the bloody Marian perſecution, 'That none of them went more joyfully to the ſtake than thoſe who had the greateſt families to commit unto the Lord.'

49. Chryſoſtom, when the empreſs Eudoxa, (an Arian) ſent a threatning meſſage to him, he ſaid, 'Go tell her, *Nil niſi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but ſin.' When he was ſentenced to baniſhment, he ſaid, 'None of theſe things trouble me; for I ſaid before within myſelf, if the empreſs will, let her baniſh me;

the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof. If ſhe will, let her ſaw me aſunder; Iſaiah was ſo uſed; If ſhe will, let her caſt me into the ſea: I will remember Jonah: If ſhe will, let her caſt me into a burning fiery furnace, or to the wild beaſts; the three children and Daniel were ſo ſerved: If ſhe will, let her ſtone me, or cut of my head. I have St. Stephen and the Baptiſt for my companions: If ſhe will, let her take away all my ſubſtance; naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither again.

But I muſt break off, for time would fail me to enumerate the many inſtances of the faith, love, patience, hope, courage and conſtancy of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, when in the view of death. Some have told the perſecutors, 'That they might pull the hearts out of their bodies, but they could never pluck the truth out of their hearts.' Others have ſaid, 'That if every hair of their heads were men they ſhould all ſuffer death for Chriſt and his truths.'—Oh (ſaid one of them) can I die but once for Chriſt?

To conclude; let theſe examples prompt us to ſeek grace from God, and make it our earneſt ſtudy to imitate and follow ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, that we may die martyrs in reſolution, our graces may be moſt lively at the laſt, our evening ſun may ſhine brighteſt, and we may go off the ſtage glorifying God, and leaving a ſweet ſavour behind us, as theſe famous worthies, whoſe praiſe is in the churches, have done before us.

DIRECT. VII. *Let dying perſons be much in prayer and ejaculations to God.*

PRayer is the native breath of renewed ſouls; it is as neceſſary to their ſpiritual life, as breath is to the natural life, Lam. iii. 56. *Hide not thine ear at my breathing.* The firſt thing a child of God doth, when he is new-born, is to breathe by prayer, Acts ix. 11. *Behold he prayeth.* And it is alſo his laſt work in the world to pray, Acts vii. 59. 60. *And they ſtoned Stephen, calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this ſin to their charge. And when he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep.* A dying Chriſtian hath many to pray for; he is to pray for the church of God, for his friends and relations, and alſo for his enemies as Stephen did; of which I ſpoke before. But eſpecially he muſt pray for himſelf, that ſin may be forgiven, and that he may have ſafe conduct through the dark valley. I have heard of ſome that have been found dead upon their knees: A noble poſture to die in! How agreeable is it, to enter praying into the land of praiſe? So did Stephen; yea, ſo did our bleſſed Saviour himſelf; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit.* The laſt words that holy Uſher uttered were, 'But, Lord, in ſpecial forgive my ſins of omiſſion.' 'Lord (ſaid dying Beza) perfect that which thou haſt begun, that I ſuffer not ſhipwreck in the haven.' I remember to have read of an old miniſter, when he found death approaching, he ſaid, 'I deſire to die like the poor thief, crying to the crucified Jeſus for mercy. I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing, except what is unworthy. My eye, and hope, and faith is to Chriſt on his croſs. I bring an unworthineſs like that of the poor dying thief unto him, and have no more to plead than he. Like the poor thief crucified with him, I am waiting to be received, by the infinite grace of my Lord, into his kingdom.' Let us in like manner die, crying to a crucified Jeſus for mercy. Lord remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom.

O dying Chriſtian, remember the time of prayer is near an end, after death there will be no more occaſion for prayer. O then beg that the ſpirit of prayer may be ſo poured down upon you at this time, that you may be enabled to pour out your heart before God both for yourſelf and others. O how earneſtly ſhould you pray then, when you are taking your leave of prayer! Mind the example which your Redeemer gave you; it was before his death that he offered up prayers and ſupplications with ſtrong crying and tears unto God. I acknowledge, ſick and dying perſons are frequently out of caſe for making prayers of any great length or continuance (which conſideration ſhould excite us to the greater diligence in prayer in the time of our health) and therefore they ought to be the more frequent and fervent, in ſhort and ſuitable ejaculations and petitions to God, as their exigencies do require.

Some MEDITATIONS *and* EJACULATIONS, *proper for ſick and dying Perſons, and eſpecially for a dying believer.*

O Lord, thou art the God of my life, and haſt the keys of death in thy hand. Thou haſt meaſured the length of my life, and appointed the hour of my death. The number of my months and days is with thee, and thou haſt appointed the bounds over which I cannot paſs.

What is my life but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away? At the longeſt, how ſhort is it; and at the ſtrongeſt, how weak! *What man is it that liveth here, and ſhall not ſee death? When a few days are come, I'll go the way whence I ſhall not return.* God hath decreed it, ſin hath deſerved it, my frailty demonſtrates it, death's harbingers proclaim it, and I muſt expect it.

There is no diſcharge in this war, no exemption from death's ſtroke. Death's meſſengers are come to warn me, that my laſt day and laſt hour draweth nigh. The ſound of their maſter's feet is behind them. This clay-houſe muſt be diſſolved, my ſoul diſlodged, and my place here ſhall know me no more; I will be quickly as water ſpilt on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again.

O that I may be ſuitably exerciſed in my preſent weak and dying condition! When my fleſh faileth, and my heart fainteth within me. O that God may be the ſtrength of my heart, and portion for ever! When the keepers of the houſe do tremble, let God watch over it, and be the keeper of my ſoul. When the grinders do ceaſe, becauſe they are few, let my ſoul be fed with manna from heaven. When the daughters of muſic are brought low, let my ſoul be diſpoſed for hearing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb in the temple above. When theſe that look out of the windows are darkened, let the eyes of my ſoul be enlightened to behold, with the dying martyr Stephen, the heavens opened, and the glorious Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God, making interceſſion for me, and ready to receive me. Let my hope and deſire look out at the windows, and ſay, *Why is his chariot ſo long a-coming? And why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether.*

O that I may obſerve the afflicting hand of God in my preſent ſickneſs! Surely affliction cometh not out of the duſt, nor doth trouble ſpring out of the ground. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, nor chaſten me in thy hot diſpleaſure. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; and heal me, for my bones are vexed. When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth: Surely every man is vanity. The ſorrows of my heart are enlarged, O bring me out of my diſtreſs. Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my ſin. I look for ſympathy to my great high prieſt, who is touched with the feeling of my infirmities. My help and ſtrength is in him.

O that, when I am afflicted, I may not deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him! Let me hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it. Let me kiſs the rod, and accept of the puniſhment of mine iniquity. O that in my affliction I may be helped to humble myſelf greatly before the God of my fathers, and make a true and penitent confeſſion of my ſins!

Oh! what ſhall I ſay to thee, O thou preſerver of men? I will ſay, Lord be merciful to me; heal my ſoul for I have ſinned againſt thee. I acknowledge, that, thro' an evil heart of unbelief, I have many a time departed away from the living God, O how vainly and fooliſhly have I lived in the world! How laviſh of my precious time! How unmindful of my latter end! How careleſs of my immortal ſoul! How little in preparation for eternity! Oh! My own heart condemns me, my ſins teſtify againſt me; and thou who knoweſt them better than I do myſelf, together with their ſeveral aggravations, mighteſt juſtly condemn me too. But my comfort is, that with thee Lord there is mercy that thou mayeſt be feared, and with thy Son there is plenteous redemption: wherefore, for his ſake be pleaſed to forgive me all my bypaſt tranſgreſſions, whether in thought, word or deed, thoſe I remember, and thoſe I have forgotten, and let them neither be charged on me to my ſhame and confuſion in this world, nor to my everlaſting ruin in that which is to come. Lord, forgive the follies of my childhood, the extravagancies of my youth, and all the iniquities of my riper years.

Oh I am polluted with ſin, and dare not appear before God with my own filthy rags upon me. When Adam loſt the garment of original righteouſneſs, he fled from God, and dreaded the ſummons of offended juſtice. Now, there is no appearing before God with acceptance, but in the garment of his Son my elder brother. None can have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all, but by the blood of Jeſus. O, enable me to diſclaim whatſoever duties I have performed, or graces I have exerciſed, and to rely on a crucified Chriſt alone for pardon and life. Tho' thou ſlayeſt me, let me die truſting in and cleaving to a crucified Jeſus.

Now the powers of darkneſs will ſeek to raiſe tempeſts to ſhipwreck the veſſel of my ſoul, when it would enter into the eternal haven; O that like the wiſe mariner, when the ſtorm approacheth, I may endeavour to ſecure the veſſel with the anchors of faith and hope faſtened on the rock Chriſt!

O that, when the time of combat with my laſt enemy cometh, I may above all take the ſhield of faith, whereby I may be ſheltered from the ſting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one!

O that the Lord of hoſts, the captain of my ſalvation, may be with me in my laſt conflict, and may help me to put on the whole armour of God, and give me ſkill to uſe it, that I may be able to ſtand in the evil day! Teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, that thro' thee I may do valiantly, and tread down all mine enemies. O that now I may ſo finiſh my courſe, and fight the good fight of faith, that at death I may receive the crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous judge will give to all that love his appearing. O that my faith may ripen into a full aſſurance, that I may go off the ſtage with joy, and an abundant entrance may be miniſtred unto me into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

O that the night of my death may ſhine bright with the ſparkling ſtars of heavenly graces! Lord, increaſe my faith? Let the pilgrim's ſtaff of faith be never out of my hand, till I come to my journey's end. O let me get Chriſt all in my arms, like old Simeon before his death, that I may ſay like him, *Now let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* Kindle the fire of heavenly love in my ſoul, and give me a taſte of heavenly joys. O for one beam of thy light, to baniſh away all my doubts and fears! Lord, let in ſomething of heaven to my ſoul, before itſelf go into heaven.

Lord, take me not out of this life till thou haſt fitted me for a better. May I be fitted for heaven before I leave the earth, and finiſh my work before I finiſh my courſe! Make me ready to meet thee at thy coming, ſo that thy coming may not be the matter of my terror, but the matter of my hope, deſires and joyful expectations. O that I may be in a longing frame for that bleſſed time, when he will come and put a period to all my ſins, ſorrows, troubles and temptations here; and when. I ſhall exchange my preſent being in the body, for an everlaſting being with the Lord! Lord ſtrengthen my faith and hope, that ſo neither the ſweetneſs of life, the pain of death, nor apprehenſions about my future ſtate, may make me unwilling to die. Is my Redeemer aſcended and gone before to prepare a place for me; why then ſhould I be ſlothful to go in and poſſeſs the good land?

Mercy hath filled up all my life, and brought me near to the end of it; O let it not leave me now, when all the enjoyments of the world are as nothing to me, and I am to take an everlaſting farewel of them all, Now one ſmile of thy face, one taſte of thy love, would be ſtrength and joy to my departing ſoul. O remember the word to thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope; haſt thou not ſaid, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee?* O fulfil this word to me in the time of my need. O let me never go off the ſtage with an heavy heart, or a guilty conſcience; but may I depart in peace and ſleep in Jeſus. Let me breathe out my departing ſoul to thee, and truſt in thy hand and ſafe keeping: And let my fleſh reſt in hope of riſing gloriouſly at the laſt day, thro' him who is the reſurrection and the life, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Love and praiſe is the exerciſe of ſaints for ever; may I be acquaint with it here! O ſhall I not love and praiſe him, who hath forgiven all my iniquities, healed all my diſeaſes, redeemed my life from deſtruction, and crowned me with loving-kindneſs and tender mercies? He hath cauſed goodneſs and mercy follow me all the days of my life; and, ſhall not I follow him with praiſes at the end of it?

Now the time of my departure is at hand, and the lamp of my life is ready to be extinguiſhed. O that I may die in faith, that whether the lamp go out of its own accord or by ſome ſudden blaſt, it may be lighted again by the immortal beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs! And tho' I be overtaken with the ſleep of death, and ly down in the bed of the grave, yet ſhall I awake again in the morning of the reſurrection, that morning which ſhall never be ſucceeded by an evening; when I ſhall behold thy face in righteouſneſs, and be eternally ſatisfied with thy likeneſs.

Now I am going the way of all the earth, ready to launch forth into eternity, where I ſhall be fixed in my everlaſting condition. Grant me, Lord, the perfect uſe of my ſenſes, of my reaſon and underſtanding, that I may glorify thy name, and edify my neighbours to the laſt moment of my departure. And now, when I am to conflict with the king of terrors, O ſupport and aſſiſt me in my ſoreſt extremities and laſt agonies, O mercifully mitigate death's pangs, and let my paſſage be eaſy, and my landing ſafe. Stand by me in my dying moments, and ſecure my ſoul in thy hands from all its deadly enemies. And, when I am numbered among the dead, let me alſo be numbered among the redeemed and bleſſed of the Lord for ever.

O Lord, thou determineſt both the bounds of man's life, and the bounds of his habitation. If a hair of my head cannot fall to the ground without thy providence, far leſs can my whole body fall into the grave without it. Thou haſt told me plainly that I muſt die, but mercifully haſt thou concealed the time, place and manner, that I may always ſtand upon my guard, every hour expect thy coming, and have my accounts in my hand, always prepared to give them up to thee my judge. Juſtly mighteſt thou have ſnatched me away by a ſurprizing call and ſudden ſtroke: But in thy goodneſs thou giveſt me warning, and time to ſet my houſe and ſoul in order. O graciouſly finiſh what is now wanting of the work of grace in my heart and ſoul, and thoroughly accompliſh and furniſh me to appear in thy bleſſed preſence. May I now die to ſin every hour, that I may not die for ſin hereafter. Cauſe ſin wholly to die before me, that it may not riſe in judgment againſt me after death.

O God, be thou my refuge and ſtrength, and a very preſent help in trouble; and then I will not fear tho' the waters of affliction rage and be troubled, and tho' all the mountains of earthly comforts ſhake with the ſwelling thereof. There is a river, the ſtreams whereof ſhall make glad the city of God. O let my ſoul dwell beſide theſe living ſtreams, and drink of them for ever. In the valley of the ſhadow of death, Lord, be thou preſent as the good ſhepherd with thy guiding rod and ſupporting ſtaff; and make my departure eaſy, and full of peace and hope. Lord, carry me ſafe thro' the dark paſſage upon which I am entring, and let me find it, a gate of glory, a door opened into the everlaſting kingdom and joy of the Lord. Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit, and let it be preſented juſtified and ſpotleſs to the Father, that it may come to the ſpirits of juſt men made prfect, and join with them in ſinging the new ſong, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, honour, glory and bleſſing for ever. Amen.*

Some Meditations for drooping believers, when death is near.

TRavellers, who have met with many ſtorms, troubles and dangers in their journeys, rejoice when they come near to their own country; and, ſhall not I a ſtranger and pilgrim, that have been long wandering in a wilderneſs, be glad when I come near my bleſſed home, my dear friends, and eternal habitation?

With what cheerfulneſs do ſome women endure the pains of child-bearing, being ſupported with the hopes of a child's being born in the world? And what is the joy of a man-child being brought into this ſinful and miſerable world, to the joy of a ſanctified ſoul's being brought out of it into heaven for ever? It is pleaſant when the hard winter goeth over, the meſſengers of the ſpring, the ſinging of birds doth come: And ſhall not I rejoice, when ſickneſs and forerunners of death do tell me, that the winter of my darkneſs and trouble is paſt, and the ſummer of my eternal light and joys is at hand?

What tho' death be the king of terrors? Is not glorious Chriſt the King of comforts? Have not I met already with this bleſſed King; and why ſhould I fear to meet with the other? O let my ſtrength and ſupport at this time come from Chriſt my covenanted Redeemer.

O Lord, deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling! O bring me out of the miry clay, ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings, and put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſes to God?

If Jacob went down ſo cheerfully into Egypt, when God had ſaid unto him, *Fear not to go down, for I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again*; Why ſhould a believer fear to go down to the grave, when God hath undertaken to go down with him thither, and to bring him up again? His body may be turned into duſt, but God is in covenant with his duſt, and will not ſuffer the leaſt particle of it to be loſt.

Are not the righteous taken away from the evil to come? Do they not reſt on their beds, and enter into peace? Why then ſhould I grudge at dying? When the Lord is to bring heavy wrath and judgments on a land, he frequently houſes many of his people in heaven before-hand: And, how happy are theſe that win the houſe before the ſweeping hailſhower doth fall. A believer needeth not to look for any ſettled fair weather in this world: It will be nothing but one ſhower up, and another down, till he be houſed in heaven. O why then ſhould I linger in this wilderneſs!

How highly dignified is the believer, in being made an heir of God, and a joint heir with his own Son Jeſus Chriſt? So that Chriſt and the believer do, as it were, divide heaven betwixt them; they have the ſame

Father, dwell in the ſame houſe, ſit at the ſame table, reign on the ſame throne, and partake of the ſame glory. O what honour is this, which is put upon a worm of the earth! It is indeed but little that the young heir enjoys of the inheritance while in this world; no more than will ſerve to bear his charges to heaven, where he ſhall get all, forget his preſent ſtraits, and remember his poverty no more. O why then ſhould not I, like a young heir, be looking and longing for the expiring of my minority, when I ſhall arrive at ripe age, and enter upon the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance! O that I could ſend out faith and hope, theſe two faithful ſpies, to ſurvey the promiſed land, or at leaſt to viſit the borders of my elder brother's country! What an encouraging report would they bring back! My glorious Lord is gone, he hath left the earth, and entred into his glory; my brethren and friends have many of them arrived there alſo. How great is the difference betwixt my ſtate and theirs! I am groaning out my complaints, but they are ſinging God's praiſe; I am in darkneſs, and cannot ſee God; but they are in light, and ſee him face to face. O my Lord, ſhall I ſtay behind, when they are gone? Should I be ſaiſfied to wander in the wilderneſs, far diſtant from my Father and my God; when they are triumphing above, dividing the ſpoil? No; I will look ſtill after them with a ſtedfaſt eye, and cry, O Lord, how long? I'll wait now in hope, yea, rejoice in the forethoughts of the day, when my minority ſhall be expired, my pilgrimage finiſhed, my baniſhment over, that I may get home to my country and friends above.

What tho' my days be dark and gloomy now, my winter be ſharp and ſtormy? Why, it is but ſhort, and near over; the eternal ſummer approacheth! The long day, the high ſun, and the fair garden of my well-beloved, above theſe viſible heavens, will quickly make amends for all. Let me get up by faith and viſit the new land, view the fair city, and behold the white throne, and the Lamb that ſits thereon, that I may rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Shall many of the heirs of wrath go ſinging and rejoicing to hell; and will an heir of God go drooping and ſorrowing to heaven? Oh, let not by my behaviour on a death-bed bring up a bad report upon Chriſt's good way, and the land which he hath purchaſed.

Have I ſuch great and precious promiſes left me, and ſhall I not live and feed upon them in the time of my need? Shall I not truſt the word of him that is faithful and true? Hath he not ſaid to me, *When thou paſſeſt thro' the waters, I will be with thee; and thro' the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: When thou walkeſt thro' the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee!* When the diſciples were ſore toſſed with winds and waves, thou cameſt to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on the waters; and when their fears were increaſed, thou ſaidſt, *It is I, be not afraid.* Thou rebukedſt the winds, and there preſently followed a great calm. My Redeemer's compaſſions continue; his bowels are not ſhut up this day, more than in the days of his fleſh. *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame today yeſterday and for ever.*

Ah! I have too little improven my acquaintance with precious Chriſt in the day of my life! How ready am I to miſken and miſtake him, when he changeth his diſpenſations towards me! Tho' I have been long at Chriſt's ſchool, what ſmall proficiency have I made in the work and myſtery of faith? How little have I learned to believe in the dark, and to drop an anchor at midnight upon the Rock of ages, and to look out for the dawning of the day?

Surely the day ſhall break, and the ſhadows flee away: My king cometh, my well-beloved is on his way; he hath ſent his letter before him to warn me of it, ſaying, *Behold I come quickly.* O that, like the cold and wearied night-watch, I may be looking out for the appearing of the morning-ſtar, and the breaking of the eaſtern ſky; and may be ſtill crying, *Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.*

Thou haſt ſaid, *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for all the upright in heart.* Surely God's ſeed ſhall not ly always beneath the clods; the time is at hand, when it ſhall ſpring; and joyful will the crop be at laſt. O that, like David in affliction, I could encourage myſelf in the Lord my God, and ſay, *The Lord liveth, bleſſed be my rock!* Why ſhould I droop, while my Lord liveth, and my rock ſtandeth? My hopes may die, my comforts my die, my gifts die, my riches die, my relations die, and my body die; but, good news! *The Lord liveth, bleſſed be my rock.* The diſciples had a melancholy time while Chriſt was dead and lying in the grave; but that ſad time is over, he is now riſen and will die no more. Nay, he hath proclaimed it for my comfort, ſaying, *Fear not, I am the firſt and the laſt. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.*

When my ſoul is caſt down within me, let me remember God from the land of Jordan, and the hill Mizar; that I may reaſon myſelf out of all my fears and diſcouragements: For yet *the Lord will command his loving-kindneſs in the day-time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life.*

Why then art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, and why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Now, when death is at hand, let not my Saviour be far off. He who remembred the dying thief, and ſpoke comfortably to him, let him now remember me when he is ſeated in his kingdom, and ſay to my ſoul, *This day thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe.* When it is abſent from the body, let it be preſent with the Lord. Let the angels now be ready to do their office, to carry my departing ſoul into Abraham's boſom. Let me now depart, that I may be with Chriſt; yea, be for ever with the Lord, that I may ſee his face. Let me dwell there, where they have no night, need no candle, no light of the ſun for ever; where God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying.

Father, into thy hands I commit my ſpirit. By the hands of him who hath redeemed it, let it be preſented to thee without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing.

An addition of ſome further Meditations proper for any ſick perſon in the view of death.

THE Lord is pleaſed ſometimes to caſt men down on beds of ſickneſs, and draw the curtain betwixt the world and them, that they may take a view of their bypaſt life and future ſtate. Now is it time for me to look into my ſoul, and examine my ſtate Oh, how many do miſs ſalvation, when they think themſelves ſure of it? They miſtake a form of godlineſs for the power of it, and thereby deceive themſelves, thinking themſelves ſomething when they are nothing.

Some come the length as to ſhed tears, as Eſau did; profeſs fair, yea fight for the Lord, as Saul and Jehu did; wiſh for the end of the righteous, as Balaam did; deſire God's people to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; walk ſoftly, and mourn for fear of judgments, as Ahab did: Joy in goſpel ordinances, and reform in many things, as Herod did; propheſy and ſpeak well of Chriſt, as Caiaphas and Judas did; be convinced and tremble at hearing a ſermon, as Felix did; yea, taſte the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, as apoſtates have done: And yet for all theſe attainments, remain ſtrangers to the ſaving work of the Spirit on the heart.

O that the conſideration of hypocrites attainments might alarm me out of my ſecurity, and make me reſtleſs till I find the diſtinguiſhing marks of true grace and ſincere faith in my ſoul? O that I could ſay, there is a principle in me that will not ſuffer me to build on any foundation in the world but Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; that makes me content with Chriſt, with his all offices, with all his precepts, and with his very croſs for his ſake! Doth the love of Chriſt keep me back from ſin, more than the law or fear of hell? Have I aimed at God's honour in all my actions, civil, natural and religious? Am I humble, and denied to my own will, wit, credit, eaſe and honour, and to all the enjoyments of the world? Am I acquaint with the throne of grace, and deſirous to keep up a conſtant correſpondence with it? O let me not reſt till I perceive theſe things in my ſoul which accompany ſalvation.

O how comfortable would it be to me now, if I could ſay with good Hezekiah in his ſickneſs, 'Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight?' O that I could pray, and ſay with Jeſus my Saviour when in the view of death, 'Father, I have glorified thee on earth; I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which thou haſt ordained for me before the world was?'

Alas, Lord, I muſt confeſs, my iniquities have gone up above mine head; my miſpent time, my unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace, and waterings of ordinances, may cauſe me to cry out, Wo is me for the leanneſs of my ſoul, and barrenneſs of my heart? I have been an empty vine, bringing forth fruit only to myſelf. I have hid my Lord's money, and therefore deſerve the doom of the wicked and ſlothful ſervant. But my relief is in my ſurety's righteouſneſs. Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath ſent his Son to bleſs thoſe who by nature lie under the curſe, and to interceed for thoſe who cannot ſpeak for themſelves. O how ſuitable is he to my ſoul's caſe! I have indeed a multitude of ſins, but he hath a multitude of tender mercies; I have deep and heinous guilt, but he hath a deep fountain for waſhing it out; I am ſold under ſin, but he hath a ranſom to buy me back again; my ſore is broad, but his plaiſter is anſwerable; my wound is great, but his balm is excellent. Surely it is my wiſdom to go to Chriſt with all my grievances, and always to lie and cry at my Redeemer's door.

O that now, when the ſun of my life is ſetting, the bleſſed ſun of righteouſneſs may ariſe and ſhine upon my ſoul! Goodneſs and mercy hath followed me while I lived; O that Chriſt and glory may meet me when I die! I muſt acknowledge thy goodneſs; were this the laſt hour I had to live, and this the laſt word I had to ſpeak in the world, I behoved to ſay, Lord, thou haſt been a merciful and gracious God to me, my whole life hath been a continued tract of mercy; Lord, crown the end of it with mercy alſo.—Surely the ſea is not ſo full of water, nor the ſun ſo full of light, as thou art full of grace and mercy. O let not my ſins ſtop the current of thy tender mercies at this time. Lord, drown all my ſins in the ſea of Chriſt's blood, that my ſoul may not be ſunk by them in the ocean of divine wrath. Lord Jeſus, embrace my periſhing ſoul in thy arms: Let thy croſs be my ſecurity, and thy wounds my refuge.

O thou that heareſt the young ravens which cry, be not ſilent to me at this time, leſt, if thou be ſilent to me, I be like them that go down to the pit.

Lord, I am now called to the work I never did: Give me the ſtrength I never had. Surely it is an important matter to die, and my eternal ſtate dependeth upon dying aright. What I do amiſs in my life one day, I may amend it in the next; but not ſo here, I cannot die but once: If I mar this piece of work, I cannot come back to mend it again; if I forget any thing neceſſary for my journey, I cannot return to fetch it. Oh, a wrong ſtep in going out of this life is highly dangerous. In one reſpect it is like the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and can never be forgiven: For I cannot come back to mourn for it. Of all the buſineſs I ever undertook, I have moſt need to take care of my dying.

Oh, is death coming to take down this earthly tabernacle, and to put the one half of me in the dark grave, and the other half of me in heaven or in hell; and ſhall I give ſleep to mine eyes, or ſlumber to mine eye-lids, till I find myſelf in that caſe, that I dare look death in the face, and dare hazard my ſoul upon eternity?

O to have right impreſſions of the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of life! What is my life but a vapour, a ſand glaſs of ſixty or ſeventy years, which will ſoon run out? Eternity and a judgment-ſeat are now hard upon me. The blaſt of the laſt trumpet is at hand. There will ſhortly be a proclamation by one ſtanding in the clouds, that time ſhall be no more.—The world looks big in mens eyes in time of health; but when the eye-ſtrings break, the breath turns cold, and the impriſoned ſoul looks out at the windows of the clay houſe, ready to leap out into eternity, can the world give any ſatisfaction? No, no; a lamp full of oil will be valued then more than a houſe full of gold. The fineſt things on earth will then appear nothing but a piece of painted duſt and gilded clay. How gladly would the greateſt worldling, then, give all his gold and ſilver, riches and honours, for one ſight of Chriſt's fair face, one ſmile of his countenance? O wherefore ſhould men in health neglect the market of grace and ſlight the pearl of great price? Why ſhould they ſpend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not?

Lord, ſave me from the hypocrite's caſe at death, whoſe candle of profeſſion and of hope burns and blazes fair all the way with him, but goeth out in the drak trance of death; and there he ſtumbles and falls, and ſhall riſe no more. O that my profeſſion and hope may be of God's creating! If God light my candle, then ſhall my feet be enligthned thro' the dark valley, and death nor hell ſhall not be able to put it out.

Lord, ſubdue ſin in me, and let it be continually dying now, that it may certainly be dead before me. God forbid that my ſins ſhould ſurvive me!

O that, when the ſtroke of death diſſolves my body, my ſoul may eſcape as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowler, and may aſcend to the heavenly regions to enjoy God himſelf.

O let me look through the gates of mortality, and long for the jaylor's coming to ſet me at liberty. God help me to overcome the love of life, and fears of death. If my neighbour lend me any thing, I pay it again with thanks, and, ſhall I not reſtore my life to God with thanks, who hath been pleaſed to lend me it ſo long? Ariſe and let me depart, for this is not my reſt: Heaven is my home, Lord bring me to it; the joys of it are too great to enter into me, O make me fit to enter into them.

While I lie on a ſick-bed, Lord help me to patience in my ſickneſs without mourning.

How willingly would the damned in hell endure my pains a thouſand years, if they had any hopes of being ſaved at laſt! Bleſſed be God, that my ſickneſs is not in hell, that my pains are not eternal.

O that I may look on my affliction as coming from the hand of him that is the Lord of health and of ſickneſs, of life and of death; who killeth and maketh alive, bringeth down to the grave, and raiſeth up again! That ſovereign and wiſe Lord hath determined the time when my affliction ſhall end, as well as the time when it began. Thirty-eight years were appointed the ſick man at Betheſda pool, eighteen years the woman that Satan kept bound; twelve years to the woman with the bloody iſſue; ten days tribulation to thoſe of Smyrna; three days plague to David. The number of the godly man's tears is regiſtrated in God's book; yea, the hairs of his head are numbered.

When David got his choice of his own chaſtiſements, he choſe rather to be corrected by the hand of God, than by any other means, ſaying, *Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great.* I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it. Glory to God, that I am fallen into his merciful hand. Hath God appointed that man's coming into the world ſhall be attended with pain and crying, and his going out of it with grief and trouble; and ſhall I quarrel at it? No, I deſire humbly to underly the correction of mine iniquity, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him. O that the ſickneſs of my body may be a means of health to my ſoul! May I be chaſtened of the Lord, ſo that I may not be condemned with the world!

It is good for the believer that he is afflicted. Why? It ſprings from divine love, and it works for his ſoul's good. Affliction is a ſeal of his adoption, and no ſign of reprobation. The pureſt gold is ofteſt tried, the ſweeteſt grape is hardeſt preſſed, and the trueſt Chriſtian is heavieſt croſſed. But O how ſoon will the Chriſtian forget all his groans when he comes to heaven! Aſſoon as Stephen ſaw Chriſt, though at a diſtance, he forgot all his wounds and bruiſes; he minded no more the terror of the ſtones about his ears, but ſweetly yielded his ſoul into his Redeemer's hands.

I read of many in the goſpel that by ſickneſſes and diſeaſes were driven unto Chriſt, who, if they had enjoyed health and proſperity, would have neglected, like many others to come to him. O bleſſed is that croſs, that draweth a ſinner to Chriſt, to lay open his own miſery, and implore Chriſt's mercy. And bleſſed be that Chriſt, who never refuſeth the ſinner that cometh to him, though driven by affliction and miſery. To whom ſhall ſuch a diſtreſſed creature as I go, but to him who is the only phyſician, that can both cure my ſoul from ſin, and my body from ſickneſs?

Lord, thou never denied'ſt thy mercy to any ſinner that aſked it with a penitent heart. There were many ſorts of ſick ſinners that came to thee in the days of thy fleſh; the blind, the deaf, the lame, the lepers; theſe that were ſick of palſies, dropſies, fevers, fluxes, and were poſſeſſed with devils: And yet never one of them came crying for mercy, that went away without his errand, were his ſin never ſo great, his diſeaſe never ſo grievous. Nay, ſo merciful is my Redeemer, that he offered and gave his mercy to many that never aſked it, being moved with the bowels of his own compaſſion, and the ſight of their miſery; ſo dealt he with the woman of Samaria, the widow of Nain, and the man that lay thirty-eight years at the pool of Betheſda. Oh, if he gave his mercy ſo willingly to them that did not aſk it, and was found of them that ſought him not, will he deny mercy to my ſoul that is crying for it?

There is but a ſtep betwixt me and death; Lord ſeal my pardon to me, before I go hence and be no more. O draw nigh to me, and ſave me: For my ſoul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. Thy loving-kindneſs is better than life; O make me ſure of that, and I'll willingly part with this mortal life.

O thou who willeſt not that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance; be pleaſed to make uſe of the chaſtiſement of my body, as a medicine to cure my ſoul, and bring me to a true and ſincere repentance. One day is with thee as a thouſand years; O work in me in this, which may be my laſt day, whatſoever thou ſeeſt wanting in me. Enable me to preſent unto thee the ſacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, which thou haſt promiſed not to deſpiſe. Give a true and lively faith in the bleſſed Jeſus, who is the propitiation for our ſins. He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him; O heal me by his ſtripes. Let the cry of his blood drown the clamour of my ſins. I am indeed a child of wrath, but Chriſt is the Son of thy love; O pity me for his ſake, and let my ſoul find ſanctuary in his wounds.

O Lord, the waters of affliction are come in even unto my ſoul; O let the Spirit of God move on theſe waters, that, like the pool of Betheſda, they may cure whatever ſpiritual diſeaſes thou ſeeſt in me. O Lord, conſider my affliction, accept my tears, aſſuage my pain, increaſe my patience, and finiſh my troubles. Correct me with the chaſtiſement of a Father, and not with the wounds of an enemy; and though thou take not off thy rod, Lord take away thine anger.

Lord, the prince of this world cometh, O let him have nothing in me; but, as he accuſeth, do thou abſolve. I have nothing to ſay for myſelf, but be thou my advocate, Lord; and do thou anſwer for me. I am clothed with filthy garments, and Satan ſtands at my right hand to reſiſt me; O Lord rebuke him, and pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Cauſe mine iniquities to paſs from me, and clothe me with the righteouſneſs of thy dear Son. I know, O Lord, that no unclean thing can enter into thy kingdom, and thou ſeeſt I am nothing but pollution, yea, my very righteouſneſs is filthy rags: O waſh me and make me white in the blood of the Lamb, that I may be fit to ſtand before thy throne. O take me from the tents of Kedar to the manſions of light and purity. When my earthly houſe of this tabernacle is diſſolved, O let me have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. O bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may eternally give thanks unto thy name. Amen.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing Directions to the friends and neighbours of the ſick, who are themſelves in health for the time.

WHEN the Lord ſends ſickneſs and affliction to our neighbours, we ought not to be idle and unconcerned ſpectators of his diſpenſations; but we ſhould hearken to the voice of God's rod upon others, and conſider what it is that the Lord is calling for at our hands. Theſe following directions may be uſeful to thoſe that are in health.

Direct. I. *Be very thankful to God for the great mercy of health and ſtrength, and improve it to his glory.*

SURELY an healthful perſon hath ſtill great cauſe to be a thankful perſon. Health is a mercy that doth ſeaſon and ſweeten every other temporal mercy; without it the greateſt wealth and honours, nay, a king's crown, can give no ſatisfaction. It is far more eligible to be a healthy beggar than a ſickly king. What comfort could it afford us, under toſſing ſickneſs and torturing pains, to have the greateſt heaps of money to look to, or thouſands coming to pay us homage; alas, for our unthankfulneſs to him who is the God of our health! How little do we prize his goodneſs, in continuing with us ſuch a long tract of health and ſtrength, together with the uſe of our reaſon and ſenſes, when many others are deprived of them. Surely God were righteous, ſhould he teach us to value the worth of theſe mercies by the want of them.

Let us conſider how many miſerable perſons there are in the world, and who it is that maketh us to differ from them; how many diſeaſed, diſtracted, deformed, lame, blind, deaf and dumb people there are; and how eaſy it had been for God to have put us in their condition, and them in ours. The difference is not owing to any thing in us: Their ſins are not greater than ours. Had we a due ſenſe of our ſins and ill-deſervings, we would acknowledge ourſelves unworthy of the leaſt of all God's mercies; we would reckon every common mercy a ſpecial bleſſing, and an unmerited favour to us.—Again, let us take a view of the fainting ſickneſs, racking pains and reſtleſs nights of others. Let us look upon our ſick friends ſweating and burning under fevers, let us hear them groaning and moaning under ſtrong pain. *Their ſoul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death.* Sometimes we ſee them panting and fainting, and not able to ſpeak a word to us. And, what is the language of all this to us? Is it not, that we ſhould thankfully adore our gracious God, and bleſs and magnify him, for his diſtinguiſhing goodneſs to us? O how much are we bound to the Lord, that it is not ſo with us as with others! While weariſom nights are appointed to them, and their bones are full of toſſing; all the comforts of this life are taſteleſs to them, their friends are weeping about them, but cannot help them; ‘It is far otherwiſe with me (may you ſay) my mercies and relations are comfortable and helpful to me, I reliſh my food, my bed gives me eaſe, my ſleep is refreſhing: I have freedom to read and pray, meditate and attend the public ordinances. Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name. Forget not this benefit of health, that is the chief of all my outward bleſſings. Some would part with all their worldly wealth, to have ſo much bodily health as I have. Long have I undervalued and abuſed this choice mercy of health: O that I could mourn for my neglect, and reſolve in God's ſtrength to improve my remaining health, for the praiſe and ſervice of that merciful God who is the author and preſerver of it! Let me ſpend and be ſpent for God, that gives me all my health and ſtrength for his glory. Let me abhor the ingratitude of thoſe who employ the health which God giveth, in the ſervice of his enemies; and make a ſacrifice of it to the devil, the world and the fleſh. O what prodigious folly are theſe guilty of, who, for ſatisfying their ſenſual appetite, do often deprive themſelves of health, which is in itſelf a thouſand times of more value than all their brutiſh pleaſures! God help me to prize this mercy, that can never be prized enough.’

Direct. II. *Make conſcience of viſiting your ſick friends and neighbours, believing that it is your duty and intereſt to do it.*

VISITING of the ſick is not only the duty of the miniſters of Chriſt, but likewiſe of all the members of Chriſt: For we are all injoined to remember them that are in adverſity, and to ſympathize with the afflicted, as being ourſelves alſo in the body. *To him that is afflicted, pity ſhould be ſhewn by his friends,* ſaith Job. And our Lord gives it as a character of thoſe whom he will own and acquit at the great day, Mat. xxv. 36. *I was ſick, and ye viſited me.* This i the way to be like him, who is the Father of mercies, and whoſe *ſoul was grieved for the miſeries of Iſrael,* Judg. x. 16. We read how tenderly David ſympathized with his enemies when they were ſick, Pſalm xxxv. 13. 14. and much more ought we to viſit and ſympathize with our ſick friends. To viſit the proſp rous and healthy, is an act of curioſity and civility, but to viſit the afflicted and ſickly, is an act of charity and Chriſtianity.

And as it is your duty, ſo it is your intereſt and advantage to viſit the ſick. The wiſe man tells you, Eccl. vii. 2. *It is better to go to the houſe of mourning, than to the houſe of feaſting.* King Joaſh went to ſee Eliſha in his ſickneſs, and wept over him; and he loſt nothing by ſo doing, 2 Kings xiii, 14. for he obtained thereby three famous victories over the Syrians. Tho' it be not warrantable to enquire at the dead, Deut. xviii. 11. yet we may learn many wholſome leſſons from the dying, and even tho' they be ſpeechleſs. As for inſtance, we may hereby be inſtructed how to prize health, mind our own frailty, and provide for the time of ſickneſs. When we behold their ſtrength languiſhing, their tongue faultering, their eyes failing, their countenance pale; we ſhould think with ourſelves, "This " will be my caſe ere long: The next arrow that death " ſhoots, may be levelled at me: How much is it my " concern to prepare for it!" Alſo we may think, what a bitter thing ſin is, that is the cauſe of all theſe pains and diſtreſſes; and how mad they are who love ſin and take pleaſure in it.—We may ſee likewiſe the great folly of courting and truſting the world, which leaves the ſick and dying man in the time of his greateſt extremity.—And we may obſerve, how happy the man is, that hath an intereſt in Chriſt, the peace of a good conſcience, and a well grounded hope of heaven, to yield ſupport and confidence to him under his ſtrugglings with ſickneſs and death. When we hear the dying man's complaints of his ſins, and his lamenting his neglect of duty, and miſpending of precious time, we may learn repentance and reformation. When we obſerve their profeſſions of love to Chriſt, and their hope in him to the laſt, it doth contribute to the quickning and ſtrengthning of our faith. A right ſight of dying perſons, is a good mean to increaſe the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication in us. We may fitly allude here to the anſwer which Elijah gave to Eliſha, when he ſought a double portion of his ſpirit, 2 Kings ii. 10. *If thou ſeeſt me when I am taken from thee, it ſhall be ſo unto thee.* A double portion of the Spirit ſhall be the allowance of theſe who make conſcience of this duty.

DIRECT. III. *Let the friends of the ſick, and thoſe who viſit them, deal faithfully with them about their ſouls.*

CONſider, this may be the laſt opportunity you may have of doing any thing for your friend's ſoul. If he die, he is fixed in his everlaſting ſtate, ſo that all advices and counſels then will be fruitleſs. It is now, or never, you muſt exert yourſelf for your friend's advantage; their is no knowledge nor wiſdom in the grave, to which he is going, *God's loving kindneſs cannot be declared in the grave, nor his faithfulneſs in deſtruction,* Pſal. lxxxviii. 11. Now is the proper time for doing good to your neighbour's ſoul. When affliction opens the ear to diſcipline, be careful to drop in wholeſome inſtructions into it; and, when the heart is made tender by ſickneſs, it is a fit ſeaſon for good counſel to make impreſſions on it, Let the opportunity then be improven with faithfulneſs and prudence. And, in order thereto, obſerve the following advices.

I. Labour to know the ſick man's ſpiritual condition, that your applications may be ſuitable thereunto. The knowledge of the diſeaſe is previouſly requiſite unto the cure; as the miſtake of a phyſician about a man's diſeaſe may be as dangerous as the diſeaſe it ſelf, ſo here it is highly dangerous to miſtake the caſe of the ſick man's ſoul; for then lenitives may be applied, when corroſives are needful; promiſes may be adminiſtred, when threatnings are more proper.

II. Beware of flattering the ſick with vain hopes of life, when he is more likely to die; leſt he be thereby tempted to delay or ſlacken his preparation for another world. It is fit that plainneſs be uſed with reſpect to his danger, that he may be quickened to his work.

III. The ſick perſon is to be admoniſhed and told, that ſickneſs comes not by chance, nor by ſecond cauſes merely; but by the wiſe direction and ſpecial providence of God; that ſometimes God ſmites out of diſpleaſure for ſin, and for the ſinner's correction and amendment; and ſometimes for the tryal and exerciſe of his peoples graces; that the ſharpeſt afflictions ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and are rightly exerciſed under God's hand; that it is a great mercy to a ſinner, when God by his rod gives him warning and ſpace to repent, and flee to the blood of ſprinkling, and to cry to God for pardon, and doth not ſnatch him out of the world by a ſudden death. Upon which account the voice of the rod ſhould be carefully hearkned to and thankfully obeyed.

IV. If the ſick perſon be ignorant, he is to be catechiſed and inſtructed in the principles of religion, eſpecially concerning his faith and repentance, and his uptaking of the covenant of grace, and the method of pardon and ſalvation through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt apprehended by faith. And it may be proper to demand his aſſent to ſome of the fundamental truths of Chriſtianity, or his anſwer to ſuch queſtions as theſe; *1ſt,* Do you believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God in three perſons, the maker and governor of the world? *2dly,* Do you believe that Jeſus Chriſt, who aſſumed our nature, obeyed the law, died on the croſs, roſe from the dead, and aſcended to heaven, is the eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of ſinners? *3dly,* Are you ſenſible that you are a loſt ſinner by Adam's fall, and, beſides that, guilty of innumerable actual ſins; and that you have broken God's commandments in thoughts, words and deeds, and, for ſo doing, do deſerve God's wrath both in this life and that which is to come? *4thly,* Are you truly grieved and ſorry for breaking God's law, neglecting his worſhip, miſpending your time, and purſuing the vanities of the world? And would you do as you have done, or live otherwiſe if you were to begin your life again? *5thly,* How do you think to get your guilt removed, your ſins pardoned, and your peace made up with God? Are you deſirous from your heart to be reconciled to God through Jeſus Chriſt, the bleſſed peace-maker? *6thly,* Do you heartily approve of the goſpel-method of reconciliation, by the righteouſneſs and ſacrifice offered by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as your ſurety, in your name and ſtead? And is your ſoul deſirous to chuſe and accept of Chriſt for your Mediator and Saviour, in all his offices, of Prophet, Prieſt, and King? *7thly,* Do you renounce all confidence in any other, all dependance on your duties and righteouſneſs, and put your whole truſt and confidence in Chriſt, and the merits of his death and blood, ſaying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I deſire beſides thee.* Do you believe that there is no ſalvation in any other, and that there is no name under heaven whereby you can be ſaved, but Jeſus Chriſt only? 8*thly*, Do you deſire to be wholly renewed and ſanctified by virtue of Chriſt's blood, and to ſhew forth the reality of your faith by good works and a holy life for the time you have to live in the world? And, as an evidence thereof, are you willing to reſtore what you have taken wrongfully from any, and aſk forgiveneſs of any you have injured? 9*thly*, Do you believe that Chriſt is coming at the laſt day to judge all the world, both the quick and the dead, whom he ſhall then raiſe from the grave, and that your dead body ſhall riſe with the reſt? 10*thly*, Do you believe the immortality of the ſoul, and its living in a ſeperate ſtate after death, and that the ſouls of believers do immediately paſs into glory, where they ſhall ever be with the Lord?

V. In dealing with the ſick you are to ſeparate betwixt the precious and the vile, and to make a difference betwixt the converted and the unconverted. And ſeeing different applications are requiſite, you are, according to your knowledge, to ſtudy to ſuit your counſels, admonitions and prayers to their ſtate and condition; not uſing the ſame words to the ungodly as you uſe to the godly, leſt you flatter them with ill-grounded hopes that their ſtate is ſafe, while they are ſtrangers to a work of regeneration. That truth is to be declared to all, that, *unleſs a man be born again he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.* O it is dangerous to ſpeak peace, where God ſpeaks war.

VI. If the ſick perſon ſeem to be be ſecure, or have not a due ſenſe of his ſins; endeavours muſt be uſed to convince him of the guilt, pollution, and danger of them, in order to his humiliation. Preſumptuous ſinners are not to be flattered, leſt we betray their ſouls into eternal ruin, and ſo their blood be required at our hand. No fond love, no ſlaviſh fear, muſt keep us from telling them the hazards of their preſent ſtate. Their ſecure conſcience muſt be awakned to ſee the demerit of ſin, and the terribleneſs of the juſtice of a ſin-revenging God, before whom no Chriſtleſs impenitent ſinner can ſtand: This is neceſſary in order to a ſinner's diſcovering his loſt caſe in himſelf, and his fleeing to Chriſt for refuge. It is God's method, firſt to caſt down the ſoul before he lift it up; to plow the heart by conviction, before he caſt in the ſeed of conſolation.

VII. If the ſick perſon hath ſtudied to walk uprightly, but is at preſent diſcouraged upon account of the ſharpneſs of the rod, Satan's temptations, the guilt of ſin, fear of death, or the like; then ſuitable counſels, reſolutions and comforts are to be tendered, in order to his ſettlement and ſupport. Particularly, he may be told, that ſharp rods are nowiſe incoſiſtent with divine love; nay, frequently, they are a ſign of it: For, as ſtanding waters turn corrupt, becauſe they have no current; and theſe who are not poured from veſſel to veſſel, their taſte remains, and their ſcent is not changed; therefore God, in order to take away the ſcent of the corrupt nature from us, is pleaſed to change us from ſtate to ſtate by croſſes and ſickneſs to ſalvation. And as Noah's ark, the higher it was toſſed with the flood, the nearer it mounted towards heaven; ſo the ſanctified ſoul, the more it is exerciſed with affliction, the nearer it is lifted toward's God. Again, it is proper to ſet before him the freeneſs and fulneſs of God's grace, the ſufficiency of righteouſneſs in Chriſt, and his rich and gracious offers in the goſpel, by which we are aſſured, that all who repent and believe with their heart in God's mercy through Chriſt, renouncing their own righteouſneſs, ſhall not periſh in their ſins, but have life and ſalvation in him, and that believers in Chriſt are aſſured of victory over Satan, death and all their enemies, becauſe Chriſt their head hath by his croſs conquered the devil, unſtinged death, triumphed over the grave, and obtained victory for all his members; ſo that neither life nor death, principalities nor powers, ſhall be able to ſeperate them from God's love in Chriſt.

VIII. If a ſick man be ſo tempted and troubled in conſcience, that he is in hazard of deſpairing of God's mercy; it is neceſſary to inform him of the greatneſs and infiniteneſs of God's mercy, that the moſt notorious ſinners have been pardoned and ſaved by it, and it is ſtill offered in the goſpel to the vileſt of ſinners. Though God foreſaw all the ſins which the world would commit, yet theſe did not hinder him from loving the world ſo, that he gave his only begotten Son to death, to ſave as many as would believe and repent: So that the ſins of one man can never hinder God from loving his ſoul, and forgiving his ſins, when he ſincerely deſires to repent and believe. The cry of the moſt grievous ſins that are recorded (ſuch as theſe of Sodom) could never reach higher than unto heaven, Gen. xix. 13. But David aſſures us, Pſal. cviii. 4. that the mercy of God is great, and reaches up higher than the heavens, ſo that it overtoppeth the greateſt of all our ſins. If the mercy of God be greater than all his works, it muſt ſurely be greater than all our ſins.

Again, lay before him the infinite virtue of Chriſt's blood: Why? It is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. And, are there any ſins ſo great, or guilt ſo heinous, but the blood of God can waſh away? This was godly Cranmer's ſupport that day he ſuffered martyrdom, when his ſin of renouncing the proteſtant doctrine ſtared him in the face: 'Surely '(ſaid he) God was made fleſh, and ſhed his blood, 'not for leſſer ſins only, but for great ſins alſo.' He was ſadly diſcouraged, and wept abundantly, till he eyed this meritorious blood, and then he took heart, and died with courage. O this price was ſo great, that it could have merited pardon for the ſins of all the devils in hell, as well as for all the men on earth, tho' every one of them had been red as crimſon. Yea, the leaſt drop of this blood is of more merit to procure the mercy of God for our ſalvation, than all our ſins can be of force to provoke the wrath of God for our damnation; why? The greateſt of our ſins are but the ſins of a man, but the leaſt drop of Chriſt's blood is the blood of God.

Moreover, let him be put in mind of the willingneſs and readineſs of our Redeemer to receive all ſinners that came to him in the days of his fleſh, tho' driven to him by ſickneſs and affliction; ſo that he never put any of them away without their errand, that came crying for mercy. Nay; he many times ſought out objects of his mercy, that were not thinking of coming to him, as ſhewed before. Obſerve the gentleneſs of our

Lord's carriage to Judas himſelf, in calling him friend, after his moſt treacherous dealing. Mat. xxvi. 50. *Friend* (ſaid he) *wherefore art thou come?* Had wretched Judas laid hold on the word friend, out of the mouth of Chriſt, as Benhadad did the word brother, from the mouth of Ahab; doubtleſs Judas ſhould have found the God of Iſrael more merciful than Benhadad found the king of Iſrael.

Laſtly, Let him conſider, that to deſpair of God's mercy, caſts the greateſt diſhonour upon the divine majeſty, and is a ſin more heinous than all the ſins which we have before committed: Why? It doth charge the great God as guilty of perjury, who hath ſolemnly ſworn, that he deſires not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. God was more diſpleaſed with Cain for diſpairing of his mercy, than for murdering of his brother: And with Judas for hanging himſelf, than for betraying his maſter: Why? Becauſe that by their deſpair they would make the ſins of mortal men greater than the infinite mercy of the eternal God.

DIRECT. IV. *Be earneſt in prayer to God for your friends when ſick or dying. Pray with them and for them.*

FRequently ſick perſons are ſo diſquieted with pain and trouble, that they are out of caſe to pray for themſelves, and therefore they have the more need of the prayers of others. David faſted and prayed for his enemies when they were ſick, Pſal. xxx. 13. much more ought we to pray for our friends in that caſe. Never did they need our prayers ſo much, as when they are called to enter upon an unchangeable condition, to go to their long home, even that place wherein they muſt abide for ever. Now they are in the land of prayer, and it is now or never that you muſt pray and beg mercy for them. When their life is gone, they go from the land of prayer, and are fixed in that place, whence they ſhall never remove: Then all your prayers and cries for them will be in vain. If your friend be a ſtranger to Chriſt, he is on the brink of hell, and knows it not; and, will you not cry to God to open his eyes, and ſave him from falling into that devouring pit out of which there is no redemption? You would be willing to ſit up a whole night for the relief of his body; and will you not ſpend a part of a night for the good of his ſoul, that is a thouſand times more valuable! Now the queſtion is, whether this precious ſoul ſhall be Chriſt's or the devil's for ever? And, when will you wreſtle for your friend if you do it not now? If the ſick perſon be a child of God, you may pray for him with the more comfort, and expectation to be heard. You may in that caſe, ſend the ſame meſſage by prayer to Chriſt, that the ſiſter of ſick Lazarus did, John xi. 3. *Lord, behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick.* Lord, pity him, comfort him, abate his diſtemper and relieve him from it, if it be thy will: If not, grant him thy gracious preſence and ſafe conduct thro' the Jordan of death, and a happy landing in the Canaan of glory.

We are told, that the prayers of the righteous, in ſuch caſes, do avail much, James v. 16. and this, to encourage us to pray one for another. Whatever be the ſick perſon's condition, ſuch confeſſions, and petitions as theſe following may be made uſe of in prayer for him.

Petitions for the Sick.

Lord, thou firſt breathedſt into man the breath of life; and, when thou takeſt away that breath, he dies, and returns again to his duſt. May we be duly ſenſible of our dependance on thee for all that we enjoy. We acknowledge, that our great abuſe of the many days of health and welfare thou affordeſt us doth juſtly deſerve the viſitation of ſickneſs and diſeaſes. Wo's us, we ly under a burden of ſin, both original and actual; we are all children of wrath by nature, and under the curſe of a broken law: And all other miſeries temporal and ſpiritual, diſtmepers, pains, death and hell itſelf, are the iſſues thereof. Be merciful to the ſick perſon under thy hand; diſcover to him his ſins, and the cauſe why thou contendeſt with him. Make him to ſee that he is loſt in himſelf, and wholly unable to ſatisfy the demands of offended juſtice; and do thou reveal Chriſt to his ſoul for righteouſneſs and life. O give him thy holy Spirit to create and ſtrengthen faith, that he may lay hold on Chriſt as offered in the goſpel, work in him the grace of true repentance. Enable him to ſearch his heart and try his ways, ſo as he may diſcover every accurſed thing, every Achan in the camp, that hath provoked the Lord againſt him. When thou putteſt him in the furnace, be pleaſed to ſtand by, and overſee the metal while it is melting in it. Try him as ſilver is tried and bring him out purified, and let him loſe nothing in this furnace but his droſs. Remove his ſins from thy preſence as far as eaſt is from the weſt, that they may never trouble his conſcience, nor riſe in judgment againſt his ſoul. However bitter the cup may be, let it be medicinal to cure all the diſeaſes of his ſoul. O that theſe afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory thro' Jeſus Chriſt the purchaſer!

Look down from heaven the habitation of thy holineſs, behold his affliction and his pain, and forgive all his ſin. Shew ſuch pity to him as a father doth to his child, and lay no more upon him than he is able to bear. Lord, give patience and ſtrength anſwerable to the burden of trouble thou haſt laid on him. In time of his weakneſs uphold him by thy ſtrength. Relieve his wants out of thy infinite fulneſs. Lord, thou knoweſt his frame, and remem播reſt that he is duſt; ſave him from extremity of trouble, either abate his pain, or increaſe his patience to endure what thou meaſureſt out to him. Give him the evidences of all the graces of thy Spirit Arm and defend him againſt all the ſuggeſtions and temptations of Satan. Take his heart wholly off the world, and ſet his affections on things above.—Lord, make uſe of this chaſtiſement of his body as a medicine to cure his ſoul, by drawing his ſoul, that is ſick of ſin, to thyſelf. O enable him in a penitent believing manner to come by repentance to Chriſt his ſoul-phyſician, to get it healed of all its maladies. Sanctify his ſickneſs, and let the fruit of it be to purge away his ſin.

If God ſhall be pleaſed to add to his days, bleſs all means of his recovery. Remove the diſeaſe; renew his ſtrength both outward and inward; heal his ſoul as well as his body. And enable him to walk tenderly before God, and carefully to remember and perform ſuch vows and promiſes of obedience as men are apt to make in time of ſickneſs.

If God hath determined to finiſh his days by the preſent viſitation; let him find ſuch evidence of the pardon of his ſins, of his intereſt in Chriſt, and eternal life, as may cauſe his inward man to be renewed, while his outward man decayeth; that he may meet death without fear, caſt himſelf wholly on Chriſt without doubting, and deſire to be diſſolved, that he may for ever be with Jeſus Chriſt.—Lord, make his laſt works better than his firſt, and the day of his death better than the day of his birth. Make his laſt words his beſt words, his laſt thoughts his beſt thoughts, and his laſt hour his beſt hour. O let him die the death of the righteous, and let his laſt end be like his. Let the eyes of his ſoul be opened to ſee his ſins and his Saviour, before the eyes of his body be ſhut by death. Take away the ſting of death, the guilt of ſin, that he may walk thro' the valley of the ſhadow of death and fear no evil. Open thou his lips, that his mouth may ſhew forth thy praiſe, before he go to the place of ſilence. And when his ſtrength doth fail, and his tongue is not able to utter words, let the blood of Chriſt ſpeak for him in heaven. And let thy holy Spirit within him make requeſts for him with ſighs and groans that cannot be uttered.—When the ſight of his eyes doth fail him, let the eyes of his faith be ſtrengthened, that his ſoul (with Stephen at his death) may behold Jeſus Chriſt in heaven ready to receive him. Lord, ſtand by him in his laſt conflict with his enemies, Satan and death, that he may overcome both, and be more than a conqueror thro' Chriſt that hath loved him. Into thy hands we commend his ſpirit.

Lord teach us who do ſurvive, by this and other like daily ſpectacles of our mortality, to ſee how frail and uncertain our condition is, and ſo to number our days, that we may ſeriouſly apply our hearts to heavenly wiſdom, thro' Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

DIRECT. V. *Be careful to furniſh your friends with ſuitable company and ſpiritual converſe, when they are ſick or dying.*

AS worldly company and converſe are great hindrances, ſo ſpiritual company and converſe are ſpecial helps to the ſick and dying. Now, that the friends of the ſick may prevent the one, and provide the other, let the following advices be remembered.

1ſt, Mind your friends timeouſly to make their wills, and diſpatch the ſettlement of their worldly affairs, that ſo they may not be diſturbed at the laſt, nor any wiſe diverted from there main work, by thoughts or diſcourſe about the world. A mind abſtracted from the world is a moſt ſuitable diſpoſition for a dying man. You cannot carry the things of this world with you when you go hence; and it is not fit you ſhould carry the thoughts of them.

2dly, Keep carnal company from them as much as poſſible, and all theſe that would divert them by idle or worldly diſcourſe. It is both impertinent and cruel, to throw in ſuch impediments in the way of thoſe that are going ſpeedily to their endleſs ſtate.

3dly, Do what you can to get faithful miniſters and godly Chriſtians to be much about them, who are fit to inſtruct and counſel them about their ſouls matters, and alſo to pray with them and for them.

4thly, Be often minding your ſick friends of their chief work, and theſe things which belong unto their peace. Whatever be their ſtate, whether gracious or graceleſs, it is proper, to be minding them, 1. Of the vanity and emptineſs of the world, that can neither give eaſe to the body nor comfort to the ſoul, when either of them is in trouble. 2. Of the ſinfulneſs of ſin, which is the ſpring of all diſeaſes and miſeries whatſoever. 3. Of the preciouſneſs and uſefulneſs of Chriſt to a ſinner in all caſes, and eſpecially at a dying hour. 4. Of the inexpreſſible felicity of believers in Chriſt after death, *&c.*

Laſtly, If you think yourſelves not able to inſtruct or adviſe your ſick friends as they ſtand in need, then read ſome good book to them, that may be ſuitable to the condition of their ſouls; and, if you have not a fitter at hand, read ſome chapters or directions of this book to them, as you may ſee moſt proper for them. But, above all books read to the ſick the holy ſcriptures, and ſome particular chapters and pſalms there, ſuch as the laſt three chapters of Geneſis; the laſt chapter of Deuteronomy;—the 17th chapter of the firſt book of Kings;—the 2d chapter of the 2d book of Kings;—the 14th and 19th chapters of Job;—the Pſalms of David, and particularly the 6th, the 23d, 25th, 30th, 38th, 41ſt, 42d, 49th, 51ſt, 71ſt, 73d, 77th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 103d, 116th, 118th, 130th, 142d, 143d, and ſeveral other Pſalms;——The 12th chapter of Eccleſiaſtes;—the 38th, 53d, 54th, and 55th, chapters of Iſaiah;—the three laſt chapters of Luke;—the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 20th chapters of John;—the 8th chapter of the Romans;—the 15th chapter of the 1ſt Corinth.—the 5th of the 2d Corinth.—the 4th of 1 Theſſ.—the 11th and 12th of Hebr.—the three laſt chapters of the Revelation, and the like.

DIRECT. VI. *Be likewiſe ſuitably concerned for the bodies of your friends, when they are ſick.*

IF you would evidence a ſuitable concern for them, then you muſt deal tenderly and compaſſionately with them in their ſickneſs, bear with their impatience and fretting, weary not of them, nor grudge at the trouble they put you to: For ſhortly you yourſelves may be in the like caſe, when you ſhall be as great a trouble to others, as your friends are now to you.

Again, It is neceſſary to employ phyſicians, and uſe the beſt means for the recovery of your friend's health. The means indeed muſt not be truſted to inſtead of God, but uſed in a ſubſerviency to him, who hath appointed them, and can only give ſucceſs to them. We muſt beware of Aſa's ſin that ſought to the phyſicians, and not to the Lord. Let us neither take food nor phyſic without prayer to God for his bleſſing thereupon.

DIRECT. VII. *When the ſickneſs of your relations or neighbours doth iſſue in death, ſtudy a Chriſtian and ſuitable behaviour under ſuch a diſpenſation.*

WHEN a parent looſeth a promiſing child, or a child looſeth a loving parent, or when death deprives us of any near relation, it is a ſpeaking and trying providence; and we have much need of grace and counſel from God to carry aright under it. Let us obſerve theſe advices.

I. It is neceſſary in ſuch a caſe that we have a tender ſenſe and feeling of God's afflicting hand. There are two extremes which we muſt equally avoid, *viz.* to make light of the death of relations, and to be exceſſively grieved on that account. God will have us neither to diſpiſe his rod, nor to faint under it, Heb. xii. 5. God is diſpleaſed with thoſe that are ſtupid and inſenſible under ſuch afflictions. Why? They deſpiſe his rod, and make light of his corrections. Hence he complains of theſe, Jer. v. 3. *I have ſmitten them but they have not grieved.* God will have us to feel his hand, to enquire into the meaning of the rod, and ſearch for theſe ſins that have provoked God to ſmite us. It is a ſign of a naughty, ſelfiſh and unchriſtian ſpirit, to be unconcerned for the death of friends; and much more is it ſo in theſe children, who have a ſecret ſatisfaction in the death of parents, becauſe of the worldly riches or liberty which they get thereby. God uſeth to follow this wicked temper with his heavy judgments even in this life.

II. Conſider, that God is calling you, by the death of others to keep up lively and laſting impreſſions of death and eternity upon your ſpirits. God knoweth how advantageous it would be for men ſo to do; and therefore he ſets frequent ſpectacles of mortality before their eyes for this end. But ſuch is the corruption and earthlineſs of our minds, that we ſoon forget the thoughts of death. When we ſee our friends in the pangs of death, or laid in the grave, it ſtrikes us with ſome fear and concern to think, that one day this will be our own caſe: But no ſooner is the dead interred, and the grave filled up again, than all theſe ſerious thoughts begin to vaniſh, and men return to their ſins and pleaſures as before. Ah, what folly is this! Should not men always keep alive the ſerious thoughts of death and a future ſtate? Are we not always alike mortal? Are we not as liable to death's arreſt at other times, as when examples are before our eyes?

III. When God takes away your children or relations, let it draw your hearts and affections more toward God and things above. As when a ſhepherd taketh up in his arms a lamb of the flock, the ewe followeth him of her own accord, and will not leave him; ſo, when the great Shepherd of the ſheep taketh a child or friend from you, it ſhould cauſe you to follow after him, and deſire to be with him. But one may ſay, that is not the caſe with me; I fear the wolf hath got the ſtrayed ſheep, and devoured it. Then even that ſuſpicion ſhould make you run to the good Shepherd, abide with him and keep cloſe by the footſteps of the flock, and beware of ſtraying in theſe paths wherein deſtroyers go. When God taketh from you theſe relations whom you dearly loved, he calls you to take your love off the fading creatures, and ſet it on the eternal Creator: When the weak branch is lopt off, then claſp to the body of the tree, which will not fail you.

IV. In ſuch trials, ſtudy a humble and patient ſubmiſſion to the will of God, who in his ſovereign wiſdom and pleaſure hath taken your child or friend from you. Remember who hath done it, even he who gave all men their lives, and hath the abſolute power and right to diſpoſe of mens lives, as he thinks beſt. If your fellow-creature do any thing that diſpleaſeth you, you may both aſk who did it, and why he did ſo? But, when God doth any thing to you, you muſt remember he is the Potter, and you are the clay; and that he may make or mar his clay-veſſels, yea, break them in pieces at his pleaſure; and *there is none that can ſtay his hand, or ſay to him, what doſt thou? Be ſtill, and know that I am God,* Pſal. xlvi. 10. The maſter of a family gathers at his pleaſure the flowers and fruits of his garden; ſometimes he cuts off the buds, ſometimes he ſuffers them to bloſſom; ſometimes he gathers the green fruit, ſometimes he ſtays till it be ripe; and every body thinks he may do with his own what he pleaſeth; and, ſhall not the Almighty God have liberty much more to diſpoſe of all that grows in his own territories at his pleaſure? The maſter of the family hath not created the trees and plants of his garden; but God hath made and faſhioned all the children of men with his almighty hand.

It is the ſenſe of this ſovereign right and dominion of God over his creatures, that hath made his people to be ſilent under the greateſt loſſes. Hence Aaron when he loſt his two ſons by a ſudden and extraordinary ſtroke, it is ſaid of him, Lev. x. 3. *And Aaron held his peace.* He opened not his mouth, becauſe it was a ſovereign God that did it. So holy Job, when he loſt all his children by one blow, patiently ſubmits to this abſolute Lord, Job i. 21. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* Job knew that God's relation to them was far nearer than his, and his right to diſpoſe of them was indiſputable. It was a holy and excellent ſpeech of that honourable perſon, lord Dupleſſis, at the death of his only ſon; "I could not have born this from a man, but I can from God."

V. Guard againſt immoderate grief and exceſſive ſorrow for the death of Children or near relations; for this is ſinful and offenſive to God. Now, grief is ſinful and immoderate, when it makes you grudge at God's diſpenſation, murmur at his will, turn unthankful to him for the mercies you enjoy, overlook all bypaſt favours, and lament a temporal more than a ſpiritual loſs. Alas! there are many who can bewail a dead friend far more than a dead heart, and the loſs of a child more than the loſs of God's countenance. Now, for preventing this exceſſive ſorrow, conſider theſe things.

1ſt, If thou be Chriſtleſs and impenitent, you have reaſon to bleſs God that the ſtroke was not at your own life, for then you had been eternally miſerable and without hope. What is the temporal loſs of a child, to the eternal loſs of thine own ſoul? O it is far better to be childleſs and friendleſs on earth, than to be hopeleſs and remedileſs in hell.

2dly, Conſider how little ground you have to complain of any loſs or ſtroke you meet with on earth. 1. If you eye God's ſovereignty and power over you, you have cauſe to be thankful that he hath not annihilated you and your relations both long ere now, ſeeing he hath as full a dominion to reduce you to nothing, as to bring you from nothing. Tho' God ſhould daſh us againſt the walls, as a potter doth his veſſel, no man could have reaſon to ſay, What doſt thou; or, why doſt thou uſe me ſo? Jer. xviii. 6. *O houſe of Iſrael, cannot I do with you as this potter? ſaith the Lord.* Nay, he hath a greater right to deal ſo with us, than a potter with his veſſel, for God hath contributed all to his creature that it hath, but the potter never made clay which is the ſubſtance of the veſſel, nor the water that is needful to make it tractable. All that the potter doth is only to mould the clay into ſuch a ſhape; beſides the potter's body is no better than the clay he makes his veſſel of; nay, perhaps that very clay might once have been ſome part of the body of a man as good as the potter himſelf. Now, ſhall the potter have ſuch abſolute power over that which is ſo near and like to him, and ſhall not God have it over that which is infinitely diſtant from him? That word, Dan. iv. 34. 35. *The moſt high doth according to his will,* is enough to ſilence the murmurings of all men under ſtrokes and loſſes.

2. If you eye the hand of God, as moſt juſt and righteous in what you have met with, you have no ground to complain. *Have you not procured all this to yourſelf?* Is not God moſt juſt in all that hath come upon you? Nay, if you conſider your ſins and God's abſolute dominion over you, you muſt own he might have dealt with you in a ſmarter way than he hath done; inſtead of one affliction, you might have had a thouſand.

3. Look to the mercy that is mixed with the rod. It is a wonder that this great Sovereign, who is ſo provoked by us, ſhould allow us any mercy at all, and yet we receive innumerable benefits from him. Whatever be our afflictions, ſurely they are far leſs than our iniquities deſerve. Hath he caſt your child into the grave? He might juſtly have thrown your ſoul into hell. It is of the Lord's mercies you are not conſumed. Why ſhould a living man complain? A man out of a grave, and out of hell too, hath ſurely no reaſon.

4. If you compare your affliction with the trials of others of God's people, yea, and theſe ſaints who have been moſt eminent, you have no reaſon to grudge at your loſs. You have one child dead, but Aaron (who is called the ſaint of the Lord, Pſal. cvi. 16.) had two at a ſtroke; nay, Job, whom God commends above all the ſaints in his day, had all his children ſlain by one blow, and both theſe eminent ſaints had theſe loſſes by an immediate and extraordinary ſtroke from God. Some godly parents have ſeen their children live to prove ſcandals to religion, and a grief of mind to themſelves, and would have thought it a mercy if God had taken them away when young. Say not then, that there is no ſorrow like your ſorrow; for the cup which many others have drunk, hath had more bitter ingredients in it than yours.

3dly, Conſider, that exceſſive grief cannot better your caſe, it may well make it worſe. If you ſtruggle and contend under God's hand, you act a fooliſh part; as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke, that by his ſtruggling galls his neck, and makes the yoke the more uneaſy; or like a bird fluttering in a net, that, inſtead of freeing, doth the more intangle itſelf. Thus, by immoderate ſorrow and fretting under the ſtroke, you ſin the more againſt God, and make your burden the more heavy.

4thly, Remember the tranſactions of thy ſoul with God in the day thou enteredſt into covenant with him. When thou ſaweſt thyſelf on the brink of hell, and a burden of ſin preſſing thee down, and no hope for thee but in Chriſt; then your cry was, 'None but Chriſt: Take children, take relations, riches, and all ' things in the world from me, and give me Chriſt. I ' give up myſelf, and all I have, to be diſpoſed at thy ' pleaſure; thy will, Lord, ſhall be my will," &c. Now, God is taking thee at thy word, and trying thy ſincerity in what thou ſaidſt and profeſſedſt to him ſo ſolemnly. He hath diſpoſed of thy dear relation as pleaſed him: O believer, doſt thou rue the bargain? Wouldſt thou take thy word again? Where is thy covenanted ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and thy promiſed contentment with all his diſpoſals?

5thly. Doſt thou not believe that a covenanted God is better to thee than all the friends in the world? Cannot God ſoon make up the greateſt loſs to thee, if thou turn to him by prayer, and pour out thy heart and ſorrows in his boſom? What are the world's comforts to God's comforts? A ſmile of God's face in prayer, can ſoon ſweeten thy bitter cup, and make thee forget all thy ſorrows, Pſal. xciv. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul.* The author of the Fulfilling of the Scriptures tells us of one Patrick Mackilwrae, an eminent ſaint in the weſt of Scotland, who having loſt his dear and only ſon, got to his cloſet, and there poured out his ſoul freely to the Lord. When he came out to his friends at length, who were waiting to comfort him, and fearing how he would take ſuch a heavy ſtroke, he returned from prayer with a cheerful countenance, and told ſome of his friends, who aſked him the reaſon of his cheerfulneſs, ' That he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, ' that to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content to loſe a ſon every day."

6thly, Seriouſly conſider, that you are but a few days journey behind him for whom you mourn, and that you will quickly overtake him, and be with him again. This allayed David's ſorrow for his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23. *I ſhall go to him.* It is our expecting to live long here, to enjoy the comfort of relations that commonly makes us grieve ſo much for their death; for, if we looked on ourſelves as men that were to die in a few days, we would not be ſo troubled for our friends, that are gone but a little ſpace before us.

7thly, If your friends are gone to heaven, your have more reaſon to rejoice with them than to mourn for them; ſeeing they are unſpeakably happier where they now are, than they could have been with you. It is the moſt fervent deſire and wiſh of every true Chriſtian to be in heaven; and, will you grieve, becauſe God hath taken your relation thither, where you deſire to be yourſelf above all things? As Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples before his death, John xiv. 28. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I go unto the Father*: So, if your departed friend could ſpeak to you from heaven, he would ſay, 'If you loved me with a pure ſpiritual love, ' ye would rejoice that I am gone to my Father, where ' I am more happy than you can poſſibly conceive of ' me.'

Object. 'Had I ground to think that my friend is ' gone to heaven, it would eaſe me; but, alas, I fear ' it is otherwiſe.'

Anſ. 1. It doth not belong to us to dive into the eternal ſtate and condition of theſe that are gone off the ſtage. Theſe ſecret things belong to God, who exerciſeth his mercy or juſtice toward ſinners according to his ſovereign will.

2. Suppoſing the worſt, you ought to ſubmit to the incontroulable ſovereignty of God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth. He is of one mind, and who can turn him? The Lord cut off Aaron's two ſons in the very act of ſin and rebellion againſt him, and yet Aaron held his peace, and ſo ought you.

3. Whatever be the lot of others hereafter, you have reaſon to be thankful to God for his diſtinguiſhing mercy, in ſaving you from theſe flames that others fall into, and giving you good hope through grace of glorifying God above for ever.

DIRECT. VIII. *Let the ſickneſs and death of others be a warning to you in time of health, to make due preparation for the time of ſickneſs and of dying, which is before your hand.*

WHen you ſee your friends and neighbours in a ſickly, weak or dying condition, the language of the diſpenſation to you that are in health is, Prepare for ſickneſs alſo. Nay, the feeble voice of the ſick doth proclaim this warning as loudly, as if they ſhould lift up their voice like a trumpet, and ſay to you, 'Remember that you muſt lay in the ſame caſe ere long, you muſt alſo groan under pain, loſe your ſtrength and beauty, leave your mirth and company, bid adieu to all the world, and look out for the grim meſſenger death, that is a-coming to diſſolve the earthly tabernacle, ſend the body to lie in a putrifying grave, and the ſoul to ſtand before God's tribunal, to be ſentenced to an endleſs ſtate.' This will be thy caſe, O young man, ſtrong man, healthful man, as really in a little, as it is of theſe now before your eyes. O how ſoon will it come! What thoughts will you then have of this world, of ſin and vain company? Will any thing comfort you then but the favour of God, the love of Chriſt, and the review of a holy well-ſpent life? Wherefore do with all thy might now what thy hand finds to do: Employ the time of health well in preparing for ſickneſs, and leave nothing to do in time of ſickneſs, which is a moſt unfit ſeaſon for a man to do ſoul-work and ſalvation-work in.

I. I ſhall begin with thoſe of the family where the harbingers of death do preſently reſide. Surely the warnings of ſickneſs and death ought to be louder in your ears than others, and moſt diligently hearkened unto by you, that lodge under the ſame roof with the meſſengers of the king of terrors. 1ſt, Remember that word, 1 Pet. v. 6. *Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God.* It well becomes guilty ſinners, all the members of the family, to be humble before a holy God, when he is ſmiting any of the number. Humbly acknowledge his ſovereignty and abſolute dominion over you, ſaying, 'Lord, thou art the author and founder of families, and thou mayeſt afflict and puniſh them as thou thinkeſt fit. Thou ſetteſt the ſolitary in families, and multiplieſt their number; and thou mayeſt diminiſh them, yea, lay them deſolate according to thy pleaſure. Thou mighteſt have made all the members of the family ſick, as well as one; thou mighteſt have given a deadly blow to parents, children and ſervants at once, yea, have made the houſe in which we live a common grave, and buried us all together in its ruins." Humbly acknowledge the juſtice and mercy of God in the preſent viſitation. 'Lord, inſtead of one, we all deſerved to have been thrown on ſick-beds and all of us to have been ſmitten by death. Thou puniſheſt us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." Acknowledge alſo God's wiſdom and love in the preſent affliction, and humbly ſubmit to take the cup which he hath mingled for you. 'The cup which our heavenly Father hath ordered for his family, ſhall we not drink it? It is a gracious and wiſe God that doth what is done in the family; therefore it is our part to be dumb, and not to open our mouths to quarrel it."

2dly, The command which the king of Nineveh gave to all his ſubjects, when threatened with ruin, Jonah iii. 8. is very proper for a maſter of a family to give to all his charge, when ſickneſs doth rage among them: *Faſt, and cry mightily to God, and turn every one from his evil way;——Who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?* When the deſtroying angel gets a commiſſion to ſmite families with mortal and infectious diſeaſes, which ſometimes go from houſe to houſe like a plague, ſweeping many old and young off the ſtage; then eſpecially it ſhould be a time of mighty crying and pleading with God for mercy. And, ſince our pleading is wholly ineffectual without an atoning ſacrifice to incenſed juſtice, let us not forget to bring the all-ſufficient ſacrifice of Chriſt's blood alongſt with us, and plead this with God for averting his wrath from our houſes and families. As Moſes ſaid to Aaron in a time of common calamity, Numb. xvi. 46. ſo may I ſay to you that are heads of families, *Take a cenſer and incenſe, and go quickly and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun.* Bring the incenſe of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, that great atonement to divine juſtice, which was typified by the legal ſacrifices and oblations. Humbly and earneſtly plead that great ſacrifice with God, for turning away the fierceneſs of his wrath. Get the bunch of hyſſop, faith, in order to the ſprinkling of your houſes with that atoning blood, that ſo you and your families may be among the preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus.

Laſtly, Let all in the family where ſickneſs is, and eſpecially the head of it, remember that word, Job xxii. 23. *Thou ſhalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.* God hath ſent ſickneſs with this meſſage to you, 'Search out family ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion; mourn over them, turn from them, baniſh them far away. Let no vice lodge under your roof. Let family-worſhip be no more neglected, nor ſlightly performed. Let God have both the morning and evening ſacrifice." Now, if the members of theſe families viſited with ſickneſs, who are in health for the preſent, would thus humble themſelves, cry to God, plead the blood of Chriſt, and reform what is amiſs among them; the preſent affliction would be ſanctified, and they in ſome meaſure prepared for the like trial, when God ſhall be pleaſed to put the cup in their hands.

II. In the next place, let me warn all the friends and neighbours of the ſick, whether they be in the family or not, to improve the day of health, in making ready for the time of ſickneſs. Be much in the exerciſe of ſelf-examination, humiliation for ſin, believing in Chriſt, renewing covenant with God, mortifying of ſin, trimming the lamp, meditating of heaven, living by faith, deniedneſs to the world, ſtudying to overcome the love of life, and fears of death. Concerning all which, I have given directions in the foregoing chapters of this book, when ſpeaking to the ſick and diſtreſſed. Theſe exerciſes are not only proper for the ſick, but alſo for theſe in health; and are ſuitable preparations for ſickneſs and death, to be ſtudied by all men in every condition. But there are ſome things further moſt neceſſary to be minded by people in time of their health, in order to prepare them for the time of ſickneſs and of dying, before it come.

1ſt, Make your latter-will, and keep it by you, that you may not be incumbered with your worldly affairs, in time of ſickneſs, or at a dying hour. Surely it is great wiſdom to put this work by-hand in time of health. But I have ſpoken largely of this Chap. I. Direct. VI.

2dly, Take heed in time of health, that you lay not up ſad proviſion againſt the day of ſickneſs, by your careleſs and untender walk. As it is ſin that brings on ſickneſs upon us, ſo it is ſin that imbitters it unto us. O beware of known ſin, and particularly the ſins of earthly-mindedneſs, unthankfulneſs for mercies, lukewarmneſs in religion, neglecting to improve Chriſt, neglect of prayer, and formality in it, quenching of the Spirit, falling from your firſt love, breach of vows, miſcarrying under ſignal mercies, ſinning after afflictions, returning to old ſins. Guard againſt theſe evils now in time of health, otherwiſe they will put thorns in your pillow when ſickneſs cometh. Dare not to live in ſuch a courſe as you would not adventure to die in. How do you know but your next ſtep may be into the grave? And, would you be willing to lie down there in your ſins, with earthly, dead, formal, wandering and unbelieving hearts?

3dly, Sit looſe from the world, and live as ſtrangers in it, that you may be able to pack up and begone from it upon ſhort warning. Let death find you dead before hand, dead to the world. If your affections be glewed to the world, it will be a violent rending and ſad parting you will have with it when the dying hour cometh. You will be ready, like Lot's wife, to linger, hanker, and look greedily back again.

4thly, Keep ſhort reckonings with God and conſcience, that you may not have old ſcores to reckon upon when you come to the death-bed. O what ſtinging pain and torment may one ſin unmourned for coſt you at that time! Let conſcience then bring in the accounts of every day before you ſleep, and ſpeedily make up every controverſy that may fall out betwixt God and thy ſoul.

5thly, Dwell much upon the thoughts of death, that you may learn to be acquaint and familiar with it, as Job was, who ſaid before-hand, *to corruption, Thou art my Father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my ſiſter*, Job xvii. 14. For this cauſe the Egyptians uſed to place a dead man's ſcull in ſome conſpicuous place of their rooms; likewiſe the Jews had their ſepulchres in their gardens of pleaſure, that ſo in the midſt of their delights they might think on their dying time. We read of Philip king of Macedon, that ordered a page every morning to rouze him from ſleep with theſe words, "O king, remember that thou art a mortal man." By this oft repeated leſſon, he laboured to humble his lofty mind, and make his acquaintance with death, that it might not ſeem ſtrange or ſurprizing to him when it ſhould actually come and ſnatch him away.

6thly, Study to ſpend every day as it were to be your laſt, and perform every duty as it were the laſt, ſtill looking on ſickneſs and death as very near. That which makes moſt men ſo unconcerned about ſickneſs, death and eternity, is, they view them as things afar off, at thirty or forty years diſtance. "They think their "time will be long here: Why? They are healthy, "of a ſtrong conſtitution, and their fathers lived ſo "long; which ſurely are falſe rules to judge by." It was the expectation of many years that helped on the ruin of that rich fool in the goſpel. It were far better for every man to look on himſelf as ſtanding every day and night at the very door of eternity, and hundreds of diſeaſes ready to open the door to let him in. When you ly down at night, leave your heart to Chriſt, and compoſe your ſpirit ſo, as if you were not to awake till the heavens are no more; for certainly that night cometh, of which you will never ſee the morning, or that morning of which you will never ſee the night. But which of your mornings or nights theſe will be, you know not, ſeeing your times are not in your own hands.

7thly, Set apart ſome time daily for thinking in a retired way on your time that is paſt, and upon eternity that is to come. The neglect of this duty of meditation and retired thinking is very prejudicial both to the godly and ungodly. It was David's practice to think, and to think upon his ways; which engaged him to reform whatever he found amiſs in them, Pſal. cxix. 59. Oh! it is the ruin of many a ſoul, they are utter ſtrangers to this way of thinking. I have read of a father, who on his death-bed left it as a ſolemn charge upon his only ſon, who was a prodigal, that he ſhould ſpend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking, and let him chuſe any ſubject he pleaſed. The ſon thinks this an eaſy taſk, undertakes it, and after his father's death ſet himſelf to perform his promiſe: one day he thinks upon his bypaſt pleaſures; another day he contrives his future delights; after a while he begins to think ſeriouſly what might be his father's deſign in laying this taſk, upon him: At length he thinks, his father was a wiſe and good man, and therefore ſurely he intended and hoped that, among the reſt of his meditations, he would ſome time or other think of religion. When this had truly poſſeſt his thoughts, one thought and queſtion comes upon the back of another, about his bypaſt life and future ſtate, that he could not contain himſelf in ſo ſhort a confinment, but was that night without ſleep; yea, and afterwards could have no reſt till he became ſeriouſly religious. O that I could perſuade all careleſs and unthinking ſouls to go and do likewiſe! Ah, how many ſpend their days in a hurry about worldly affairs, and periſh for want of thinking!

8thly, Among other ſubjects of your retired thoughts, ſpend ſome time in thinking, how awful and terrible a thing it muſt be for a poor Chriſtleſs ſoul to make its appearance before an angry God after death: For who (ſaith the prophet) can dwell with devouring fire? Who can abide with everlaſting burnings? I have read of a certain king of Hungary, who being on a time marvellouſly ſad and heavy, his brother, who was a briſk and gallant man, would needs know the reaſon:

‘Oh brother, (ſays he) I have been a great ſinner againſt God, and I know not how I ſhall appear before his judgment-ſeat.’ His brother anſwered, ‘Theſe are but melancholly thoughts;’ and ſo made light of them, as moſt courtiers uſe to do. The king replied nothing at that time; but the cuſtom of that country was (the government being abſolute) if the executioner ſounded a trumpet at a man's door, he was preſently to be led to execution. The king ſent the executioner in the dead time of the night, and cauſed him to ſound his trumpet before his brother's door, who hearing and ſeeing the meſſenger of death, ſprang in trembling into his brother's preſence, falls down upon his knees, and beſeeches the king to let him know wherein he had offended him. ‘O brother (ſaid the king) you never offended me, but loved me; but is the ſight of an earthly executioner ſo terrible to thee; and, ſhall not I, who am ſo great a ſinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-ſeat of an angry God.’

9thly, Think often how religiouſly men uſe to wiſh they had lived when they come to the ſick and dying time. Theſe who have ſpent their time moſt careleſly, begin to have other notions of religion when they ſee the grim meſſenger approaching. Go to their bedſides, and aſk them, Whether ſloth or diligence, formality or fervency, drinking or praying, loving the world or loving Chriſt, be the beſt; would they not tell you, that there are none ſo wiſe as they that are moſt religious? Think. O man in health, with thyſelf, if thou waſt juſt now upon thy death-bed, and ſaweſt thy friends ſtanding mourning round about thee, but unable to help thee, what would be thy thoughts and diſcourſe at that time? O then, let ſome of the ſame thoughts and diſcourſe fill up every day and hour of thy life now. Why? Thou knoweſt not but this moment thou mayeſt be as near death as if thy friends and phyſicians too were deſpairing of thy life, and had given you over for dead.

10thly, Be employed now in fighting the good fight of faith. You have many enemies to deal with, and death is the laſt of them. Would you obtain the victory over them? Then get on the Chriſtian armour, and make much uſe of the ſhield of faith. We read in the book of Eſther, that king Ahaſuerus would not recall the proclamation he had emitted againſt the Jews; but he gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend themſelves, and attack their enemies: So here, God will not recall the ſentence of death he hath paſt on all men in the garden; but nevertheleſs he allows, yea, commiſſionates all true Iſraelites to take up arms againſt death, to conquer and trample it under foot by faith.

Laſtly, Be buſy now in health, providing and laying up a ſtock againſt the time of ſickneſs and affliction; which may contribute to your comfortable living then, when the world's good things will be taſteleſs and comfortleſs to you. As they who have a voyage to go, do victual the ſhip, and theſe who have a ſiege to hold out, take in proviſions; even ſo do you.

1. Get a ſtock of graces againſt that time, eſpecially a ſtock of faith, of patience, of humility, ſelf-denial, *&c.* There will be uſe for all theſe then. A little grace, or a little faith, is not enough; for this will faint under great afflictions. We read, Mat. xiv, that, when the winds began to blow fiercely Peter's little faith began to fail. You have need of a great meaſure of patience againſt that time, that you may wait patiently on God till he come to your relief. You know not but he may lengthen out your trials, and tarry till the fourth watch of the night before he come with deliverance.

2. Provide a ſtock of evidences or marks of grace, and of the love of God, that you may be able to aſſert your intereſt in him as your portion in Chriſt, and may be perſuaded that neither death nor life will ever ſeperate you from him.

3. Get a ſtock of divine experiences. Lay up all the experiences you have had of God's loving-kindneſs and theſe will give great relief and encouragement to the ſoul in the day of diſtreſs.

4. Lay up a ſtock of ſermons. Treaſure up the counſels and cordials which they bring you from God's word, that ſo you may, according to Iſa. xlii. 23. *hear for the time to come;* and eſpecially for ſick-beds, when you cannot get ſermons to hear. Then it is, that you ought to live and feed upon the ſermons you have heard.

5. Lay up a ſtock of prayers. Be much in wreſtling with God for help and through-bearing in the day of affliction; and ſo you may expect the gracious returns thereof in the day of calamity.

6. provide a ſtock of promiſes. Be now gathering theſe ſweet cordials from God's word, lay them up in your heart and memory, and they will be very refreſhing and ſupporting to you in the day of affliction.

DIRECT. IX. *Let thoſe who are in health ſet about the work of repentance, and turning to God in Chriſt timeouſly and quickly: And beware of delaying this work until the time of ſickneſs and of dying.*

GOD's command to you is, to ſet about the work preſently without any delay, Heb. iii. 15. *To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,* Mat. xxi. 28. *Go work to-day in my vineyard,* Eccl. xii. 1. *Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth.* Well, God's voice to you, O man in health, is to-day. But the devils voice is to-morrow. And which of the two will you hearken to? Surely it is your wiſdom to obey the voice of your Creator and Friend, and not of your enemy and deſtroyer. Why? To-day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayſt be in ſickneſs; to-day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in hell; to-day Chriſt is inviting you to come to him, to-morrow he may be ſentencing you to depart from him. And conſider, that the devil, who tempts you to delay this day, will be as ready to tempt you to the ſame to-morrow; and ſo the devil's to-morrow will never come. It will ſtill be to-morrow with him till the laſt hour, that ſo he may get you cheated out of your whole time and ſalvation together.

Here I ſhall endeavour two things; 1. Bring arguments to peſuade you to repent and cloſe with the offers of Chriſt preſently, without any delay, as God requires. 2. Shew the evil and danger of delaying till the time of ſickneſs and of dying. As to the firſt, *viz.* arguments for preſent repentance, and againſt delaying the work;

1ſt, Conſider the uncertainty of your life and time to repent. Your life is but a vapour, a little warm breath that is going out and in at your noſtrils, which may be ſtopt by death ere you be aware; thou knoweſt not what will be to-morrow, Prov. xxvii. 1. It was the ſaying of a godly man, when invited to a feaſt upon the morrow, 'I have not had a morrow for theſe many 'years.' It was a bad uſe theſe Epicureans made of this uncertainty, Iſa. xxii. 13. *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we ſhall die.* It is much wiſer to ſay, 'Let us pray and turn to the Lord, for to-morrow we ſhall die.' Nay, you have no ſecurity for one hour to repent in; for God hath a thouſand diſeaſes and accidents ready to ſtop your breath and end your days, whenever he pleaſeth to give them orders. There are many ſecure ſinners, who preſume on long life, but there are none nearer to deſtruction than ſuch; for God loves to diſappoint theſe that promiſe themſelves a long life in ſin and impenitency, as he did that rich man who was laying up for many years. Luke xii. 19. *This night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee.* And O what a dark and diſmal night will it be, if death come before thy repentance! O man thou never didſt ly down one night with aſſurance of riſing again; thou never didſt draw one breath with aſſurance of drawing another. What madneſs is it then to delay ſalvation-work one day or hour longer, and ſo to leave the weightieſt matter in the world at the greateſt uncertainty!

2dly, Conſider, that tho' God in his wonderful mercy and patience ſhould prolong your days, yet the longeſt life is ſhort enough for the work you have to do, ſuppoſe you begin it preſently. Nay, had you Methuſalem's years to ſpend, they would be no more than ſufficient to repent and mourn for the ſins and guilt which you have been ſo long contracting; to perform and amend the many things that have been amiſs; to perform all the duties incumbent on you; to make ſure your calling and election, and put your ſouls in a good poſture and preparation for an eternal ſtate, and get them made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. Now, do ye think that all this work can be done in an inſtant, or in a time of ſickneſs, or old age, when ye are hardly fit to do any thing? When a man's ſpirit is unable to bear the infirmities of nature, how will he be able to bear the laſhes of a guilty conſcience or a wounded ſpirit? When the underſtanding is weak, the memory frail, the will obſtinately bent the wrong way, by a long cuſtom of ſinning, and neglecting of duty; will that be a fit time to begin the work of repentance and converſion to God? When nature is decayed, and the candle of life juſt ſinking in the ſocket, will you begin then to act for God, and make your light ſhine before men to his glory? O remember, your work is long, your time is ſhort;' and though you begin this very hour, you will have no time to ſpare.

3dly, Delay not this work, becauſe it is not in your power to do it when you pleaſe. It is a deluſion of the devil, to imagine you may repent when you will. No, no; it is God only that giveth repentance, and he gives it when, and to whom he pleaſeth, Acts v. 31. And it is a mere peradventure, if ever he give it to a delaying ſinner, 2 Tim. ii. 25. When is it that you may have hopes he will give repentance, but when he calls you to it, and preſcribes means to be uſed for that end? Now that is, to-day. *To-day, if ye will hear his voice: Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation.* To-day, when God is calling and the ſpirit ſtriving, is the time of finding the Lord, and getting repentance from him. To-morrow it may be too late; the Lord's hand may be cloſed, and the door of mercy ſhut. If you refuſe the Spirit when he ſtrives with you, he may leave you, and never put another ſerious thought in your heart of turning to the Lord. O defer not ſeeking repentance till it be too late: For there is a time when the Lord will not be found, and then repentance will not be found, tho' you ſeek it with tears. Indeed, God hath promiſed mercy to penitent ſinners; but he hath no where promiſed the aids of his grace and Spirit to them that put off their repentance: And he hath no where promiſed acceptance to mere grief and ſorrow for ſin, without faith and fruits meet for repentance: He hath no where promiſed to pardon theſe, who at laſt promiſe to leave their ſins, when they can keep them no longer.

4thly, The longer repentance and cloſing with Chriſt is delayed, the difficulty thereof is every day increaſed. Why? 1. Becauſe of the deceitful nature of ſin, which doth daily bewitch and harden the heart more and more in the practice of it. 2. Cuſtom in any thing hath a ſtrange influence on us, and becomes a kind of ſecond nature, and breeds an almoſt inviſible inclination to whatſoever we have long addicted ourſelves unto, whither it be in action natural or moral. Hence Ovid gives that good advice.

Sed propera, nec te venturas differ in horas:
Qui non eſt hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

Be ſpeedy, put not off till another time;
He who is not prepared to-day, will be more unprepared to-morrow.

He that goes on from day to day in ſin, will find his indiſpoſition to repent daily increaſed, the habits of ſin ſtrengthened, and himſelf brought at length under the power of an inveterate cuſtom. And, if it be hard to break any cuſtom, much more a cuſtom in ſinning, which is ſo agreeable to depraved nature. Hence ſaith the Spirit of God, Jer. xiii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? Then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil.* 3. The longer Satan keeps poſſeſſion, the more difficult will his ejection prove. The devils that poſſeſſed the man from the womb up, could not be caſt out but by ſome extraordinary way. 4. Delays bring on ſpiritual judgments from God, ſuch as judicial hardneſs on the heart, which will make repentance impoſſible, according to that terrible place, Iſa. vi. 9. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat*, &c. Which is quoted no leſs than ſix times in the New Teſtament, as if it belonged only to them that linger and ſit impenitent under goſpel calls.

Laſtly, We would reckon ſuch delays madneſs in earthly affairs, which are but trifles when compared to ſalvation-work. If a man's houſe were on fire, we would count him mad, if he would ſay, it is time enough to quench it to-morrow; or, if he were ſtung with a venomous ſerpent, he would be mad that neglected to ſeek a preſent cure: Or, if he had got poiſon in his ſtomach, he would never think he could ſoon enough vomit it up. If a malefactor were condemned to a cruel death to-morrow, but had a promiſe of a remiſſion if he ſhould look after it to-day; would he be ſo fooliſh as delay it till next morning? But, how much greater madneſs is it, to delay repenting and fleeing to Chriſt, when God's calls and promiſes relate to the preſent time, and our danger in delaying is infinitely greater than in any of the foreſaid caſes? Surely there is no ſting ſo dangerous, no poiſon ſo deadly as ſin; and can we too ſoon ſeek after the balm of Gilead, the blood of Chriſt, for its cure? There is no death like the ſecond death, no fire ſo dreadful as the eternal fire of God's wrath. Now, this fire is already kindled againſt your ſouls; and if it be not timeouſly quenched, it will burn to the loweſt hell. Loſe no time to get it extinguiſhed, by fleeing to the blood of Jeſus.

II. The next thing is to ſhew the evil and danger of delaying this work until the time of ſickneſs and of dying. Alas, it is the common practice of the moſt part! But conſider, *1ſt*, What wretched ingratitude and baſeneſs there is in it! Whether is it fit you ſhould give the beſt of your time to God that made you, or to the devil that ſeeks your deſtruction? Is it reaſonable that the devil ſhould feaſt on the flower and prime of your youth and ſtrength, and your Creator have no other but the fragments of the devil's table? When the dregs of your time are come, your ſtrength gone, your ſenſes failed, your underſtanding and memory weak, your affections ſpent upon the creature, yea, when you are good for nothing elſe; will ye be ſo baſe as think you are then good enough for God, and for ſalvation-work, which requires all your ſtrength and might? But remember, if you be ſo baſe as reſerve the dregs of your time for God, you may expect he will be ſo juſt as reſerve the dregs of his wrath for you, according to that word, Mal. i. 14. *Curſed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and ſacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.* Your youth, ſtrength, health, gifts and talents are the males of the flock; if you give theſe to the devil, and reſerve the weakneſs of ſickneſs and old age for God, you draw down his curſe upon your heads: And, how long will you be able to bear up under the weight of God's curſe? Now, O delaying ſinners, why ſhould you be ſo ungrateful to God, and injurious to yourſelves? God had early thoughts of mercy to you; and, will you have nothing but late thoughts of duty to him? Chriſt did not defer his dying for us till he was old; and, ſhall we defer living to him, till we be old? Oh! we do not deal with God, as we would have him to deal with us. When we need help in trouble, we cry, as Pſalm cii. 2. Lord, hear me; in the day when I call anſwer me ſpeedily. To-day we ſtill make the ſeaſon for mercy, but to-morrow the ſeaſon for duty. When mercy is delayed, we impatiently cry, How long? How long? We will not wait God's holy leiſure; but alas! We would have God to wait our ſinful leiſure. Oh let us be aſhamed of ſuch diſingenuous dealing with our Creator.

2dly, Death may get a commiſſion to take you off ſuddenly, without giving you any time to repent. You are not ſure to ſee the evening ſtar of ſickneſs before the night of death overtake you, or that you will have any warning given you before the fatal ſtroke. For, how many are there who project long lives, and look for time before death to repent that get a ſurpriſing call to flit from the earthly tabernacle, and have not one minute to provide another lodging? How many are drowned by a ſudden ſtorm at ſea? And how many killed by outward accidents at land? Some drop down ſuddenly in the ſtreets; ſome die ſitting in their chairs; ſome go well to bed at night, and never ſee the morning; ſome die as quickly by a fit of an epilepſy, or apoplexy, as if ſhot with a gun. Thus thouſands are hurried into eternity, and preſented before a tribunal, without being allowed ſo much time as to think one ſerious thought, or ſpeak one word; not one moment to conſider where they are going, or cry to God for mercy. And, how know you but this may be your caſe at death? Muſt it not be the greateſt folly then, to delay your repentance to a dying time, when it may not be one minute longer!

3dly, Though you may have ſome time to lie on ſick-beds, how know ye but your ſickneſs may be ſuch as ſhall incapacitate you for ſpiritual work? Some, we ſee are ſo oppreſſed with continual ſlumbering and ſleeping, even when death is neareſt, that they are in no caſe to think or ſpeak of theſe things that belong to their everlaſting ſtate. Others, in high fevers, are troubled with rovings, and have no uſe of their reaſon, ſo that they are not capable to ſettle their worldly affairs; and how much leſs are they fit to ſecure their ſouls eternal concerns at that time?—Some, again, are ſo racked with extreme pains and agonies, impatient frettings, and bitter uneaſineſs, that they cannot get one ſettled thought about their ſouls preſent and future ſtate Others are ſo filled with terror and amazement, at the view of approaching death and eternity, that they cannot compoſe their thoughts to examine themſelves, confeſs their ſins, act faith in a Saviour, or follow any direction that is given them; but go off the ſtage in a confuſion, being incapable to do any thing to purpoſe for their ſouls. Some, their diſtemper is ſuch that they are brought to a great ſtrait betwixt the word of God and the phyſician. The word of God and miniſters tell them, if they do not mourn for their ſins, and wreſtle for mercy, they cannot be ſaved: But ſaith the phyſician, If you trouble yourſelf with ſad and melancholy thoughts you prejudice your body, and hazard your life. Oh! is this a fit time then to begin your preparation for another world?

4thly, The Spirit of God being long reſiſted and vexed by many in the day of health, he is provoked to leave them on death-beds to the hardneſs of their own hearts: And ſo they remain like ſtocks and ſtones, dead and ſtupid to the laſt.

5thly, The devil, that was buſy all your lives to keep you from repentance, will not be idle at this time; nay, he will be more active then, than ever to ruin you, either by cauſing you to ſplit on the rock of preſumption or of deſpair. Sometimes he will tell ſinners then, ‘You need not trouble yourſelves about your ‘ſouls; God is more merciful than to damn you; the ‘repentance you have already will ſerve the turn.” But, if this will not quiet them, he will ſtudy to drive them to deſpair, by telling them, ‘They have loſt the ‘ſeaſon of repentance and cloſing with Chriſt; and ‘now there is no remedy, no hope for them, and it ‘is in vain to uſe any further means.” O then, do not hearken to Satan now, when he tempts you to delay your repentance.

6thly, Whatever appearance of repentance ſome dying perſons may have, let that be no encouragement to put off till that time. Why? There lieth a juſt ſuſpicion upon a late repentance, that it is ſeldom ſound and ſincere. It is no ſound work, that ariſeth more from fears of hell, than from any real hatred of ſin; more from love to ſelf, than love to God. And, it is to be feared, that death-bed repentance is moſtly of this ſort, ſeeing ordinarily it conſiſteth more in grief and fear, prayers and promiſes, than in a hearty loathing of ſin, love to holineſs, or willingneſs to accept of Jeſus Chriſt: For, have we not ſeen many of theſe penitents, who, in the view of death, have profeſſed great ſorrow for their wicked lives, and made ſolemn promiſes of amendment; yet, when they have happened to recover, all their righteouſneſs hath vaniſhed, and they have returned to their former ſins as greedily as ever? And, O delaying ſinner, what ground have you to think that your death-bed repentance will be any better than theirs? Be wiſe then in time, ſet heartily about ſalvation-work in the day of your health, and do not leave the weightieſt work to the weakeſt time.

Object. I. "But hath not God promiſed mercy to them that repent of their ſins at any time?"

Anſ. Yes, to them that repent truly and ſincerely: But do not think that it is in your power to repent ſo, at any time you pleaſe; no, it is impoſſible you can do it without the influence and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God. And God hath no where promiſed this to theſe who put off their repentance to a death-bed. There is a great difference betwixt a ſick man's howling upon his bed, and ſincere goſpel-repenting. I grant, true repentance is never too late; but, Oh! late repentance is ſeldom true. True repentance is that which hath a care to walk holily, or hath works meet for repentance joined with it. Hence repentance is not only called *metanoia*, a change of mind: but alſo *metameleia*, an after-care. Now, for a death-bed-repentance, that hath no ſuch holy care or good works, I know no promiſe in the Bible that annexeth ſalvation unto it.

Object. II. "Do not we read in Chriſt's parable of the labourers, Mat. xx. that ſome were hired and brought into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and got the ſame reward with thoſe that were hired at the third and ſixth hour."

Anſ. 1. Theſe that were brought in ſo late, could ſay for themſelves, verſe 6. *That no man had hired them*, or had offered to hire them before: They did no ſooner hear the goſpel call, and offers of ſalvation through Chriſt tendered to them. But, oh! this will ſtand you in no ſtead, who have had many a call and offer made you at the third, ſixth and ninth hour, and have reſiſted and refuſed them: You will not have it to ſay at the eleventh hour, as theſe had, *No man hath hired us.*

2*dly*, Theſe men, though they came in but at the eleventh hour, not being ſooner hired, yet they were labourers in the vineyard, and wrought one hour therein faithfully, in obedience to their Lord's command; and ſo brought forth ſome fruits meet for repentance, and were accepted. But this is no encouragement to any to expect to be brought in at the twelfth hour, when there is no time to work, nor bring forth any fruits to teſtify the ſincerity of their repentance; we have no promiſe of acceptance made to ſuch.

Object. III. "The penitent thief on the croſs ſought mercy from Chriſt at the laſt hour, and got it."

Anſ. That is a ſingular inſtance, and gives no encouragement to delaying ſinners. The ſcriptures contain a hiſtory of more than four thouſand years, and and yet during all that time we have but one example of a man that truly and ſincerely repented when he came to die. And in this man's caſe there was ſuch an extraordinary conjunction of circumſtances, as never happened before, and can never fall out again to the end of the world. This man had the happineſs to die cloſe by the newly pierced and bleeding wounds of a crucified Jeſus, when he was lifted up from the earth in the height of his love, drawing ſinners to ſalvation; which was a juncture that can never have a parallel. Again, the man never had any offer of Chriſt, nor day of grace before now; he ſurrendered himſelf upon the very firſt call; and his faith in Chriſt at this time was truly ſingular and miraculous. He was deſigned by heaven to be made a rare monument of the power of Chriſt's grace, and a ſpecial trophy of his victory over the devils and wicked men, at a time when they ſeemed to triumph over him, as one crucified thro' weakneſs.

From all which we may ſee, that this example was extraordinary, and affords no ground for the preſumption of delaying ſinners. You may as well caſt yourſelves into the ſea, in hopes of preſervation by a whale, from the example of Jonah, as defer repentance now, in hopes of repenting on a death-bed, from the example of the thief on the croſs. Beſides, your way of ſinning differs vaſtly from his: He was not guilty of preſumption as you are; he did not ſlight Chriſt's calls and offers in the day of his health, and delay his repenting and cloſing with Chriſt, in hopes of an opportunity for them at the hour of death, as you do. Do you know what God determines concerning preſumptuous ſinning? You may ſee it, Numb. xv. 28, 30, 31. *And the prieſts ſhall make an atonement for the ſoul that ſinneth ignorantly,* &c. *But the ſoul that doth ought preſumptuouſly (whether he be born in the land, or a ſtranger) the ſame reproacheth the Lord: And that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people: Bceauſe he hath deſpiſed the Lord.* O preſumptuous delaying ſinners, let this word of the Lord awaken you to a ſpeedy and preſent reſolution to obey his voice. *Return ye every one from his evil way and make your ways and your doings good,* Jer. xviii. 11. Now is the accepted time; if ye will hear his voice, it muſt be to-day. Lord ſave us from hardning our heart. Amen.

Some EJACULATIONS and DYING Words of the Author.

To my Wife.

My Dear,

MY diſtreſs calls me to think of parting with you, the will of the Lord be done. I thank you for your tender care of me, may the Lord bleſs and reward you for it, and ſanctify your own tenderneſs, and ſupport you under it. As you have ſtudied to live a life of faith and prayer all your days, ſo I hope and believe you will continue to the end. In all your difficulties and fears encourage yourſelf in the Lord your God. Commit your way to him; truſt him that is faithful and true. I reſign you, my dear, to the HUSBAND of Huſbands, our deareſt Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

To my Children.

DEAR Children, your earthly father muſt leave you, your heavenly father is immortal. O! cleave faſt to him. Trifle not about your ſouls concerns in time of health; mind theſe things as the one thing needful, this you will not repent of when you come within a near view of death and endleſs eternity. O ſirs! preſs for clear views of your intereſt in Chriſt, the only ſurety and Saviour of ſinners. Among other evidences of it, live by faith on him, and ſtudy holineſs in heart and life. Dear ſirs, think how you will be able to ſtand before Chriſt your judge at the laſt day, unleſs you have Chriſt's image on you, and be made new creatures. Lord make you all ſuch, and bleſs you with his beſt bleſſing! My bleſſing be upon you all. —What means God gave me, I have beſtowed them to you. Be kind and careful of your mother while you have her. And let none of you forget, that tho' I go before you to the duſt, you muſt all quickly follow me. O! that we may all meet together at the right hand of our bleſſed Redeemer, to ſee his face, and ſing his praiſe. The time is near, be ye therefore alſo ready.

Now, my dear wife and children, remember what is above as the words of your affectionate huſband and loving father, who being dead, yet hereby ſpeaketh to you for your eternal good and happineſs: may they ſink into your heart: So prayeth

JOHN WILLISON.

Some of his divine EJACULATIONS.

O Let me ſleep in Jeſus! I would not live always in this evil world, that has little in it tempting and ſeems ſtill to grow worſe, and where the torrent of ſin and backſliding ſeems to grow ſtronger.

I would deſire to depart and be with Chriſt, which is far better than to be here. I am willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee; for tho' my heart, ſtrength and fleſh fail, yet the Lord will be the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Now, Lord, what wait I for, my hope is in thee, I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord.

O for Simeon's frame, to be ſaying, "Lord, letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation."

When Chriſt ſays, Surely I come quickly; may my ſoul anſwer, Even ſo come Lord Jeſus.

I am living on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, yea, dying in the Lord. Even ſo come. I am detained here upon the ſhore waiting for a fair wind to carry me over this Jordan. I have waited and will wait for thy ſalvation, O Lord. The Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect: Lord, perfect what concerneth me.

O that I could ſay with Paul, The time of my departure is at hand. I have kept the faith, I have run my race, I have finiſhed my courſe; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous Lord will give me at his coming.

I am vile and polluted, O how ſhall I be cleanſed! But that is a comfortable promiſe, 'The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son, cleanſeth us from all ſin.' And ſo is that, 'Tho' ye have lyen among the pots, ye ſhall be as doves, whoſe wings are cover'd with ſilver, and their feathers with yellow gold.'

I reſolve to obey, to ſubmit to the Lord's will, to die like Moſes and Aaron, the one at mount Hor, the other at mount Abarim. They went up and died there at the command of the Lord.

O that when my fleſh and ſtrength fail, God may be the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever. When now the keepers of the houſe do tremble, O that God may be the keeper: When the grinders ceaſe, becauſe they are few, O that God would feed my ſoul with manna, that will need none of theſe implements; when the daughters of muſic are brought low, O to be fitted for the heavenly muſic above: When the lookers out at the windows are darkened, O that my ſoul may be enlightened to ſee Jeſus my Redeemer.

Lord help the unbelief and infidelity of my heart, and help to more of the faith of a riſen Jeſus, an aſcended Redeemer. O let me believe and feel the ſweetneſs of that word of Chriſt, 'I aſcend to my Father and your Father, and to your God and my God.'

O how ſhall ſuch an unholy creature as I preſume into ſuch a pure and holy place! But the apoſtle has taught us, we may have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all by the blood of Jeſus.

O that when the time of my laſt combat comes with my laſt enemy Death, I may be helped above all to take the ſhield of faith, whereby I may be relieved from the ſting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

O that I may be helped to adore the ſovereignity of God, kiſs his rod, and humbly ſubmit to it. Save me from both extremities; let me never deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him.

Now the prince of darkneſs will ſtudy to raiſe tempeſts of temptations to ſhipwreck the poor weather-beaten veſſel of my ſoul, when it would enter into the harbour of reſt above; may Chriſt come to be pilot, ſteer the helm, and it ſhall be ſafe.

O for more faith! May my faith ripen to a full aſſurance, that I may go off the ſtage rejoicing, and that abundant entrance may be miniſtered to me into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

O for more faith, that I may die like Simeon when he had Chriſt in his arms, ſaying, 'Now let thy ſervant depart in peace, mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.'

Lord one ſmile of thy countenance would baniſh away all my doubts and fears, and make me ſing in pain.

Is my Redeemer gone to prepare a place for us; why ſhould I be ſo ſlothful to follow his footſteps, when he is ſaying, Come up hither; come up, dwell here; come up, reign here; come up, ſing here.

O Lord, deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. O ſave me from the horrible pit, draw me out of the miry clay, ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings, and put a new ſong in my mouth.

O give grace to ſtrive by faith and prayer to enter in at the ſtrait gate. Lord, thou haſt bid me knock and it ſhall be opened, aſk and ye ſhall find. Lord, I knock, open unto me; I would be in, I muſt be in; let me but in over the threſhold; let me in within ſight of my Redeemer's face, within ſight of the ſmiles of his countenance, let me within hearing of the ſongs of the redeemed ; let me get to the out ſide of that praiſing company ; I'll be well enough if I get in.

Lord in I muſt be, out I cannot ſtay : O ſhut me not out with ſwearers, ſabbath-breakers and profane perſons ; Lord, I never chus'd their company while in this world. Lord, do not gather my ſoul with ſinners hereafter.

The redeemed are gathering, and the wicked are gathering, Lord gather me with thy flock : They are faſt a-gathering ; the church's head is gone ; he has left the earth, and entered into his glory ; my brethren and friends, many of them have arrived where he is ; I am yet behind. O how great is the difference betiwxt my ſtate and theirs. I am groaning out my complaint, they are ſinging God's praiſe : I am in darkneſs, and cannot ſee thy face, but they behold thee face to face. O ſhould I be ſatisfied to ſtay behind, when my friends are gone ! Shall I wander here in a hungry deſart, when they are triumphing above, and dividing the ſpoil ? O help me to look after them with a ſtedfaſt eye, and cry, O Lord how long !

O heavenly Father, draw me after Jeſus, for none can come to him without thy aid. O Father draw me up there where he is, and I'll mount up as on eagle's wings. O draw me, and when thou ſeemeſt to fly from me, Lord enable me to follow hard after thee.

Lord give me the ſtaff of promiſe in my hand, that I may go over Jordan with it, O give me ſuch a promiſe as that, 'When thou paſſeſt thro' the waters, I will 'be with thee, and thro' the rivers they ſhall not over- 'flow thee. When thou walkeſt thro' the fire thou 'ſhalt not be burnt neither ſhall the flame kindle upon 'thee.'

Lord, my experiences are ſmall, my manifeſtations are few ; theſe I will not lean to : Yet I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, from the Hermonites and from the hill Mizar. Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, and why diſquieted within me ! Hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

O thou who remembredſt the dying thief when on the way to thy kingdom, O rememeber me when now ſeated in thy kingdom, and ſay to my ſoul, when I'm dying, 'This day ſhalt thou be with me in para- 'diſe.'

Lord I am call'd to the work I never did, O give me the ſtrength I never had. O ſtrengthen me like Samſon for this once, when at death, to pull down the ſtrong holds of ſin in me. Lord waſh away my ſins in the blood of Chriſt, and then my ſoul ſhall not ſink in the ocean of thy wrath.

O what's my life but a vapour ! a ſand-glaſs of 60 or 70 years ! O how faſt does it run down ! How ſoon runs it out ! Vain, vain is the love of life ! O give me grace to overcome the love of life, and the fear of death. O for more patience and leſs fretting. If the damned had hope of being ſav'd from hell after a 1000 years of my pain, how willingly would they endure it. Bleſſed be God, my pains are not hell, their ſtate is not mine.

Lord draw near to me, and ſave me ; my body is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave. But, Lord, thy loving kindneſs is better than life. O make thy loving kindneſs ſure to me, and I will willingly part with this dying life.

Oh, that I could make all the world ſee the beauty of my precious and adorable Saviour.

Nothing but an intereſt in Chriſt can give peace in life, or comfort in death. He is the chief among ten thouſand, and all together lovely.—My body is in part dead, but I know, I cannot die eternally while Jeſus lives. I muſt go down to the grave ; but what is the grave ? It is but a refining pot ſince my Saviour lay in it, it is but a bed of roſes. *He is the roſe of Sharon and the lilly of the valley.*

It was his free grace that drew me, and made me willing in the day of his power ; no deſire, no merit in me, it was all free and undeſerved.

O let the chaſtiſement of my body be the medicine of my ſoul, to cure me of ſin, and bring me to ſincere repentance for it : For Chriſt was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities ; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him.

Lord, remember the chaſtiſement of Chriſt for ſin, and let my pains be the chaſtiſement of a father, and not the wounds of an enemy : Let Chriſt's ſufferings mitigate mine.

I rejoice in the proſpect of that glorious inheritance reſerved ſafe.——I could not comfortably enter eternity any other way but in and through this God man mediator ; if he was not God as well as man I could not be ſupported, but he is God.

Oh, this precious Saviour, he is my all in all, he is my all-ſufficient good, my portion and my choice, in him my vaſt deſires are fulfilled, and all my powers rejoice. I am travelling through a wilderneſs to a city of habitation, whoſe builder and maker is God.

Oh, delightful thought ! that I who was going on in ſin, ſhould be plucked as a brand out of the burning. —Oh, how will they ly on a death bed that have nothing but their works to fly to ; with only this to depend on, I ſhould be the moſt miſerable of all creatures, but the long white robe of my Redeemer's righteouſneſs is all my deſire. They are truly bleſſed, they alone are happy, who are enabled to exult in the garment of celeſtial glory, which never waxeth old, in the illuſtrious robes of a Saviour's conſummate righteouſneſs, which are incorruptable and immortal. This is a robe which hides every ſin, of thought, word or deed that I have committed.—O how unſpeakably happy are they who are juſtified by this all perfect righteouſneſs of all they, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and who therein can conſtantly triumph and glory.

Lord, I live upon Chriſt, I live upon his righteouſneſs, I live upon his blood and merits ; yea, I die alſo leaning wholly upon this bottom. It is not paſt experiences or manifeſtations I depend upon : It is Chriſt a preſent all-ſufficient Saviour, and perfect righteouſneſs in him I look to. All my attainments are but loſs and dung beſides him.

When I find myſelf polluted, I go to this fountain for cleanſing. Lord give me delight in approaching to thee ; delight to be at a throne of grace. O that I could make my bed there, ly and die there.

The kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force. O for ſtrength to offer a holy violence by faith and prayer.

A
SACRAMENTAL DIRECTORY:
OR, A
TREATISE
CONCERNING THE
SANCTIFICATION
OF A
COMMUNION SABBATH.

THE PREFACE.

THIS DIRECTORY being firſt publiſhed in the year 1716, the preface was added to the ſecond edition of it in the year 1726, in which now I have made ſome additions and alterations. The book itſelf alſo is conſiderably inlarged from what it was at firſt, namely in proving and preſſing the neceſſity of communicating, in obedience to our Lord's dying command; and it is to be regreted, that there ſhould be ſtill ſo much need for urging it. Ah, that ſo many Chriſtians, who profeſs reſpect to Chriſt as their Saviour, ſhould live in the neglect of his dying charge! Perhaps, my friends, upon viewing the hazard of eating unworthily, ſome of you may think you are on the ſafeſt ſide to keep away from this ordinance altogether; not conſidering, that the danger of unworthy refuſing is fully as great as that of unworthy receiving: For you ſee, thoſe who make light of Chriſt's invitation to the marriage-ſupper eſcaped no better than he that came without the wedding-garment, Mat. xxii. 7. 13. Likewiſe I have adduced many arguments to preſs frequency in communicating, and have anſwered objections againſt it; which if you duly conſider, you muſt own that frequent partaking is moſt advantageous and neceſſary for the exigences of your ſouls, and highly acceptable unto God. If there be *a book of remembrance written before the Lord, for them that feared the Lord, thought upon his name, and ſpoke often one to another,* Mal. iii. 16. we have no ground to queſtion, but there is a book of remembrance written for them that love their Redeemer, and often remember his death and ſufferings in the ſacrament, which he hath inſtituted for that end. And as I would have you come frequently to this ſolemn ordinance, ſo I would always have you coming with ſuitable preparation; and, for your help in this matter, I have compoſed the following Directory. Special care ſhould be taken, that our frequency do not breed formality, but that we be as devout as we are frequent; and, tho' we communicate never ſo frequently, that we truſt not to former preparations, but that we examine and prepare ourſelves of new for every communion.

But ſeeing it is in vain to exhort Chriſtians to frequent receiving, unleſs miniſters do alſo frequently adminiſtrate this ordinance, and call their people to partake thereof; it may be proper to ſpeak ſomething of the neceſſity of frequent diſpenſing of the Lord's ſupper. All the arguments and reaſons which I bring in the enſuing treatiſe, to prove the neceſſity of peoples frequent partaking, do as much prove the neceſſity of miniſters frequent diſpenſing, ſeeing, if miniſters do not diſpenſe, the people cannot partake: But, beſides theſe, I ſhall, with all humility and becoming reſpect, add ſome things here, which I hope may be of weight with myſelf, and other miniſters of the goſpel, to perſuade to frequent diſpenſing.

I. The inſpired apoſtles of Chriſt, and other paſtors of the church that were contemporary with them, did (in obedience to the intimation which their Lord and Maſter gave them at the firſt inſtitution) frequently diſpenſe the Lord's ſupper to the Chriſtians in their days; yea, it was their ordinary cuſtom to do it every Lord's day, Acts ii. 46. Acts xx. 7. The inſpired Penman of that book doth mention the breaking of bread as a conſtant concomitant to the Apoſtles doctrine and prayers, Acts ii. 42.

II. In imitation of the apoſtles, the paſtors of the ancient church did keep up the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper every Lord's day, thro' the ſecond, third, fourth and fifth centuries. To evidence this (if it were called in queſtion) I might cite many paſſages from the hiſtories of Euſebius and Socrates, and the writings of Juſtin Martyr, Cyprian, Chryſoſtom, Hierom, Ambroſe, Auguſtine, and ſeveral others, who on that account uſed to call the Lord's day *Dies Panis*; but, it being a matter of fact of notour, I need not blot paper with quotations to this purpoſe. Nay, it is plain from the foreſaid ancient writers, that the Lord's ſupper continued to be diſpenſed in ſome places, not only every Lord's day, but alſo every day of the week, and that for ſeveral centuries: Which practice Auguſtine, (who lived in the fifth century) doth not ſeem ſo heartily to approve; for, *Lib. de Eccleſiaſticis, Cap.* 53. he hath theſe words, *Quotidie communionem Euchariſticæ nec vitupero nec laudo; omnibus tamen Dominicis Diebus communicandum ſuadeo*, i. e. *I neither praiſe nor diſpraiſe daily receiving of the Lord's ſupper; but I would have all men to communicate each Lord's day.* Moreover, learned men, who are beſt acquainted with the antiquities of the Chriſtian church, do obſerve, that unfrequency in celebrating this ſacrament did creep in together with other antichriſtian errors and defections into the church of Chriſt.

III. I ſhall therefore paſs the ages of darkneſs and defection, and come to the two laſt centuries of the church, and take a ſhort view of the practice of ſome proteſtant churches ſince our reformation from popery. I grant, the Lord's ſupper hath not been celebrated ſo oft ſince that time, as in the firſt ages of the church. We have the reaſon pointed at in a book, which repreſents the practice of the church of Geneva, particularly in celebrating the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, which was four times in the year. The book is intituled, *laws and ſtatutes of Geneva, anent eccleſiaſtic diſcipline*, tranſlated out of the French, and printed London, Anno 1643. P. 7. we have theſe words; 'For as the ſupper hath been inſtituted by our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt to be frequented and uſed, and alſo it hath been obſerved in the primitive Chriſtian church, until ſuch time as the devil hath turned all upſide down, ſetting up the maſs inſtead thereof, which fault ought to be corrected, and alſo the rare celebrating thereof: We have determined and ordained, that it ſhall be miniſtred four times a year.'

Again, let us look into the practice of the reformed churches of France, whilſt their liberty continued. In the acts of the national ſynod held at Charentoun, printed London, Anno 1644. Cap. 12. Art. 14. we have theſe words; 'Altho' it hath been a cuſtom in moſt of the churches in theſe parts, to celebrate the holy communion only four times every year; yet it is much wiſhed and deſired that it might be uſed more frequently.

As for the reformed churches in the united provinces, or the Dutch churches, we ſee what was their practice, in *corpus diſciplinæ*, publiſhed by the miniſters and elders of the Dutch congregation in London, Anno 1645. Cap. 3. Sect. 2. Art. 3. 'It is appointed that the Lord's ſupper be adminiſtred every two months (*i. e.* ſix times a-year) wherein the churches under perſecution are left to their liberty.'

As for the churches in New-England, we have account of their practice, *brief narration of the practice of the churches in New England*, printed London, *Anno* 1651. p. 8. 'As for the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper, becauſe Chriſt deſires us to do it often, we commonly have it monthly, tho' we ty not ourſelves to any ſet time, but alter it as often as reaſon appears.'

Let us come to the church of Scotland, and conſider the ancient practice of our worthy reformers in this matter. And, in the firſt place, if we look to the old Scots liturgy, or the *book of common order*, which was written by John Knox, firſt for the order of the Engliſh kirk at Geneva, whereof he was miniſter, and approved by John Calvin, printed at Geneva, *Anno* 1556. and afterwards received and uſed by the reformed king of Scotland; we will find in the 10th chapter, concerning the manner of adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper, theſe words; 'The day when the Lord's ſupper is miniſtred, which is commonly uſed once a month, or ſo oft as the congregation ſhall think expedient, the miniſter uſeth to ſay as followeth,' *&c.* From which it appears, that the firſt practice of our reformers, after the reformation of this nation from popery, was to adminiſtrate the Lord's ſupper commonly once a-month. Afterwards, it ſeemeth, they found that the people did not ſo generally fall in with the foreſaid order for monthly ſacraments as could be wiſhed: And therefore in the General Aſſembly, which was held at Edinburgh in December 1562, they thought fit to condeſcend to a leſs frequent adminiſtration of this ordinance; for in their act thereanent, recorded by Cald. in his hiſtory, Page 816, we have theſe words; 'It is ordained, that the communion be four times miniſtred in the year within borough towns, and twice in country pariſhes.'

Here indeed there is a diſtinction made betwixt the frequency in boroughs and country pariſhes: But in the firſt book of diſcipline, which was compiled by ſeverals of our famous reformers, by way of addreſs to the civil government, and much about the ſame time approved and eſtabliſhed both by church and ſtate, we find four times in the year condeſcended upon for the ſacrament, without any diſtinction of congregations, *Cap.* 2. *Parag.* 2. They tell us indeed, that the order of Geneva, concerning the miniſtration of the ſacraments, was at that time uſed in ſome of their churches, *i. e.* the *book of common order* forecited, which declareth for monthly ſacraments; but, in *Cap.* 11. *Parag.* 5. they give their judgment for quarterly communions in theſe words: "Four times in the year we think ſufficient to the adminiſtration of the Lord's table, which we deſire to be diſtincted, that the ſuperſtition of times may be avoided ſo far as may be; for your honours are not ignorant how ſuperſtitiouſly the people ran to that action at Paſch, even as if the time gave virtue to the ſacrament; and how the reſt of the whole year they are careleſs and negligent, as if it appertained not to them but at that time only. We think it therefore moſt expedient, that the firſt Sunday of March be appointed for one time to that ſervice, the firſt Sunday of June for another, the firſt Sunday of September for the third, the firſt Sunday of December for the fourth. We do not deny but any ſeveral kirk for reaſonable cauſes may change the time, and may miniſter oftner; but we ſtudy to repreſs ſuperſtition."

From all which we may ſee what it was that came to be the more general, ſettled and declared mind of the church of Scotland after the reformation, concerning the frequency of the Lord's ſupper, *viz.* that it ſhould at leaſt be celebrated once in the quarter, allowing liberty to any miniſter or congregation to adminiſter it oftner if they thought fit. Some perhaps may doubt if it was altogether right in our reformers, to reduce the primitive practice of celebrating the Lord's ſupper once a-week to once in the month, and afterwards to once in the quarter; but we are to ſuppoſe they had weighty reaſons for it at that time: But there are many now of the mind, that we of this age cannot ſo well account for reducing the ancient practice of this church in adminiſtrating this ſacrament once in the quarter, to once in the year. Is not this a lamentable deviating from the ſentiments and practice of our great and zealous reformers? What can our unfrequency in celebrating this Chriſtian commemorating ordinance be imputed to ſo much, as a ſad decay of love to a crucified Jeſus? Alas that love to our unchangeable lovely Redeemer ſhould cool by length of time! We ſadly verify what he foretold of the latter days, Mat. xxiv. 12. *Iniquity ſhall abound, and the love of many ſhall wax cold.* But oh! Are not Chriſt's benefits as great as ever, his blood as freſh and efficacious as ever? Why then ſhould not Chriſtian love be as warm as ever, and their reſpect to his goſpel inſtitutions as ſtrong as ever? O that the Chriſtians of this age were ſenſible from whence we are fallen; how far we have departed from the zeal of our anceſtors, and left our firſt love to a crucified Chriſt; ſo that all ranks were concerned to revive and recover it, in and by the uſe of the means which God hath appointed for that end; that by degrees we might again attain our reformers frequency of celebrating this Chriſt exalting and love-inflaming ordinance, and ſo change our annual to quarterly communions! I know it is affecting to ſome hearty well wiſhers of the proſperity and credit of the church of Scotland, to think that a church, ſo excellently well conſtituted, and which had attained to a greater pitch of reformation in other things than her neighbours, ſhould yet ly behind them in this point.

I aknowledge, the matters were ſo put out of order in this church, by reaſon of the long oppreſſion ſhe groned under and the great defections of many, before the late happy *revolution,* that miniſters in ſeveral places were afraid to diſpenſe this ſealing ordinance to their flocks for ſome time: And finding themſelves very much ſtraitned betwixt the indiſpoſition of their people, and the hazard of a total omiſſion they came to an unfrequent celebration of this ordinance, perhaps but once in two or three years, till this unfrequency became cuſtomary and too general. Serious Chriſtians indeed flocked unto theſe places where it was diſpenſed, whereby their loſs at home was in ſome meaſure repaired.

But the General Aſſembly being ſenſible of the evil of this unfrequency, began to take notice of it, and make ſeveral excellent acts for the more frequent celebration of the Lord's ſupper, as in the years 1710, 1711, 1712, and 1724. Tho' theſe acts have not hitherto had their full effect, yet they have been ſo far effectual, as to bring miniſters generally to adminiſtrate this ordinance in their congregations at leaſt once in the year I know, ſeveral worthy miniſters have ſome years ago given a moſt laudable example to their brethren, in celebrating the Lord's ſupper in their congregations twice a year; tho' indeed it is to be regreted that ſo few hitherto have copied after it.

The authority and judgment of the great Calvin (whom the church of Scotland doth moſt deſervedly regard and eſteem) concerning annual and frequent communicating, hath very great weight with me: We have it in his inſtitutions, *Lib.* 4. *Cap.* 17. *Par.* 46. *mihi fol.* 507. After he had ſhewed what was the practice of the ancient church in pureſt times, he hath theſe words; *Et ſane hæc conſuetudo quæ ſemel quotannis communicare jubet, certiſſimum eſt diaboli inventum, cujuſcunque tandem miniſterio invecta fuerit.—Quum certa lex de una quotannis communicatione poſita eſt, qua factum eſt, ut fere omnes quum ſemel communicaverunt, quaſi in reliquum anni tempus pulchre defuncti, in utramque aurem ſecuri dromiant. Longe aliter factum oportuit: Singulis ad minimum hebdomadibus proponenda erat Chriſtianorum cætui menſa domini, declarandæ promiſſiones quæ nos in ea ſpiritualiter paſcerent; nullus quidem neceſſitate cogendus, ſed cohortandi omnes, & ſtimulandi; objurgandus etiam ignavorum torpor. i. e.* 'And indeed this cuſtom which commands to communicate once only in the year, is moſt certainly the invention of the devil, whoever was inſtrumental to introduce it. When there was a law made for communicating once in the year, it came to paſs, that almoſt all, when they had once communicated, turned ſlothful and ſlept ſecurely throughout the reſt of the year. But it ſhould have been far otherwiſe: Every week at leaſt the Lord's table ſhould have been ſet before the aſſembly of Chriſtians, and the promiſes therein ſet forth upon which we ſhould feed ſpiritually: No man indeed ſhould be compelled to come by force, but all ſhould be exhorted and excited; and the ſloth of the negligent reproved.' And upon the margin we have theſe words; *Papiſtica autem couſuetudo, quotannis ſemel communicare jubens, execrandum eſt inventum. i. e.* "The popiſh cuſtom, which injoins men to communicate once a year, is a curſed invention." And certainly the godly and judicious Calvin his obſervation is moſt juſt: For when we call our people to come to the Lord's table but once in the year, and there believingly to remember a crucified Chriſt for the remiſſion of their ſins, the moſt part are tempted to think, when they have done that their main work is over for that year, and ſo fall aſleep and turn ſecure thro' the reſt of the year; upon which account he calls this *popiſh cuſtom a curſed invention,* and an *invention of the devil.* It is to be hoped, that the church of Scotland, which ſo much abhors popery and all popiſh cuſtoms will at length throw out this of *annual communicating,* as well as they have done others.

Objections anſwered.

Obj. I. *By divine appointment the paſſover was celebrated but once in the year; and now the Lord's ſupper is come in room of the paſſover.*

Anſ. 1*ſt.* It muſt be remembred, that as the paſſover ſerved to ſignify and prefigure Chriſt's death and ſufferings to the Jews, and their ſpiritual redemption thereby; ſo it was inſtituted to preſerve the memorial of their temporal freedom and deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, which God wrought for them on the fourteenth of the firſt month, Exod. xii. 17. 18. And therefore he appointed them to keep the paſſover annually upon that day of the month. But the Lord hath fixed no certain day of the year for the Lord's ſupper under the New Teſtament times; but only in general hath injoined a frequent celebration of it.

2*dly,* The Jews did not need a very frequent celebration of the paſſover to put them in mind of the coming, death and ſufferings of the Meſſiah; ſeeing, beſides the paſſover, they had by divine appointment many other lively types, figures and inſtitutions, which were deſigned for that ſame very end, ſuch, as the ſacrifices of ſlain beaſts, which they frequently witneſſed in the temple: Yea, every day they had both morning and evening a lamb killed in the temple, its blood poured out, and its fleſh burnt on the altar, for a ſacrifice to God for their ſins; which did in a moſt eminent and lively manner repreſent to them the death, bloodſhed, ſufferings and bitter agonies of Chriſt the great ſacrifice for the ſins of the world, juſt in the ſame manner as the paſſover did; only it was not eaten in every houſe, as that was. So that we ſee a plain reaſon why the Jews did not ſtand in need of ſuch a frequent celebration of the paſſover to be a remembrance of Chriſt under the law as we do of the Lord's ſupper under the New Teſtament times, when we have no other ordinance inſtituted to keep up the remembrance of Chriſt's death and ſufferings but this alone: And therefore it ought much more frequently to be celebrated than the Jewiſh paſſover was.

3dly, Suppoſing the Jews had no other ordinance but the paſſover, to keep up the remembrance of the Meſſiah that was to come; yet ſeeing our Meſſiah hath now come and actually ſacrificed himſelf upon the croſs for our redemption, hath fully completed the work, and made far more bright diſplays of his love and glory to us Chriſtians, than he did to the Jews under the law, and hath inſtituted the Lord's ſupper for a memorial of what he hath done and ſuffered, limiting us to no time, but injoining frequency in the uſe of it; I ſay, ſeeing the caſe is ſo with us, we are under many ſtrong ties to be more zealous and frequent in celebrating the memorials of Chriſt's love to us in the Lord's ſuper, than the Jews were to do it in the paſſover. The Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians were ſo ſenſible of this, that they thought themſelves bound to remember Chriſt crucified once a week in their goſpel-paſſover which the Jews did but once a year in theirs. From all which we ſee no argument can be brought, from the Jews annual cuſtom in celebrating the paſſover, to juſtify annual communions.

Obj. II. *To adminiſtrate the Lord's ſupper frequently, would tend to diminiſh the reſpect and reverence which is due to it, and at length bring it into contempt among the people.*

Anſ. 1ſt, If we make conſcience of our duty, our Lord will ſee to the credit of his own ordinance.

2dly, Will any ſay that the apoſtles and primitive paſtors brought this ordinance, into contempt by celebrating of it every Lord's day? Did they not eſteem and prize it much higher than we who celebrate it but once a year? And why ſhould we think, that the adminiſtrating of the Lord's ſupper twice, thrice, or four times in the year, would at all derogate from the credit of it?

3dly, Were this reaſon valid againſt the frequent diſpenſing of this ordinance, why not againſt other ordinances alſo? And ſo we ſhould but ſeldom preach, or read the ſcriptures in the audience of the people; we ſhould ſeldom pray or ſing pſalms with our flocks, leſt we contribute to leſſen the eſteem and reverence due to theſe ordinances by the frequent uſe of them.

4thly, Are not there many ſerious exerciſed Chriſtians, who communicate almoſt every Sabbath during the ſummer ſeaſon, when they can have the occaſion in neighbouring congregations, who can tell us, that they reap ſpiritual advantage by ſo doing, that their eſteem of the ordinance is much increaſed, and that they do not at all find that their frequent partaking tends to bring this awful inſtitution into contempt with them? And why ſhould it be thought that their communicating twice, or even four times a year, in their own congregations, at a convenient diſtance, would produce that bad effect? No; I am perſuaded it would not; for the oftner that this ſacrament is worthily received, inſtead of diminiſhing our reſpect, it increaſeth our reverence of God, and our affection to our Saviour. I am ſure, a conſcientious owning of God's authority is a greater ſign of holy reverence, than the neglect of his inſtitutions.

5thly, We may perhaps think to keep up the credit of this ſolemn ordinance among theſe who are not the better ſort, by ſeldom diſpenſing it, but it ſhould be minded, that it is not true eſteem which ariſeth merely from the rarity of a thing, but that which ſpringeth from knowledge of its intrinſic worth, and experience of its uſefulneſs: And theſe people who have no heart-acquaintance with precious Chriſt, and the ends, uſes and ſucceſs of his ordinances will never have a due reſpect unto them. Let us by all means recommend to ſuch perſons the worth and excellency of Chriſt, ſhew them their daily need of him, and his daily uſefulneſs to them, and preſs their making ſuitable preparation, by ſearching themſelves and cloſing with him, before they be admitted to partake; and then we needed not much fear that frequency would detract from the reputation of this ordinance: For frequent experience of its uſefulneſs would beget the higheſt eſteem of it, and ſharpen the appetites of people for it. As he prayeth beſt, and with moſt delight that prayeth oftneſt; ſo a worthy communicant increaſeth in the love of God and of religion, the oftner he receives: The more acquaintance and communion he attains to with Jeſus Chriſt in this ordinance, he values it ſtill the more. I cannot think this bleſſed ſacrament will be undervalued by frequent repetitions, but by perſons moſt unworthy who ought not much to be regarded; for no true hearted Iſraelite would lothe this heavenly *Manna*, becauſe it is common and afforded us in plenty.

Laſtly, And, with all due ſubmiſſion to others, I do ſtrongly incline to have a great regard to the judgment of the famous Mr Calvin, and many learned and godly divines, who are ſo far from thinking that annual communicating is a mean to preſerve the eſteem of this ordinance, and prevent peoples careleſneſs and formality in receiving, that they rather judge it a device of Satan to cheriſh ſloth and ſecurity in ſin, to ſtifle true Chriſtian love, to diſcourage endeavours after ſerious godlineſs, and to obſtruct very much the life and continued exerciſe of religion.

Obj. III. *We ſee how much the other ſacrament, baptiſm, is contemned, becauſe of its frequent repetition; and ſo might it alſo fare with this.*

Anſ. 1ſt, If the peoples contempt of ſacraments be a good argument againſt the frequency of one ſacrament, it is as good againſt the frequency of another; and ſo we ought to ſet up for the adminiſtration of baptiſm but once in the year, to preſerve the eſteem and ſolemnity of it, as much as we do for that of the other ſacrament. Are they not both precious inſtitutions of the ſame Lord? both ſeals of the ſame covenant? Why then ſhould we put the one at ſome great diſtance from the other, and ſeek to raiſe its honour ſo much above the other?

2dly, Tho' baptiſm be frequently adminiſtrate yet the Lord doth ſtill keep up the reputation of his ordinance, ſo that no man is eaſy to be excluded from it: Yea, people generally have ſtronger impreſſions of the neceſſity of this ſacrament than of the other, notwithſtanding of all our endeavours to maintain the credit of the other more than this; which may teach us, that we ought ſtill to go on in the way of our duty, and leave it to God to ſee to the credit of his own inſtitutions.

3*dly*, It is not ſo much becauſe of the frequent adminiſtration of baptiſm, that people do ſlight it, as becauſe they, not being to partake of it themſelves, do commonly apprehend they are no more but ſpectators (tho' indeed there is much more incumbent on them): But were they bound to partake frequently of this ſacrament, as of the Lord's Supper, and that under the pain of Chriſt's higheſt diſpleaſure, if they either did neglect it or perform it ſlightly; all ſober people would reckon themſelves obliged to attend it when they had the opportunity of doing it, and that with ſome awe and fear too.

Obj. IV. *There is more ſlightneſs and formality amongſt the Communicants in theſe churches where the Lord's Supper is frequently diſpenſed, than where it is ſeldom.*

Anſ. 1*ſt*, This is not generally true; for as there may be much ſlightneſs and formality in ſome places where it is but ſeldom diſpenſed, ſo there is much devotion and ſeriouſneſs in other places where it is frequently adminiſtred.

2*dly*, The peoples ſlightneſs in receiving may proceed very much from the paſtor's ſlightneſs in adminiſtrating. Were due pains taken to keep back the unworthy, to inform people of the greatneſs of the work, to warn them of the danger of unworthy receiving; to obſerve faſt, preparation and thankſgiving days; to chuſe ſuitable texts, preach awakning doctrine, make particular application, and to fence the Lord's table with awful ſolemnity: Perhaps there would not be ſuch ſlightneſs amongſt the people in receiving.

Obj. V. *It will not be eaſy to get different texts and ſubjects ſuitable to ſuch frequent communions.*

Anſ. A crucified Jeſus is a ſubject moſt ſuitable, and one ſo large and copious as cannot be exhauſted. The Apoſtle, while he preached at Corinth, determined to know nothing among that people, *but Chriſt and him crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 2. He reſolved to make this the great and conſtant ſubject of his ſermons; And can any think it too much to preach upon this theme, twice, thrice or four times a year?

Certainly a crucified Jeſus is the ſpring and ſcope, the matter and end of all goſpel-preaching. Every thing we ſay is reducible to him; and the deſign of all is to exalt him, who is the great founder of our religion, and the foundation of all our hopes: When we dehort from ſins and vices, we do it mainly becauſe they were the cauſe of Chriſt's ſufferings, and do tend to crucify him afreſh: When we exhort to duty, we do it chiefly from this topick that we ſhould live to him that died for us; and that the love of Chriſt ſhould conſtrain us to follow his pattern, and obey his precepts. We preſs duties as a neceſſary fruit of faith in Chriſt, and of love to him; and we teach, that they are only to be performed by his ſtrength, and accepted thro' his merits. Nay, Chriſt crucified is the ſcope and ſubſtance of the whole bible; *for to him give all the prophets witneſs*, Acts x. 43.

A *crucified Chriſt* is a ſubject ſo pleaſant and ſo fertil, that we cannot be ſtraitned to preach directly thereupon many times a year, if we take a view of theſe things in him, *viz.* the infinite dignity and glory of his perſon; the perfections of God that ſhine in him; the freeneſs and greatneſs of his love; his eternal undertaking; his glorious ſuretiſhip; his wonderful incarnation; his threefold office; ſignificant metaphors and types whereby Chriſt and his benefits are repreſented; his manifold ſweet relations to his people; his mediatory fulneſs; his deep humiliation; his innocent life; his holy example; his heavenly doctrine; his unparalleled ſufferings; his meritorious death; his victorious reſurrection; his triumphant aſcenſion; his prevalent interceſſion; his glorious coming again: The excellency of that covenant he hath confirmed; the ſufficiency of the ſacrifice he hath offered; the neceſſity and completeneſs of the righteouſneſs he hath wrought; the innumerable benefits of his death; the unſearchable riches of his grace; his exceeding great and precious promiſes; the incomparable virtue of his blood; our union with him by faith; our adoption by relation to him; our juſtification by his merit; our ſanctification by his Spirit; our fighting and conquering under his banner; our protection under his ſhadow; our bearing burdens by his grace; our performing duties by his ſtrength; our holy walk in obedience to his injunctions; the thankfulneſs we owe to him in heart and life; and the ſweet communion believers have with him in duties and ordinances. Yea, we have bleſſings unſpeakable, grace and glory, peace and pardon, light and life, ſtrength and growth, riches and wiſdom, joy and hope, perſeverance in grace, comfort in affliction, conduct in life, through-bearing at death, reſurrection from the grave, abſolution at the tribunal, happineſs thro' eternity, and all things coming to us with and by a crucified Jeſus. So that in this noble ſubject there is a perpetual plenty and variety of ſuitable matter for ſacramental occaſions.

Obj. VI. *To adminiſter the Lord's Supper ſo frequently would occaſion very much labour and toil to the adminiſtrators.*

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Did we diſpenſe this ſacrament more frequently, probably the labour and toil would be leſſened; we might come to find our people habitually in a better caſe for that ſolemn ordinance than at preſent generally they are: So that leſs pains in exciting, inſtructing and preparing them for it, might be more ſucceſsful than greater is now.

2*dly*, We have no cauſe to diſtruſt our faithful and kind Lord, who doth not fail to give ſtrength and furniture to his ſervants as their needs require, according to his gracious promiſe, Deut. xxxiii. 25. *As thy days, ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be.* We have experience hitherto of his pitying our weakneſs, ſupplying our wants, and helping us in time of need: So that we may aſſure ourſelves that he will ſend none to warfare upon their own charges.

3*dly*, If we put the glory of our maſter, the advantage of our people, and the increaſe of our reward, in the balance with our labour; I hope we will not think it deſerveth once to be mentioned. Tho' we had no more to expect, it is a great reward in itſelf, to be honoured to bring glory to our Redeemer, and to advance the ſalvation of immortal ſouls: And ſeeing the reaſon of our capacity for either is ſo very ſhort, with what cheerfulneſs ſhould we beſtir ourſelves to ply that bleſſed work? What a pleaſure would it be to ſee Chriſt in eſteem, ſin in diſgrace, the world in contempt, and religion in proſperity amongſt men? Well then, would we contribute thereto in our ſtations; would we have a lively remembrance of God, and Chriſt, and heaven, kept up in the world; would we have our people cloſly and conſtantly to bear in mind the evil of ſin, the precious neſs of immortal ſouls, the love of God to mankind-ſinners, the death and ſufferings of the ſon of God in our room: Let us frequently adminiſter the Lord's ſupper in our congregations.

Would we help the careleſneſs of our peoples minds, and the weakneſs of their memories; would we give our hearers a compendious and affecting view of the Chriſtian religion; would we bring them to have freſh and laſting impreſſions of its truths and doctrines; I know no more effectual means for it: For in this ſolemn ordinance we have man's fall and diſeaſe, together with his recovery and remedy, ſet forth to the life; and that in ſuch a way as makes impreſſion on the outward ſenſes, ſo that the eye may affect the heart.

Would we have ſin and vice kept under conſtant rebukes among our people; let us keep their eyes always fixed upon the bleeding wounds of a crucified Jeſus: Would we have them carefully to maintain family-religion, ſecret duties, and a holy tender walk; let us conſtrain them to it, by the love of a dying Jeſus frequently ſet before their eyes in this ordinance. This, thro' the divine bleſſing, would be an excellent mean and help to carry about with us always the dying of the Lord Jeſus, and to make the print of his wounds deep and laſting on our hearts.

If we duly ponder theſe things, I hope it will appear, that the advantage of the frequent celebration of the Lord's ſupper will abundantly recompenſe our ſmall toil and pains.

Obj. VII. *The unworthineſs of the people is a great diſcouragement to the frequent celebration of the Lord's ſupper amongſt them: We have but few that are in any meaſure fit to be admitted to it.*

Anſ. 1ſt, If this reaſon were valid, it would conclude as ſtrongly againſt the diſpenſing of this ordinance at all, as againſt the frequency of it: And we know, an argument that would prove too much proves nothing.

2dly, I know many are unworthy, but all are not alike; and the unfitneſs of many cannot excuſe us from adminiſtrating to theſe that are in ſome meaſure fit. As it is a ſin for parents to keep back from their children their due and neceſſary food, becauſe of ſome unworthy perſons that are in the family: So it is a ſin to withold the ſoul nouriſhing meal from theſe of their people that have a right to it: For, tho' not a few do ſlight and abuſe it, yet there are others hungry and needful of it: And theſe ought not to be denied the advantage of frequent partaking, for the fault of their neighbours.

"*It is the ſaying of one*, That we find fault upon good ground with the Papiſts for denying one of the elements to the people: And how can we juſtify theſe that deny both elements to their people, at leaſt for a long time?

3dly, Tho' the number of our communicants be ſmall, that ſhould not diſcourage us from our duty; for the Divine bleſſing is not tyed to numbers. God did own the inſtitution of the paſſover, tho' there were but few that eat it together; and our bleſſed Saviour had but a ſmall number that did partake with him at the firſt communion: But for our encouragement in that caſe, he graciouſly promiſeth, that, "where two or three are met together in his name, he will own them with his preſence and bleſſing."

Obj. VIII. *To adminiſtrate this ſacrament ſo frequently as before mentioned, would require conſiderable expences to furniſh communion elements, and otherwiſe; and we have no ſufficient fund for that charge.*

Anſ. 1ſt, Tho' we ſhould be put to more charge this way than formerly, I hope no faithful miniſter will ſay, that this conſideration ſhould be laid in balance with the glory of God and good of ſouls; we ſhould all be willing to ſpend and be ſpent for Chriſt: And whatever we expend of our private good this way, is ſurely lent to the Lord who will repay it.

2dly, The law provides a fund in every pariſh for ſuch expences; and, where it is not ſettled, our judges are very favourable to the church, and give a liberal allowance to ſuch miniſters as do apply for it: And no doubt, if the ſacrament were more frequently celebrated, they would not grudge to augment the fund, when it is not ſufficient.

3dly, If a ſufficient fund cannot be had otherwiſe, let collections be made in pariſhes for defraying this charge as Euſebius tells us was done by the primitive Chriſtians in this caſe: And ſurely there is no honeſt hearted Chriſtian or communicant but would contribute liberally for that effect, rather than the Lord's work ſhould be hindered.

Laſtly, We may ſee from the old acts of Aſſembly, that the General Aſſembly 1638 had this very objection under their conſideration, and declareth, that the charges ſhould rather be paid out of that day's collection, than that the congregation want the more frequent uſe of the ſacrament. But I hope the General Aſſemblies of this church will in due time take this and other objections under further conſideration, provide effectual anſwers and remedies thereunto; ſo that this ſolemn ordinance ſhall be more frequently celebrated amongſt us than it is at preſent: And I wiſh all may pray fervently, that, together with the foreſaid laudable practice, ſomething of the warm love and zeal of the ancient Chriſtians may be happily revived in our land.

Before I conclude this preface, there is another thing I would advertiſe the reader, that in the follwing treatiſe I have endeavoured to keep by the form of ſound words in uſe amongſt us, avoiding both the extremes of Antinomianiſm and Legaliſm, ſeeing the principles of this church do guide us equally to evite both the one and the other. And it muſt be acknowledged, that it is not eaſy to ſhun theſe extremes; for people commonly, when their zeal is excited againſt one extreme, are in great hazard of ſliding inſenſibly into the other, according to the old proverb, *Dum vitant ſtulti vitia in contraria currunt.* And indeed, not only fools, but ſome of the greateſt and wiſeſt of men, have erred in this reſpect: It was Mr Baxter's zeal and great keenneſs againſt Antinomianiſm, that drove him to ſome raſh and dangerous aſſertions on the other ſide. And this ſhould be a warning to us, always to take heed to ourſelves, and be careful to guard on all ſides; for we are ſtill in hazard this way, and eſpecially when things come to warm diſputations with us.

It is poſſible that ſome who preach the goſpel may pick out ſome of the glorious truths thereof, ſuch as, "The freedom of grace in the ſalvation of ſinners, our juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt as our ſurety, the excellency of faith in Chriſt, the privileges of the covenant, and bleſſings of Chriſt's purchaſe, and may make theſe truths almoſt the only ſubject of their preaching; and yet perhaps manage them ſo unhappily, as not to lead people to ſtudy regeneration of heart, holineſs of life, abhorrence of ſin, tenderneſs of walk, and the conſcientious practice of all commanded duties. And ſurely in this way of doing they in a great meaſure miſs the deſign of our Saviour's incarnation, and the end of the doctrine of grace, which is, "to deſtroy the works of the devil, and to teach men to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world."

On the other hand, it is as poſſible that others may inſiſt very much in enforcing morality, and make very fine rational harangues of its excellency; and yet make little uſe of goſpel-motives to preſs it, and be at little pains to ſhew the goſpel-principles from whence it muſt proceed. Likewiſe they may preach much againſt vice and immorality, and warn people of the evil of it; and yet take up but little time to teach them concerning the root and ſpring of vice, (*viz.* our fall in Adam, and the corruption of our natures) and the neceſſity of an inward change by a work of regeneration, for healing of the inward diſeaſe and plague of the heart. Alſo they may preſs holy duties very much, and yet make little mention of the true fountain and ſource of holineſs, (*viz.* our union with Chriſt by faith, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt) and ſpeak little of the neceſſity of Chriſt's blood to waſh our performances. Now both theſe extremes in the way of preaching are equally to be avoided.

It is a prevailing conceit among many, that there is no more requiſite to make a man a Chriſtian than morality, or a blameleſs walk before men. Morality indeed is a very comely thing, and moſt neceſſary both to beautify and preſerve human ſocieties; and therefore it is to be wiſhed there were much more of it in the world than we ſee there is; and every preacher of the goſpel ought ſtrongly to recommend the practice of it: But yet it is certain that morality is not ſufficient to make a man a Chriſtian, ſeeing it hath been found in heathens, and thoſe that were ignorant of Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation thro' faith in him.

Chriſtianity indeed doth enforce morality and moral virtues by the ſtrongeſt motives and arguments; but, in the mean time, it teacheth us that theſe virtues are never good and acceptable to God, until they be the fruit of the Spirit's operation, and ſpring from their proper principles, faith in Chriſt and love to him: They muſt be grafted in Chriſt as their root, have a new principle to quicken them, and a new end to direct them before moral virtues can commence Chriſtian graces. Unregenerate morality will never pleaſe God: Let men advance it never ſo far, yet, till the heart be renewed, it is ſtill but nature at beſt; and the fruit is always ſour that grows not upon the root Chriſt: It can never be acceptable unto God, while Chriſt's ſtrength and Spirit is not ſought and employed in it, nor his righteouſneſs to cover it. So that there is a great difference betwixt morality and goſpel-holineſs.

A moral man then, tho' he profeſs himſelf a Chriſtian, yet he really is not ſo, if he lives not as one that looks for and receives daily influences from Chriſt; if he hath not Chriſt ſtill in his undertakings, duties and affections, and be not ſaying, "How empty and vain are all my duties without Chriſt! Yea, though I could do never ſo much, I ſhould be utterly loſt and undone, if it were not for Chriſt my ſurety and his righteouſneſs. I count all but loſs and dung, that I may be found in him."

This church a good many years ago manifeſted much zeal againſt Antinomianiſm, and doctrines which ſeemed to tend that way: And ſurely it is incumbent upon all churches to watch and take care, that the obligations of Chriſtians to holineſs and good works, and to all kind of duties, both of the firſt and ſecond table, ſhould never be in the leaſt weakened by the preachers of the goſpel, under the ſpecious pretext of exalting free grace; ſeeing free grace and ſtrict holineſs do nobly conſiſt together.

Again, on the other hand, it ſhould equally be the church's concern to labour to prevent the ſpreading of Legaliſm, or the preaching of morality and the practice of duties in a *legal ſtrain*; that is in a way tending to the neglect of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, or to the diſparagement of the doctrine of free grace. It was the flagrant reports of the abounding of that ſort of moral preaching, eſpecially among younger clergymen, that occaſioned the bringing in an overture to the General Aſſembly 1726, for an act to diſcourage the ſame, and to direct to the right method of preaching Chriſt, and how to preach morality in an evangelical ſtrain. But, though endeavours were uſed by ſeverals to get this overture turned into an act, it was hindered by ſome leading men, leſt it ſhould reflect upon the characters of ſome preachers to whom they had reſpect; ſo that an act of this kind could never be got brought to a bearing until the Aſſembly 1736: And then theſe who were moſt zealous to promote the act, in order to get it the more unanimouſly agreed to, were fain to drop out of its preamble the true cauſe of making it, namely, the abounding of legal preaching in the land, or of a wrong ſtrain of preaching the goſpel. But, notwithſtanding of this, the act itſelf is of excellent uſe, if duly regarded and put in execution; and without this the beſt acts in the world ſignify nothing. O that I could perſuade all miniſters and preachers of the goſpel to conſider and obſerve the foreſaid act! It would ſurely fare the better, both with themſelves and their hearers: And, if no more may be done for that purpoſe, let me at leaſt uſe ſome means to get the act made known to them, by tranſcribing it in this place.

VII. Act concerning preaching.

Edinburgh, May 21. 1736. *Seſſ.* 8.

"THE General Aſſembly, being moved with zeal for the honour of God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, eſpecially at a time when the Chriſtian revelation is openly impugned, and infidelity, deiſm, and other errors do ſo much prevail: They do hereby recommend to all miniſters and preachers, ſeriouſly to conſider and obſerve the directory of this church concerning the preaching of the word, which is approven by the General Aſſembly 1645: And, in particular, that they be careful to warn their hearers againſt any thing tending to Atheiſm, Deiſm, Arianiſm, Socinianiſm, Arminianiſm, Bourignianiſm, Popery, Superſtition, Antinomianiſm, or any other errors. And that in their ſermons they inſiſt frequently upon the truth, neceſſity and excellency of ſupernatural revelation, the ſupreme Deity of the Son and Holy Ghoſt as well as of the Father; together with the Oneneſs of the Godhead, our ſinful and loſt eſtate by nature, the neceſſity of ſupernatural grace, and of faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, without which the beſt works cannot pleaſe God: And that they make it the great ſcope of their ſermons, to lead ſinners from a covenant of works to a covenant of grace for life and ſalvation, and from ſin and ſelf to precious Chriſt. And the General Aſſembly recommends to all who preach the goſpel, when they handle the doctrines of God's redeeming love, and of his free grace in the juſtification and ſalvation of ſinners, the bleſſings of the Redeemer's purchaſe, and privileges of the new and better covenant, to ſtudy to manage theſe ſubjects, ſo as to lead their hearers unto an abhorrence of ſin, the love of God and our neighbours, and the practice of univerſal holineſs; ſeeing it is one great end of the goſpel, to deſtroy the works of the devil, and to teach men to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world. Upon which account, it is incumbent on all who preach the goſpel, to inſiſt not only upon the neceſſity and excellency of faith in Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, but alſo upon the neceſſity of repentance for ſin, and reformation from it; and to preſs the practice of all moral duties, both with reſpect to the firſt and ſecond table of the law, as indiſpenſibly neceſſary, in obedience to God's command, to teſtify our gratitude to him, to evidence the ſincerity of our faith, and for the benefit of human ſociety, the adorning the profeſſion of religion, and making us meet for eternal life, ſeeing without holineſs no man can ſee the Lord.

And the Aſſembly do ſeriouſly recommend to all miniſters and preachers of the goſpel, that in preſſing moral duties, or obedience to the law, they ſhew the nature and excellency of goſpel-holineſs, and enforce conformity to the moral law both in heart and life, not from principles of reaſon only, but alſo and more eſpecially of revelation. And, in order to attain thereto, it is neceſſary to ſhew men the corruption and depravity of human nature by their fall in Adam, their natural impotence for and averſion to what is ſpiritually good, and to lead them to the true and only ſource of all grace and holineſs, *viz.* union with Chriſt, by the holy Spirit's working faith in us, and renewing us more and more after the image of God: And to let their hearers know, that they muſt firſt be grafted into Chriſt as their root, before their fruit can be ſavoury unto God; that they muſt have a new principle to animate, and a new end to direct them before their actions become gracious and acceptable in the ſight of God: And that they teach them the neceſſity of living by faith on the Son of God, in a conſtant looking to and dependence upon him as the great Author of all gracious influences, for the performance of every duty: And withal, that after their beſt performances and attainments, they muſt count them but loſs and dung in point of juſtification before God; and to make it their great deſire only to be found in Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. And that miniſters, in the application of their ſermons, do endeavour rightly to divide the word of truth, ſpeaking diſtinctly to ſuch various caſes of the converted and unconverted, as ariſe natively from the ſubjects they have been handling; and that, in the whole of their diſcourſes, they take care to ſuit themſelves to the capacity of their hearers as to matter, method and expreſſion, and to the prevailing ſins of the time and place, with all prudent and zealous freedom and plainneſs: As alſo that they make goſpel-ſubjects their main theme and ſtudy, and preſs with all earneſtneſs the practice of moral duties in a goſpel manner: And that they forbear delivering any thing in public, that may tend more to amuſement than edification; and beware of bringing into their ſermons and public diſcourſes, matters of doubtful diſputation, which tend to gender ſtrife rather than to promote the edification of Chriſtians. And the aſſembly exhort all to ſtudy to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

And finally, the General Aſſembly recommends to all profeſſors of divinity, to uſe their beſt endeavours to have the ſtudents under their care well acquainted with the true method of preaching the goſpel, as above directed: And that preſbyteries at their privy cenſures enquire concerning the obſervation of this act."

Now bleſſed be the Lord that there is ſuch a public act in record, as a ſtanding witneſs for Chriſt in the midſt of all our backſlidings and defections: May God put it in the hearts of all who preach the goſpel among us, to obſerve the directions of it; that the ſcope and tendency of their ſermons may ſtill be to exalt Chriſt, and raiſe him above all in the buſineſs of our ſalvation; to preſs the doctrine of regeneration and the new birth; to preach up juſtification by Chriſt's righteouſneſs alone, apprehended by faith, and the neceſſity of the inward operations of the holy Spirit which Chriſt hath purchaſed and promiſed for working that faith in us, and for bringing about the gracious change of the new birth, and carrying on a work of ſanctification in us, and for enabling us to live the ſpiritual life! This being the ſcope of the act, happy were it for the land if it were alſo the main ſcope of our ſermons. But, after all, if profeſſors of divinity do not their part in training up ſtudents according to it, and if preſbyteries do not theirs in calling to account theſe who do not obſerve the act, the church will not reap much benefit by it, as I fear ſhe hath not yet done: For, if ſhe had, 'what meaneth the bleating of the ſheep,' and 'the lowing of the oxen,' which we ſtill hear? What means the murmuring of ſerious Chriſtians from ſeveral corners, for want of the proper food of their ſouls? What mean the continued complaints of the growth of Deiſm and Infidelity thro' the land? It is a juſt obſerve, That, when moral preaching in a Chriſtleſs way doth much abound, it makes way for the increaſe of deiſm and infidelity: For when perſons do long hear moral ſermons, and little of Chriſt in them, or the peculiar doctrines of Chriſtianity, they are tempted to think there is but little difference between them and the diſcourſes of Seneca and other heathen moraliſts; and therefore, that they may be ſafe enough, and win to heaven, without Chriſtianity at all, and that every moral man is a good enough Chriſtian.

Oh! this is a fundamental defection, of moſt hainous guilt; it is a God-provoking and unchurching evil, which all the miniſters and lovers of Chriſt ſhould be deeply concerned about: For if we ſuffer ourſelves and others to fall from our regard and love to glorious Chriſt, neglect to exalt him in our ſermons, and to preach ſalvation to men only thro' Chriſt's ſuretiſhip and ſacrifice, and to tell the world, and inculcate it daily upon them, that this and this is only the way for them to obtain pardon, peace, grace, glory and every good thing; I ſay, if we turn careleſs and negligent in what ſo nearly concerns Chriſt's glory, and our own office as Chriſtian preachers, may he not juſtly plead a controverſy with our church, ſmite us with the moſt awful judgments, ſuffer a flood of infidelity, error and profanity to invade us, withdraw his Spirit from ordinances and judicatories, infatuate our counſels and conduct, mingle a perverſe ſpirit in the midſt of us, and give us up to the moſt unnatural diviſions and mournful breaches among ourſelves? Ah, how much is this the caſe with us at this day! And no wonder, ſeeing Chriſt's glory is ſo little minded, notwithſtanding of the foreſaid excellent act of Aſſembly, and many other good acts that are ſadly neglected this day by miniſters and preachers among us. And how can we expect that any individual man ſhould pay regard to them, and particularly to the 7th act of Aſſembly 1736 concerning preaching, when he ſees whole judicatories pay no reſpect to the 14th act of that Aſſembly *againſt intruſions*, nor to the 10th act of Aſſembly 1712, and the 9th act of Aſſembly 1715, concerning the uſurpation of patronage upon the church, and her right of calling her own miniſters; which acts are conform to other ancient acts of this church, and to our reformation-principles declared in *ſecond book of Diſcipline (ſee chap.* 3. *Par.* 4. and 5 *Chap.* 12. *Par.* 9. and 10.) and which are ſworn to in our *national covenant*, and ratified by many acts both of church and ſtate?

Now, how ſtrange and ſurpriſing is it to ſee men deliberately going contrary to theſe excellent acts and deeds of the church both ancient and modren (which are well founded upon the word of God and ſound reaſon) by drawing on the yoke of patronage upon the church without neceſſity, voluntarily ſtrengthning the hands of patrons in their ſpiritual tyranny, and encouraging men in that vile church-breaking and ſoul-deſtroying practice of *accepting preſentations*, (which no law doth require) and adhering to them in oppoſition to the peoples choice? And yet this way is continued, even after conviction, by long dear bought experience, of the pernicious effects of it. I well remember the time (yea, it is not above twenty years ago) when it was thought to be the univerſal opinion, that accepting of preſentations was inconſiſtent with Preſbyterian principles, and the rights and rules of this church, which we are ſolemnly engaged to maintain by our *Formula* 1711, and otherwiſe; At that time, *preſentation-hunters* among Preſbyterians would have appeared as monſters, and their ſociety frightful; but now, alas! they are become tame and familiar creatures to us. It is this woful practice, together with the itch of pleaſing great men, that hath of late been the great ſnare to draw in judicatories to go croſs to our declared principles maintained in this church ever ſince the reformation (which we ſhould have firmly cleaved to, and never declined from in any caſe) by making *intruſions* and *violent ſettlements* in Chriſtian congregations, to the ruin, alas! of the glorious goſpel, and of precious ſouls therein: And upon that account alone, tho' we had no acts nor declared principles againſt intruſions, it is aſtoniſhing to think how any man, that hath the glory of his maſter and the ſaving of ſouls at heart, ſhould ever concur in a violent ſettlement that is manifeſtly deſtructive to both. That is an awful threatning to miniſters, Jer. xxiii. "Wo be unto the paſtors that deſtroy and ſcatter the ſheep of my paſture, ſaith the Lord:" And yet notwithſtanding we ſee many, who go under the character of wiſe men, ſtill perſiſting in that miſerable infatuation and deſtructive courſe, driving multitudes of hearty friends and ſerious Chriſtians out of the church, and never gaining any to it of theſe they intend to gratify; yet acting as if they were joined in conſpiracy againſt the Commons of Scotland, and were carrying on a plot to ſtrengthen the ſeceſſion from the church. But let me tell theſe wiſe brethren, if our conventions and parliaments had paid ſo little regard to the inclinations of the people of Scotland, as our judicatories do now, we would not had theſe courts at this day to ſit in. I ſhall not inſiſt here upon this melancholy ſubject, having ſaid ſo much on it elſe where: Only let me add this word, if leading men go on in theſe methods, tho' they may enjoy their eaſe, power and preferments for a while; yet upon their grave ſtone it is too likely it may be written, *Here ly the men, who did deſtroy the moſt beautiful national church and conſtitution that was in the world.*

But, alas! we have cauſe not only to lament our departing from reformation principles, and weakning the eſtabliſhment, but alſo ſhameful defection from vital and practical religion. The power of godlineſs is at a very low ebb among us, and little of God's Spirit is to be found in our adminiſtrations; God is angry, and threatens to caſt us off. Ah! great ground have we to bewail our mournful caſe, and cry with the prophet, under the fearful tokens of God's anger, Jer. xiv. Lam. v. "Haſt thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy ſoul lothed Zion? Why haſt thou ſmitten us, and there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedneſs, and the iniquity of our fathers: For we have ſinned againſt thee. Do not abhor us, for thy name's ſake; do not diſgrace the throne of thy glory: Remember, break not thy covenant with us. The anger of the Lord hath divided us. The crown hath fallen from our head: Wo unto us that we have ſinned. Wherefore doſt thou forget us for ever, forſake us ſo long time? Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord and we ſhall be turned: Renew our days as of old". There are many other paſſages in Jeremiah's writings very ſuitable to our preſent caſe, ſuch as Jer. xii. 10. 11. "Many paſtors have deſtroyed my vineyard, they have troden my portion under foot, they have made my pleaſant portion a deſolate wilderneſs. They have made it deſolate, and being deſolate it mourneth unto me." Well, what can the ſons of Zion do for their mother in ſuch diſtreſs? They muſt even bring her caſe to the phyſician of Iſrael, when it is wholly deſperate and incurable as to human help, and cry, as in Pſal. lx. 2. "O God, give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man". Let us fall in with Chriſt's call to the man with the lunatick child, whom his diſciples could not cure. Mat. xvii. Bring him hither to me, ſaith our Lord. Let us bring the caſe to Chriſt when it is deſperate and incurable by all others. The church's extremity is Chriſt's opportunity: He can help her, even then when all her friends are going with their hands on their loins in the greateſt anguiſh and trouble; according to that word, Jer. xxx. 6. 7. wherefore do I ſee every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travel, and all faces are turned into paleneſs? Alas! for that day is great, ſo that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble. Yet even then, when Jacob's trouble comes to that extremity that none can match it, the Lord pities and adds that word, "But he ſhall be ſaved out of it". A matchleſs trouble cannot nonplus his ſaving ſkill. Now, how doth he ſave Jacob out of ſuch extremities? Not by human might or power, but by his own Spirit, Zech. iv. 6. O that God would help all Zion's friends pleading with him for an out pouring of his Spirit upon miniſters, preachers, ſtudents and all ranks, for ſaving his covenanted land out of extreme diſtreſs, and reviving primitive Chriſtianity among us! This and nothing elſe, will do it. O that he would ſpeak ſuch a comfortable word to Scotland, as that he ſaid to the Jews when their ſtate was low, Hag. ii. 5. According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, ſo my Spirit remaineth among you: Fear ye not! He hath remembered his covenant with Scotland in former times, and ſurpriſed our fathers with gracious effuſions of his Spirit: Let us ſteadily look up to him, who hath ſtill bowels of pity, and can help us as well as others in diſtreſs.

We have heard of the wonderful goodneſs of the Lord of late, in pitying other nations and countries, when under great darkneſs, deadneſs and diſtreſs, by ſending down his Spirit to revive his work among them in an extraordinary manner, which may be ground of hope to others. How glorious was the appearance of his ſovereign grace about eight or nine years ago in Saltzburg in Germany, in determining about twenty thouſand of the inhabitants to embrace the reformed religion merely by reading of the bible; yea, and to become ſo zealous for it, as to be willing to forſake houſes, lands, temporal goods, and relations, and all they had in the world, that they might enjoy the preaching of the goſpel?

How marvelouſly did he diſplay the riches of his grace, and the work of his Spirit, in the wonderful converſions of great numbers in Northampton and other parts of New-England by the miniſtry of Mr Jonathan Edwards and others in that country, about five or ſix years ago, of which we had a well atteſted narrative publiſhed among us?

Nay, within theſe two years we have moſt ſurpriſing accounts of the goings of our God, and the effuſions of his Spirit on ſeveral places of Old England and Wales, our neighbouring countries, where by the miniſtry of Mr George Whitefield, Mr John Weſley, and others (who inſiſt mainly on the doctrine of the new birth, and juſtification by faith in Chriſt) great numbers even of the moſt profligate are convinced and pricked in their hearts, and brought to cry out, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* Which extraordinary work I hear doth ſtill continue in divers places of England.

And this ſame very year we have the like accounts from Georgia, New-Jerſey, Penſilvania, New-York, and others of the Engliſh plantations in America, by the miniſtry of Mr Whitefield and others. Likewiſe we have very ſtrange accounts of the ſucceſs of the goſpel in many different parts of the world, even among the heathens, by count Zinzendorf biſhop of the Moravian church, and his miſſionaries.

Verily theſe good news which we now hear, of God's glorious appearances in the goſpel, do look as if God was about to accompliſh his promiſes to his church in the latter days, "When the whole earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord". O how refreſhing are the remoteſt dawnings of the glory of theſe days!

Alſo, they ſerve to teach us how eaſy it is for God to riſe up, when he pleaſeth, for the revival of his work in decayed churches, when their caſe ſeems to be very hopeleſs. How eaſy is it for him to raiſe up inſtruments to preach his goſpel with ſuch life and power, as to awaken whole towns and countries of ſleepy ſinners together to hearken to the goſpel call? He can make a nation to be born at once; which ſhould encourage us to wait on him ſtill. And now when our bleſſed Lord is graciouſly pleaſed to mount his white horſe as king of Zion, and make his circuit in our countries, to give ſuch evidences of his glorious power, and ſend down pleaſant ſhowers of his grace among them, and make many to bow down at his feet: May we not hope that he hath a great work on the wheels, and is on his march to go through his church in a conquering manner, to confound deiſts and infidels, and quell the daring boldneſs of his adverſaries? And, in that caſe, may not Scotland look for a viſit from him among the reſt, and even plead that ancient kindneſs may revive towards it? May we not draw hope from the ſecond Pſalm and other ſcripture paſſages, where God promiſeth to "give his ſon the uttermoſt parts of the earth for a poſſeſſion; and that the iſles ſhall ſee his ſalvation, and wait for his law," among which places Scotland certainly is? And though it be a land that is little and deſpiſed among the nations, yet he, whoſe thoughts are not like man's thoughts, hath ſhewed a diſtinguiſhing reſpect to it by his early ſending the goſpel to it, and, when overſpread with darkneſs, promoting reformation in it againſt both the power of the mighty and counſels of the crafty; nay, advancing reformation ſo far, and making goſpel-light ſo clear and powerful in it, by the remarkable down-pouring of his Spirit, that Scotland was noticed by divines of other places, and called *Philadelphia*, and the *morning ſtar of the reformation*. Nay, he took Scotland into covenant with himſelf in a peculiar manner, and gave ſingular tokens of his preſence with his people: He hath wonderfully appeared for the intereſt of religion, when almoſt ſunk in it: He hath raiſed up Saviours on our mount Zion, and brought about great deliverances for it (as for Iſrael of old) when grievouſly oppreſſed and brought low. And from theſe ancient and peculiar proofs of our Redeemer's care, may we not humbly hope that he will not leave the land that is given him by his Father, and ſolemnly devoted to him by its inhabitants?

Our decays and backſlidings from God indeed are very great, fearful and threatning; yet he hath ſtill left a mourning and praying remnant in the land, who are ſenſible of the want of his Spirit and preſence in ordinances, deſire to lament after the Lord, and cry for all the abominations that are found in the midſt of the city: And tho' her deſolations are mournful, the breaches in her walls many, and the glory of the Lord is gone up from the cherub; yet it ſeems ſtill to hover and ſtand over the threſhold of the door, and there is a remnant among us wreſtling and pleading againſt his departure. There is a number who take pleaſure in our Zion, have a kindneſs for her ſtones and rubbiſh, and ceaſe not to lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left: And we ſee gracious promiſes made to the prayers and tears, wreſtlings and witneſſings of a ſmall godly remnant, Pſal. xii. 5. Pſal. cii. 13. 14. 17. Alas, that this remnant in our land is ſo ſadly broken and divided in the way and manner of their witneſſings at this day! O that the meek Jeſus, who rules in Zion, would meeken all their hearts, ſave from a ſpirit of bitterneſs, and from dangerous extremes in ſeparating from one another! O that the God of peace, that hath the command of hearts, would unite his broken remnant together, give them a Chriſt-like ſpirit, and make them one ſtick in his hand! It is no wiſe difficult to him to accompliſh this union, even when the caſe is moſt hopeleſs in our eyes, and inſtruments to mediate for healing breaches are out of ſight. Let us remember and plead that promiſe, Jer. xxx. 17. "For I will reſtore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, ſaith the Lord, becauſe they have called thee an outcaſt, ſaying, This is Zion whom no man ſeeketh after." Many of God's worthies now in glory, have gone off the ſtage in the belief and hopes, that God would yet ariſe and have mercy on his Zion, that he would ſignally build her up and appear in his glory; yea, that there would be more glorious goſpel-days ſeen in Scotland than either we or our fathers have beheld. Surely theſe conſiderations may encourage God's remnant in Scotland to wait and pray in hope, however dark and cloudy our day be at preſent.

In the mean time, let us rejoice and bleſs the Lord, that he is pleaſed to pour out his Spirit, make bare his holy arm, and glorify his power in other parts of the world, yea, and get himſelf a great name amongſt theſe that have not known him, whatever he do with us: May his right-hand and holy arm get him the victory among them more and more, that we may hear goſpel-ſongs from the uttermoſt parts of the earth?——Likewiſe, let us mourn for theſe ſins, both old and late, which provoke God to make our heavens as braſs, and to withhold theſe pleaſant ſhowers from us he is letting fall upon others: And let us plead that Scotland, which formerly was the glory of all lands for the effuſions of the Spirit, may not now be paſt by and left behind all others. O let not her fleece be dry, when many others have their fleeces wet; and, when they are getting abundance of rain, may we have a little cloud appearing like a man's hand to prognoſticate a ſhower a coming! May the Lord riſe up from his place, and come mercifully to decide the quarrel between Deiſts and us; and let Infidels, and the profane ſcoffers of theſe laſt days ſee, that the bible is the word of God, and that the preaching of it is his inſtitution; that there is a ſupernatural power attending it, for changing mens hearts as well as lives! May he let the world ſee, it is not fine moral harangues, nor the enticing words of mens wiſdom; but the plain preaching of a crucified Jeſus, is the only remedy for loſt ſinners, that becomes the power of God to the convertion and ſalvation of men!'

But ſome have their queſtions, 'By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe? Will he ſhew wonders to the dead? Shall the deed ariſe and praiſe him?' Theſe indeed are nonpluſſing difficulties to us, but none at all to him who raiſeth the dead, and calleth the things which be not, as tho' they were. He hath ſtill Spirit and clay enough for new inſtruments; yea, he can make ſtrangers build up his walls, and the greateſt enemies become zealous for his glory. And, however unlikely the appearance of things may be at preſent, both ſcripture and experience aſſure us, that the time of God's peoples extremity (as I ſaid before) is his uſual ſeaſon of appearing for them: 'It is in the mount that the Lord will be ſeen;' ſo may the text be rendered, Gen. xxii. 14. God did not appear any way for Iſaac's deliverance all the three days journey he made with his father, till he came to the top of the mount, and was juſt ready to be ſacrificed: Neither did he interpoſe for the Jews in Eſther's time, until the decree was paſt, and day fixed, and but a hair-breadth betwixt them and ruin; then God ſteps in, and poſts are inſtantly diſpatched to ſtop the execution. Thus the Lord acts agreeably to his promiſe, Deut. xxxii. 36. 'For the Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up or left.' Here then is food for faith and prayer in the moſt ſtraitning times. O for grace to pray in hope, mourn in hope, labour in hope, and wait in hope, ſeeing our deareſt Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who is our hope, is gone up, and ſits at the helm! O when ſhall the power of this great Lord be preſent to heal us! Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly, *Amen*.

THE INTRODUCTION.

IT being our great buſineſs in the world, to promote God's glory and our own ſalvation, and, in order thereto, to ſeek acquaintance with, and ſecure an intereſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (the ſole mediator betwixt God and men) and alſo to labour for the comfortable perſuaſion and aſſurance of this intereſt; it hath pleaſed God for our aſſiſtance in this matter, graciouſly to preſcribe to us the uſe of ſeveral outward means, as the word, ſacraments, and prayer, and alſo to promiſe the inward influences of his Holy Spirit, for making theſe means effectual for the ends foreſaid, to ſuch as conſcientiouſly attend them and uſe them.

The ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, one of theſe means, being inſtituted by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as a bright repreſentation and compend of the whole Chriſtian religion, and an ordinance nobly adapted for carrying on the ends of God's glory and our ſouls ſalvation, and particularly for clearing up our intereſt in Chriſt, and improving our acquaintance with him; it highly concerns every Chriſtian to make conſcience of attending it in a due and ſuitable manner.

I have elſewhere ſhown, that the Lord's day is of divine appointment, and the celebration of the Lord's ſupper is the proper work of this day, and one ſpecial deſign of its firſt inſtitution. Now, if ordinary ſabbath's do require great diligence and care in our preparing for them, and improving of them; much more do communion ſabbaths, which are ſolemn and high days, and in a ſpecial manner days of the ſons of men; theſe being times wherein we make near approaches unto God, and he makes moſt near approaches unto us; and ſo may be called days of heaven upon earth, for they do eminently repreſent the employments and enjoyments of the glorified ſaints in heaven; and, by the right improvement of them, we come to be prepared for living amongſt that bleſſed company. It is then our great duty and intereſt, carefully to make ready for theſe ſabbaths when they draw nigh, and to improve every hour and minute of them with the greateſt diligence when they actually do come.

The ſubject of the Lord's ſupper is pretty fully handled in my ſacramental cetechiſm, both in a doctrinal and caſuiſtick manner. And, ſeeing it is needleſs to repeat what is there written, I muſt refer my reader to it, for a more full explication of ſeveral things relative to this ordinance than what is here to be expected; ſeeing I mainly deſign in this treatiſe to give practical directions for the right improvement of communion-ſabbaths. The ſubject is ſtill very large and copious, after all that hath been ſaid and written upon it; and their is room for much more. What I here intend may be comprehended under the three following heads;

I. Directions how to prepare for a communion-ſabbath before it come.

II. How to ſpend it when it is come.

III. How to behave ourſelves when it is over.

CHAP. I.

Containing directions how to prepare for a communion-ſabbath.

DIRECT. I. *Carefully endeavour and ſtudy to have a juſt and right uptaking of the nature, ends and uſes of the Lord's ſupper; and the work of communicating while at the Lord's table.*

THERE are many who have wrong notions of this ordinance, do greatly miſtake the ends and deſigns of it, and therefore cannot rightly partake of it: But, if we would be worthy communicants we muſt ſeriouſly ponder and rightly underſtand the nature and ends of this ſolemn inſtitution of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ſo we may approach his table with diſtinct uptakings of our works and buſineſs there.

This ordinance was not inſtituted to turn bread and wine into the true body and blood of Chriſt for people to worſhip it; nor to ſacrifice Chriſt again to the Father to be a propitiation for the ſins of the quick and dead, as the Papiſts do abſurdly affirm. Neither was it appointed to make atonement for former ſins, to purchaſe a remiſſion, and enſure heaven to us *opere operato*, as ſome ignorant people do imagine. Nor was it deſigned to cloke ſome wicked practices, or maintain a good name among men, or any other worldly end, as hypocrites do intend. But it is appointed by our great Lord and Saviour, as a *viſible repreſentation and commemoration of his death and ſufferings for his people till he come again to judge the world.* And, in obedience to his command, all his people ought to come to his table, to celebrate this ordinance: And, while partaking of the outward ſymbols of bread and wine, they are believingly and thankfully to remember Jeſus Chriſt, and his dying love; and alſo to receive and embrace him as their bleeding high prieſt into the arms of their faith, apply his benefits, reſt upon his merits, ſeal a covenant with him; look upon him whom they have pierced with a mourning heart, and a ſolemn reſolve to pierce him no more.

This is a ſhort account of the nature of this ſacrament, and of the works of communicating. But, in order to give a more full and diſtinct view of this great, and ſolemn ordinance, we may conſider and take it up under theſe ſeveral reſpects following;

I. As a *peculiar ſign and diſtinguiſhing badge of the Chriſtian church from the Infidel world, and a viſible token*, that we profeſs and own a crucified Jeſus for our Redeemer and Saviour, and that we depend only upon his death and the merit of his blood for the remiſſion of our ſins, and our reconciliation with God.

II. As a *lively repreſentation and memorial of Chriſt crucified, and the ineſtimable purchaſe of his death.* This ſacrament is a compendious map of the goſpel, and a viſible preaching of Jeſus Chriſt. The word preached holds him forth to the ear; but this ſacrament repreſents him to the eye, and in a lively way diſplays his redeeming love, his mighty acts, and unparalleled ſufferings for loſt ſinners. This ordinance is a laſting public monument to the world, of Chriſt's glorious victories and triumphs, as the captain of our ſalvation; of his vanquiſhing death and hell, his ſpoiling principalites and powers, and his obtaining peace for us. Likewiſe we are to look upon it as a ſure pledge of Chriſt's ſecond coming, and a taſte of the new wine which believers will eternally drink with him in his Father's kingdom.

III. As a *ſpecial mean appointed by God for our ſpiritual advantage*; namely, for the weakning of corruption, and the ſtrengthning of grace. The death of our glorious Redeemer, repreſented in this ordinance, gives ſuch a diſcovery of ſin to the believer as makes his ſoul to abhor it. And God bleſſeth it as a mean to excite and quicken the graces of repentance, faith, love, hope, joy and thankfulneſs in believers; by giving them ſomething of a clearer view of the attributes of God, than they had before: As of his wiſdom in the contrivance of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, and his ſuretiſhip for us; of his mercy, love and compaſſion, in ſparing poor guilty and hell-deſerving ſinners ſuch as we are; of his juſtice and holineſs, in puniſhing ſin in ſuch a manner, yea, rather puniſhing it in his own ſon, than ſuffering it to go unpuniſhed; of his veracity and faithfulneſs, in accompliſhing the old-teſtament types and prophecies, and confirming the covenant of grace, with the mercies therein promiſed, by the death of Jeſus Chriſt,

IV. As a *great feaſt, wherein Chriſt holds communion and fellowſhip with his people,* and richly entertains them. This ſacrament is the ſupper of the great God: The feaſt-maker is God the Father, the proviſion God the Son, whoſe fleſh is meat indeed, and whoſe blood is drink indeed: The gueſts are a company of poor unworthy ſinners, for whom the crumbs beneath the table are too good; yet to ſuch doth God give kindly welcome, ſaying, *Eat, O friends; drink,* &c. Cant. v. 1. A ſtrange feaſt! Chriſt is both the maker and matter of it, the feeder and the food, the giver and the gift! O what noble proviſion is Chriſt's fleſh and blood to the ſoul! John vi. 55 As bread and wine afford ſtrength, comfort and nouriſhment to the body; ſo the fleſh and blood of Chriſt, received here by faith, do yield the ſame to the ſoul. How great is the variety of heavenly dainties preſented to us in this feaſt! *viz. Pardon of ſin, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family, peace of conſcience, ſpiritual ſtrength, increaſe of grace, the precious promiſes of the covenant, the gracious preſence of Chriſt, the ſmiles of his countenance, the comfort, and quickning influences of his ſpirit.* O what rare and delicious diſhes are theſe for a hungry ſoul! O for appetites for the full feaſt which Chriſt doth furniſh us in this wilderneſs!

V. We ought to view this ordinance as the *ſolemn ſealing and confirming of a covenant betwixt God and us.* This ſacrament is one of the ſeals of the covenant of grace which God makes with believers in Chriſt; and by it he gives them ſaſine and infeftment of all the benefits of the covenant, and of the glorious inheritance purchaſed for them by Chriſt. It was uſual for people in the eaſtern countries to ratify their covenants by eating and drinking together; ſo did Iſaac and Abimelech, Jacob and Laban, *&c.* Gen. xxvi. Gen. xxxi. 2 Sam. iii. This ſacrament is a covenanting feaſt, wherein a bargain is ſolemnly ratified and ſealed betwixt God and us. God's exhibiting the elements to us, is a ſeal of the covenant on God's part, that he will be our God, and doth freely give us his Son with all his purchaſe, and will fulfil all his promiſes to us in him: Our taking the elements is a ſeal on our part, of our accepting of Jeſus Chriſt upon the terms of grace, our engaging to be his people, and that we will in his ſtrength perform all the duties required of us. Here Chriſt gives us his body and blood to ſave us, and here we give our ſouls and bodies to ſerve him.

VI. As a *ſolemn military oath, whereby we bind ourſelves to be true and faithful ſoldiers to Jeſus Chriſt our captain and general* in the ſpiritual warfare. For the word ſacrament, according to its ancient uſe (among the Romans from whom it is borrowed) doth import ſo much. Let communicants then conſider what they do at the Lord's table. You do moſt publicly, before men and angels, ſwear allegiance to the King of heaven over the broken body and ſhed blood of the Son of God. Now, if the duſt of Chriſt's miniſters feet will be a witneſs againſt the ſlighters of his goſpel, and cry for vengeance on them; ſurely Chriſt's body and blood will be a more terrible witneſs againſt perfidious communicants. Nay, the oath you here ſwear is not an ordinary one, but an oath attended with ſolemn imprecations. When you tranſact with God in this ſacrament, you do on the matter ſay, "If we be in league with ſin and ſatan, while we are profeſſing to give ourſelves away to the Lord; then let that wrath which Chriſt ſuffered fall upon us: And as certainly as we crumble the ſacramental bread betwixt our teeth, let the milſtone of God's wrath grind us to powder: And as we drink the ſacramental cup here, ſo let us drink the cup of God's unmixed wrath eternally, if we deal falſly with God in his covenant." And thus we ſee how unworthy communicants, and diſſemblers with God, do *eat and drink judgment to themſelves* with a witneſs.

VII. We ſhould take up this ſacrament, not only as a feaſt of love betwixt Chriſt and believers, but alſo as a bond of mutual love and unity among believers themſelves. As this feaſt of love is a remembrance of the greateſt love that ever was manifeſted, *viz.* of Chriſt's dying love to ſinners; ſo it is an excellent mean for procuring and advancing unity and love among the ſaints and ſervants of God. It is a mean, not only of uniting believers more firmly to Chriſt their head but alſo of uniting and endearing the members of his myſtical body to one another.

Let us view the Lord's ſupper in the foreſaid ſeven reſpects, that we may ſee what a mighty ordinance it is, and have ſome diſtinct uptakings of its nature and ends, before we approach to it.

DIRECTION II. *Be firmly perſuaded, that partaking of the Lord's ſupper is a moſt neceſſary duty; and the neglecting of it is a very great ſin.*

THAT *communicating* is a neceſſary duty incumbent upon us, and not a matter of indifference which we may do or not do as we think fit, will appear from the following obligations which God hath laid upon us;

I. We have the command of our great Lord and lawgiver to partake of this feaſt, oft repeated by the *Evangeliſts:* He ſaith to all his diſciples, *Take;* He ſaith to them, *Eat;* he ſaith to them, *Drink ye all of it;* he ſaith to them, *Do this in remembrance of me.* His precepts to pray, praiſe, hear, read, meditate, &c. are not more plain or expreſs, than his precept to communicate. So that we are as much bound to give obedience to this, as to thoſe.

II. Gratitude ſtrongly obligeth us to obey this command, if we remember what he did for us, who gave it. O believer, did he not offer up himſelf ſoul and body, as an atoning ſacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice for thy ſins? And, will not this engage you to obey him? Surely, every time you read or hear theſe words, *Do this in remembrance of me;* your heart ſhould melt and warm within you, when you conſider what he, who ſpoke them, hath done for you; even more than father, or mother, wife, brother and all your relations could have done; yea, more than a million of Angles could have done for you. And, ſhall not his command have weight with you?

III. Remember the time when he gave you this charge. It was that night he was to begin his bitter and bloody agonies for you, and wade through a ſea of wrath and ſorrow upon your account. It was then when he beheld heaven, earth and hell, Juſtice, men and devils, all conſpiring againſt him. Juſt at the time when he was going to offer up himſelf a ſacrifice in your ſtead, to ſave you from eternal flames, he gave you this charge, *Do this in remembrance of me;* as if he had ſaid,

“ Now I am juſt ready to be offered up, to die a curſed death for you, and with my blood to ſeal my teſtament, wherein I bequeath to you, pardon, peace, light, life, grace and glory; and now there is one requeſt I aſk of you that, when I am dead, you keep up the remembrance of my love and ſufferings for you, by eating bread and drinking wine together with my people at my table; and there ſhew forth my death till I come again to judge the world.” The words of dying men uſe to be of great weight with their ſurviving friends; and, will not the words of your dying ſurety, your dying elder brother, be of weight with you to obey his dying charge?

IV. Conſider how ſmall and eaſy the charge is he gives you: It is not to ſacrifice your firſt born, cut off a member of your body, give all you have to the poor, go in pilgrimage to the ends of the earth; it is not to go to the holy land, to viſit Chriſt's ſepulchre; or to the top of mount Calvary, where the croſs ſtood, *in remembrance of him*. Theſe he required not, becauſe you might have judged them hard; and yet, for as hard as they ſeem to be, had he demanded any of them, could you have been anſwerable to diſobey ſuch an one as a *dying Jeſus?* How far leſs will you be able to anſwer at the great day for diſobeying him when he requires no ſuch burdenſome taſk, but graciouſly injoins an action that is moſt eaſy, pleaſant and profitable to you; *Eat and drink at my table, in a thankful remembrance of what I have done for you?* and will you not pleaſe him in ſo ſmall a requeſt?

V. Chriſt gives you this charge, not for his good, but for your own. And your obedience to it contributes highly both to your pleaſure and your profit.

Firſt, O believer, is it not pleaſant to ſet and keep a tryſt with your dear Saviour? Well, this ordinance is the ſolemn tryſting-place where he hath appointed to meet with you; it is there you may *ſee the King in his beauty*; there doth his glory ſhine. O how glorious is he in his *dyed garments and red apparel!* With what deſire ſhould we go to ſee ſuch a beautiful ſight? How ſweet is it to hear his voice in this ordinance, which is the very muſic of heaven? How refreſhing for a doubting ſoul to hear him ſpeak as from the croſs, *It is finiſhed, the ranſom is paid, and juſtice is ſatisfied?* Can there be ſweeter melody, than to hear Chriſt whiſper into the ſoul's ear, *Fear not, I am thy ſalvation; The Lord hath put away thy ſin, thou ſhalt not die; Son, be of good cheer, all thy ſins are forgiven thee!* How pleaſant muſt it be to eat and drink at Chriſt's feaſt, with ſuch heavenly muſic ſounding in our ears?

Secondly, Is not this action as profitable to us as pleaſant? Knoweſt thou, O man, what injury thou doſt to thy immortal ſoul by neglecting it? Canſt thou have any other but a lean, hungry, ſtarved ſoul, whilſt thou ſlighteſt the food God hath appointed for it? Doſt thou know what benefit ſome of thy neighbours have got at this feaſt? Some have come to it poor, and have gone away laden with riches: Some have come to it hungry, and have gone away ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs: Some have come thirſty, and have got floods poured out upon the dry ground: Some have come blind, and gone away ſeeing: Others lame, and have gone away walking. Here they have got all their diſeaſes cured, and their wants ſupplied. And, have you not as great need of theſe mercies as others? Come then to this enriching and ſoul-upmaking ordinance; take but a view of the benefits and bleſſings which Chriſt preſents to you, and which he faithfully offers to ſeal and apply to you in this ſacrament, even his own body and blood, and all the benefits and virtues of the ſame; ſurely Chriſt and all the benefits of his purchaſe is a vaſt portion: Behold, O believer, in this ordinance you have a ſeal and pledge, an earneſt and taſte of them all.

More particularly, 1*ſt*, you have here a ſealed remiſſion of ſin preſented to you, with the blood that was ſhed for the ſame, Mat. xxvi. 28.

2*dly*, A ſealed freedom from wrath and damnation: For a crucified Jeſus here repreſented endured that for you; and he promiſes, that he who eats this food ſhall *never die eternally*, John vi. 50. 51.

3*dly*, Adoption into God's family, and a right to the childrens privileges confirmed; for your being admitted to ſit at your Father's table, and eat of the childrens bread, is a pledge of it.

4*thly*, The weakning of ſin, and ſubduing of corruption; for here you have food that kills ſin.

5*thly*, The increaſe of ſanctification, and ſtrengthning of grace: For here you have food that nouriſheth grace; and the ſanctifying Spirit is promiſed in that covenant, which is here ſealed, Ezek. xxxiv. 27.

6*thly*, Union and communion with Chriſt in the moſt intimate manner; for ſaith he, John vi. 56. *He that eateth my fleſh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.* We dwell in him by faith and love, and he in us by his Spirit.

7*thly*, A title to eternal life, John vi. 51. *If any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever.*

8*thly*, A ſealed promiſe of a glorious reſurrection, John vi. 54. ‘ Whoſo eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my ‘ blood, hath eternal life, and I will raiſe him up at the ‘ laſt day.’

9*thly*, A ſealed right to all the promiſes of the new covenant, which are great and precious, *viz.* That God will “ put his laws in our inward parts, and write them “ in our hearts, Jer. xxxi. 33. *That he will* forgive our “ iniquity, and remember our ſins no more, Jer. xxxi. “ 34. *That he will* take away the ſtony heart, and “ give us a heart of fleſh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *That he* “ *will* put his fear in our hearts, and give us hearts to “ fear him, Jer. xxxii. 39. 40. That he will cauſe us “ to walk in his ſtatutes, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. That he will “ not turn away from us to do us good, and that we “ ſhall not depart from him, Jer. xxx. 40. That he will “ ſend ſanctified rods and afflictions when they are needful, “ Pſal. lxxxix. 32. That he will put his ſpirit “ within us, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. And thereupon we ſhall “ have quickning, ſtrengthning, and ſin-mortifying “ influences. And laſtly, which comprehends all, that “ he will be our God, and we ſhall be his people,” Jer. xxxi. 33. Thus you ſee what a ſoul-profiting ordinance this is; to ſlight it then, muſt be a dreadful deſpiſing of your mercies, and a wronging of your own ſouls.

VI. Let me put you in mind with what gladneſs the Iſraelites of old did welcome the news of the celebration of their paſſover, in the room of which Chriſt hath inſtituted to us the Lord's ſupper. O what joy did it occaſion in Jeruſalem, when the trumpet was blown by the prieſt, to give intimation to the people of the day of the paſſover! How cheerful was the pſalmiſt's heart, when he ſaith, Pſal. lxxxi. 1. 3. *Make a joyful noiſe unto the God* *of Jacob: Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon, in the time appointed, on our ſolemn feaſt-day!* This feaſt was ſtill obſerved upon the fifteenth day after the firſt appearance of the new moon: And not having almanacks, as we have, to forewarn them of it, they uſed to ſend men to the top of the hill to watch for the appearance of the new-moon, who, aſſoon as they ſaw it, did run to tell the prieſt, that he might blow the trumpt, and give the welcome notice of it to the people, who received the news with univerſal joy. And have not we Chriſtians more cauſe to rejoice at the intimation of our goſpel-paſſover, in which we have Chriſt crucified, with all his benefits, far more evidently ſet forth before our eyes, than the people of the Jews had?

Alas! it is ſadly to be regreted, that in our age many people do oft hear the *ſilver trumpet* of the goſpel ſounding loud and long, calling them to the feaſt of the great king, but are not ſuitably affected therewith. Were this great goſpel ordinance, like the Jewiſh paſſover, to be celebrated but in one place in all the world; with what zeal and deſire would people flock thither, to behold it and partake of it? And, why ſhould we not come with the ſame affection and devotion now, when we have it celebrated in many places? Shall our hearts be evil, becauſe God is good? Shall we deſpiſe mercies when they are given in plenty? Surely the frequent occaſions we have of this bleſſed feaſt ſhould fill our hearts with the greateſt thankfulneſs to the bountiful maker of it, as they did the Chriſtians in the apoſtolic age.

But, beſides theſe arguments for the neceſſity of the duty of communicating, I ſhall in the next place ſhew the greatneſs of the ſin and danger of neglecting it.

I. You hereby are guilty of diſobedience to the command of the higheſt King and Sovereign, in the world; nay, of that King to whom you have ſworn allegiance in baptiſm. Is Jeſus Chriſt your ſovereign, and will you not obey his laws? Perhaps, if you neglected any other of his commands, ſuch as to pray, give alms, or to hear the word, for one Lord's day, conſcience would ſmite you for it; and have you no check for diſobeying this command which he gave in the moſt ſolemn manner; nay, a charge which our dying Teſtator gave us when his heart was full of ſorrow for us, and when he was going to underly God's wrath in the garden, be bound as a malefactor, and led away to the curſed tree for us? As the ſovereign Lord, who gave us this command, hath an undoubted right to our obedience, both by nature and dear purchaſe; ſo by the neglect of it, we are at once guilty both of deſpiſing the authority of juſt power, and the obligation of aſtoniſhing love.

II. What a ſin muſt it be to deſpiſe a ſacrament, which is one of the moſt ſolemn ordinances of this great King? You will readily acknowledge, that it is our indiſpenſible duty to receive the ſacrament of baptiſm, and that it is a great ſin to neglect it. And why do you not own the ſame of the Lord's ſupper, ſeeing the ſame Lord, who ſaid, Mat. xxviii. 19. “ Go teach and baptize all “ nations, ſaid alſo Luke xxii. 19. Do this in remembrance of me?” So that you have the ſame authority for both ſacraments. What abſurd inconſiſtency are ſome then guilty of, who think if their children die without baptiſm (tho' there be no ſinful neglect in the caſe) it endangers their ſalvation, but are not afraid themſelves to live and die without the Lord's ſupper, tho' their neglect be wilful and ſinful? Surely the practice of many, who overvalue one ſacrament, and under value another, is moſt unaccountable.

III. By declining to partake of the Lord's ſupper, you do upon the matter renounce your baptiſm (tho' the ſacrament you pretend to eſteem) ſeeing hereby you refuſe to be Chriſtians of free choice, and in effect ſay, you will not ſtand to theſe engagments your parents took on in your name, but will be at liberty to believe what you pleaſe, practiſe what you fancy, and ſerve the devil, the world and the fleſh as long as you think fit. You may profeſs the Chriſtian religion; but you are never Chriſtians by an act of your own until you preſent yourſelves at the Lord's table, and there perſonally own your baptiſmal engagements, and openly avouch the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be your Saviour, conſent to his religion, and dedicate yourſelves to his ſervice. Hearing of ſermons is not a ſufficient teſt of your doing ſo; for many do this from curioſity or cuſtom, more than any other principle; but the Lord's ſupper is the ordinance which Chriſt hath inſtituted chiefly for the foreſaid ends. How great then muſt the ſin and danger of wilful neglecting it be? In effect, it is no leſs than an open denying of Chriſt before men; and ſuch, he ſays, *he will deny before his Father in heaven.* I would have all who bear the name of Chriſtians to remember this; and, as they would not be reckoned among theſe that renounce Chriſt and his religion, let them not contemn that ordinance, which is the appointed badge of the Chriſtian profeſſion.

IV. To neglect the Lord's ſupper is a moſt unthankful requital of the kindneſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in coming to free us from the burdenſom ſervice of the legal ſacrifices, rites and inſtitutions. If we did rightly conſider what we are bound to by the ſubjection we owe to a ſovereign Lord, and by the gratitude we owe to a kind benefactor; tho' he had injoined a great number of coſtly and laborious rites, and had laid upon us a yoke more heavy than that of the Jewiſh ceremonies, yet in juſtice we ſhould have thought all but a ſmall homage to his greatneſs, and a ſmall acknowledgment of his infinite love. But now, when in his mercy he hath freed us from the yoke of ceremonial bondage, and, beſide baptiſm, hath appointed but this one ſacred rite for us to obſerve, and one that is neither coſtly nor troubleſome, but moſt eaſy and pleaſant; what monſters of ingratitude ſhall we make ourſelves, if we ſlight this his gracious inſtitution?

V. By neglecting this divine ordinance, you put greater contempt upon the true and living God, than heathens do upon their dumb idols. How great is the reſpect that ſome brutiſh idolaters ſhow to idols, who cut their fleſh, ſhed their blood, ſacrifice their children, and ſtick at nothing, tho' never ſo hard or painful, to teſtify their homage and obſequiouſneſs to their ugly deities! And, ſhall we Chriſtians, profeſſed ſervants of the glorious Son of God, our ſovereign Lord and Redeemer, neglect his eaſy inſtitution, and refuſe to pleaſe him in ſo ſmall a thing! Surely the barbarous ſavages will riſe up in judgment with many profeſſed Chriſtians, and condemn them for their diſobedience. You perhaps on ſome occaſions, will profeſs to pity the blind heathens and brutiſh Indians, who are ſtrangers to Chriſtianity, and live and die in darkneſs: But, have not we as much reaſon to pity you, who diſown and pour contempt on that holy religion you were educated in, and thereby put yourſelves in a condition worſe than theirs? For the Apoſtle tells us, that it is *better not to have known the way of truth, than after we have known it, to turn away from the holy commandment*, 2 Pet. ii. 21. And our Saviour ſaith that it will be more tolerable for the dark cities of "Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment," than it will be for the inlightned Capernaum and Bethſaida, Mat. xxi. 22. Your knowledge and profeſſion of the truths of the Chriſtian religion do very much aggravate your diſobedience to the laws and inſtitutions thereof You think their condition dreadful, that ſay there is no God, and no doubt it is ſo: But what better is your caſe; you acknowledge there is a God, but live as if you defied him, by open contemning and neglecting of his ordinances?

VI. By ſlighting this ordinance, you contemn the moſt advantageous offers that ever God made unto men. Here God the Father offereth to make over Chriſt to you, and all his purchaſe, and ſeal your right thereto. Particularly to give you his bleſſed Son, as your *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.* 1 Cor. i. 30. as your wiſdom, to enlighten you, and free you from ignorance; as your righteouſneſs, to juſtify you, and free you from the guilt of ſin; as your ſanctification, to make you holy, and free you from the reigning power and pollution of ſin; as your redemption, to reſtore you to the liberty of the ſons of God, bring you to the inheritance, and free you eternally from ſin and ſatan, hell and wrath. Now, O ſinner, if thou declineſt to come here and take Chriſt as thy wiſdom, how fooliſh and ignorant muſt thou ſtill remain? If thou refuſe Chriſt as thy righteouſneſs, how naked and guilty will thy ſoul be? If thou refuſe Chriſt as thy ſanctification, how vile and polluted muſt thou ſtill continue? If thou refuſe Chriſt as thy redemption, who will redeem thee from the wrath to come?

Conſider alſo the near and happy relations which Jeſus Chriſt himſelf offereth to ſtand in to theſe who cordially receive him in this ordinance; ſuch as that of a maſter, a father, a captain, a ſhepherd, a bridegroom and huſband. And, how great muſt our ſin and danger be, if we ſlight ſuch kind offers? If you refuſe Chriſt as a maſter now, will he not refuſe to own you as a ſervant in the great day? If you refuſe him as a captain, will he not reject you as one of his ſoldiers? If you refuſe him as a ſhepherd, will he not deny you as one of his ſheep? If you refuſe him as a bridegroom and huſband, will he not diſown you as his bride and ſpouſe? And, if Chriſt thus diſown you at the great day, how fearful will your condition be for ever?

VII. Neglecting this feaſt of memorial is a thing moſt unreaſonable in itſelf, as being againſt all the rules of humanity and gratitude. Surely it is moſt agreeable to reaſon and equity, that all Chriſtians ſhould love their Redeemer and benefactor, and keep up the memorial of his great adventures for ranſoming their ſouls. Is it not a moſt reaſonable demand, and a very ſmall return he requires of you for all his love, only *eat and drink in remembrance of me?* It is not, Go to a ſcaffold; but, Go to a well-covered table: It is not to bleed and burn, but to eat and drink: It is not to feed on the bread of affliction, or water of adverſity, but bread that ſtrengthens the heart, and wine that chears the drooping ſpirit; delicious fare, which your Saviour hath bleſſed and ſweetned for you. Now, muſt it not be againſt all reaſon to refuſe this agreeable demand, in order to preſerve the memory of the love of your *incomparable Benefactor*, and the ſufferings of your *dying Friend* which he patiently endured for you?

Ingrateful world! Can ye not endure to think on that, which Chriſt refuſed not to endure for you? Did he leave the glory of his Father, to be cloathed with your nature, and to dwell in a fleſhly cottage? Did he live a life of ſorrows and ſufferings, and at laſt undergo a ſhameful, painful and curſed death? Did he riſe again, and aſcend on high to prepare manſions, and take poſſeſſion of them for you? Doth he there abide to agent and plead your cauſe with God? And, do ye believe that he is ſhortly to come again to receive you to himſelf? And, will ye not for a ſhort while here keep up the remembrance of his love? O, did Chriſt drink vinegar on the croſs for you, yea, vinegar made bitter, tart and poiſonable with your ſins? And will ye not drink wine at his table, that is ſweetned and made delicious with the choice bleſſings of his love, and conſolations of his Spirit? Did he drink a cup of wrath for you, and will ye not drink a cup of bleſſing for him, nay, for yourſelves? For the advantage is only yours.

O Chriſtians, had we the due impreſſions of the amazing goodneſs and incomparable love of our matchleſs Redeemer, the remembrance whereof he injoins us to keep up in this ordinance; we would ſay, Lord, what is ſufficient to be done in memory of this love? Every one of our hearts would echo back at Chriſt's call, *Do this in remembrance of me*: *Do this!* Lord, what is it that I would not do for thy ſake? Glorious Jeſus, didſt thou paſs by the angels, and wouldſt have no nature but mine? I'll then ſtop mine ears againſt the ſolicitations of the world, and have no will but thine. *Remember thee!* Whom ſhall I remember, if I forget thee? *If I forget thee*, O my Saviour, *let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; If I remember not thee, let my right-hand forget her cunning.* Lord, I cannot but bluſh when I think that I ſhould need any *memento* or token, to keep up the remembrance of thee: Ah! ſhall the trifles of the world find room enough in my heart and memory, and my Redeemer's love have ſcarce any place there? Lord, hadſt thou required the deareſt of my blood and choiceſt of my ſubſtance to be offered thee in acknowledgment of it, yea, hadſt thou demanded my life, I owe it to thee, nay, a thouſand lives, if I had them: And, ſhall I not chearfully give thee up my memory and thoughts when thou art pleaſed to aſk them?

O then, if there be any obligations in the higheſt authority, any allurements in the ſweeteſt love, any reality in your profeſſed ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt, give him this proof of it, cheerfully obey his dying charge, meet with his people, and remember his love at his feaſt of memorial, and join hymns of praiſe therewith. O pleaſe him in this ſo eaſy and ſo ſmall a requeſt.

VIII. Finally, I would have you to remember how provoking the neglect of this ordinance is to him that inſtituted it. You are guilty of deſpiſing the greateſt preparation which the King of kings makes for his ſubjects: for in this ordinance he doth, as it were, kill the fatted calf, and furniſh his table with the choiceſt rarities of heaven, and ſend forth his ſervants to invite us ſaying *I have prepared my ſupper, come eat of my bread, and drink of my wine which I have mingled; all things are ready, come to the marriage.* So great and coſtly is this feaſt, that it coſt the maker of it his own life to prepare it. *Pardon of ſin, peace with God, and communion with him*, which are the dainties here ſet before you, coſt Jeſus Chriſt no leſs than his life to purchaſe them for you. And, do you think this glorious King can take it well at your hands, if you make light of this rare and coſtly feaſt, and ſlight all the preparation he hath made for you? Can you ever expect to enjoy communion with him in heaven, if you ſlight the offer of communion with him upon the earth? Nay, you provoke him to cut you off eternally from his preſence: For, as of old the Lord threatned cutting off to the ſoul of him that neglected to keep the paſſover, becauſe he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed ſeaſon, Num. ix. 13. ſo he threatens the ſame to theſe who ſhould ſlight the goſpel feaſts typified thereby, Zech. xiv. 16. 17. 18. Luke xiv. 24. We ſee how his wrath was kindled againſt thoſe that neglected to come to the marriage of the king's ſon, and how ſeverely he puniſhed them for it, Mat. xxii. 5. 7. *They made light of it, and went there ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandiſe*, But, when the king heard thereof he was wroth, and *he ſent forth armies and deſtroyed theſe murderers, and burnt up their city*. He reckons your *eating not*, no leſs ſin than *eating irreverently*; for, as by this your are guilty of profaning the Lord's body, ſo by the other you are guilty of deſpiſing it, and preferring your luſts before him, which is a crime as heinous.

Objections Anſwered.

HERE it may be proper to anſwer ſome objections which are made againſt partaking of the Lord's ſupper, whether by the profane, ſlothful, or ſcrupulous.

Obj. I. Some profane perſons think meanly of this ordinance, and hence they neglect it, *What needs ſo much noiſe* (think they) *about this matter? It is but eating a little bread, and drinking a ſmall portion of wine; what efficacy can there be in that action?*

Anſ. This ordinance is of divine authority, and not appointed by men like ourſelves. It hath the ſtamp of our Lord's inſtitution, which ſhould make it to be highly valued by all Chriſtians; For, as he hath wiſely inſtituted it for moſt important ends and uſes, ſo he will certainly make it effectual unto theſe ends. A little parchment, with ink and wax upon it, is in itſelf a ſmall thing; yet, being of legal authority and inſtitution among men, it ſerveth to convey a right and tittle to a great inheritance, and ſo it becometh highly valuable. The brazen ſerpent, that was lift upon a pole for healing the Iſraelites, was mean to the outward view; but being of God's appointment, it was effectual for healing, and therefore none would deſpiſe it. So the elements in this ſacrament, however common or mean in themſelves, yet being of God's appointment, and conſecrated for ſacred uſes, they are powerful and efficacious to the believing receiver, for the great ends of their inſtitution.

Obj. II. *We may remember Chriſt in the word; and what need is their for doing it in the ſacrament?*

Anſ. 1ſt, It is abominable preſumption to think ourſelves wiſer than Jeſus Chriſt, who is the *Wiſdom of the Father*. Hath he thought this ordinance needful; and, will any man judge it needleſs?

2dly, The word only preſents Chriſt unto the ear, but the Lord's ſupper ſets forth a crucified Chriſt unto the eye.

3dly, There is more than a ſimple remembering of Chriſt required in the Lord's ſupper; there is alſo a renewing of baptiſmal engagements, and a ratifying our covenant with God. And beſides, our Lord hath reſerved ſome ſpecial bleſſings and communications to this ordinance, which are nowiſe to be undervalued or ſlighted.

Obj. III. *It is hard to be at ſo much pains and to employ ſo much time in meditation, examination, prayer, &c. as is requiſite to prepare for communicating.*

Anſ. 1ſt, There are many who do not grudge to be at much pains and travel, and frequently to hazard their lives both by ſea and land, for a little temporal gain, and, will you grudge ſome pains to prepare for this ordinance, which ſeals a right to the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and by means whereof you might, thro' the divine bleſſing, be enabled to ſubdue your ſins, reform your lives, grow in grace, and be made ready for death and judgment? Is not this ſpiritual gain better than the gain of a whole world?

2dly, Are there not many who throw away their hours in needleſs pleaſures and paſtimes? And, with what face can ſuch pretend they have not time to examine themſelves, and prepare for this bleſſed ordinance? What are theſe tranſient pleaſures of time you are ſo fond of to the comfortable views of an intereſt in Chriſt, and of living with him throughout eternity, which may be got at his table?

3dly, Will you be at no pains to pleaſe that King and Sovereign to whom you have ſworn allegiance, or to obey the command and dying charge of your great Maſter and Saviour? That vile impoſtor, Mahomet, forbade his diſciples to drink wine; and this command hath been religiouſly obſerved among them: And, ſhall our renowned Saviour, who is Lord of angels, and ſon of the moſt high God, injoin us the uſe of the wine in the ſacrament; and, will any of his diſciples adventure to diſobey him? *Tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſkelon.* Let not this be told among Turks, Jews, Infidels, Atheiſts, and the reſt of the adverſaries of the Chriſtian religion, leſt they ſhould inſult and triumph.

4thly, Our Lord Jeſus had a thouſand more difficulties, and diſcouragements in the work of our redemption, and yet he did not ſhrink back, as you do from communicating. He never objected, "The ſea is deep, I cannot wade it; the croſs is heavy, I cannot bear it; the cup is bitter, I cannot drink it; the wrath is terrible, I cannot endure it." He did not plead, tho' he had cauſe, The work is hard, it will coſt me dear; and I ſhall meet with an unthankful world, that will ſlight my love, refuſe my offers, and deſpiſe my inſtitutions. No he overlooked all that, and went cheerfully through his ſufferings: "With deſire have I deſired (ſaith he) to eat this paſſover, the cup that the Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it? When the Father called him to drink the very dregs of the cup of trembling for you, he readily anſwered, *Lo I come, I delight to do thy will.* But when he calls you to take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord; what grudging and backdrawing is there with you! Had Chriſt ſo great deſire after the bitter cup of God's wrath on your account; and have you no deſire after the cup of bleſſing in the ſacrament? Did he go ſo cheerfully to die for you; and, are you unwilling to go and feaſt with him? *Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens,* at this ingratitude!

How wretched and perverſe a creature is man! Still he would be flying in the face of God's authority: For, when God ſaid to him, *Eat not of this forbidden fruit;* then he will needs eat, tho' it ruin him. But when God ſaith, *Eat of this bread*; he is backward to do it, tho' it be for his eternal welfare. O how long doth a patient and merciful God bear with us!

Obj. IV. *I am ſo ſtated with my worldly buſineſs, that I cannot get time to prepare myſelf in ſecret, and give ſuch attendance in public as is needful, and ſo I cannot come.*

Anſ. 1ſt, Doth not your buſineſs afford you time to eat, drink and ſleep, and converſe with unprofitable company; and, can you find no time to converſe with God in his ordinances, or to prepare for meeting and dwelling with God throughout eternity?

2dly, Can you have any greater, any better buſineſs in the world, than to remember the love of a dying Saviour to put your ſouls in order to meet with him at his table, and there to ſeal a covenant with him, and receive pledges from him of his pardoning and redeeming love? Is there any buſineſs upon earth ſo preferable to this?

3dly, When ſickneſs and death come, you muſt find time to attend them whether you will or not; all your buſineſs muſt of neceſſity give place to them. And, muſt you find time to be ſick and die, how ſoon the ſummons cometh; and will you not find time in your health to prepare for ſickneſs and death before they come? Now, if you would take time duly to prepare for the Lord's ſupper, you ſhould not be found unprepared for death; for the ſame preparation is needful for both.

Obj. V. *But,* ſay ſome, *we are not fit for the Lord's table,* (and perhaps it is very true) *Why? We have but looſe lives and converſations, there is ſome bad company we cannot be free of, ſome ſins we cannot get left; and ſo we cannot come to the Lord's table.*

Anſ. 1ſt, God will ſurely look upon it as no other than a mocking of him, to ſay, you are not dreſſed for this feaſt, when indeed you never went about to make yourſelves ready. Nay, he will look upon it as the moſt heinous wickedneſs, for you to go on wilfully in your ſins and wicked courſes, and then to make your ſins an excuſe for the neglect of theſe duties he commands you.

2dly, If you ſay, you are not fit for the Lord's ſupper here; you muſt confeſs you are leſs fit for the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb above. And, how can you live one day contentedly in that condition you dare not venture to die in; or, if you die in it, you muſt be eternally excluded from heaven? Conſider this, O profane ſinner, although you may now ſit Chriſt's charming call to come to his table and remember him, you cannot ſit his alarming call to come to his tribunal to anſwer before him. And, how can you think to look upon that face with comfort at that day, which now you have no pleaſure to behold in the ſymbols of bread and wine?

3dly, Let me aſk thee, O profane man, do you intend to repent and leave your ſins; or do you not? If you do not intend it, then it is in vain to treat with you, ſeeing you wilfully make choice of everlaſting burnings. But there are few ſo geaceleſs and wicked, but will ſay they have intentions to do it. Well, if your intentions be hearty and ſincere, ſurely you will put them ſpeedily in execution: And, if you do this, your objection evaniſheth; your bad life can no longer hinder you from this ordinance, ſeeing all penitent reforming ſinners are welcome to Chriſt, and to his table alſo, whatever their former lives have been.

Obj. VI. *But* (ſaith one) *I am not in charity with my neighbours; I am at variance with ſuch a perſon that hath injured me; and ſo I cannot come to the Lord's table.*

Anſ. 1ſt, I do acknowledge, the want of love to our neighbours, and the entertaining of angry ſtrife and diſcord with them, do very much diſcompoſe and unfit us for approaching to this feaſt of love; and therefore we ſhould uſe all endeavours to remove theſe impediments before-hand.

2dly, Suppoſe thy neighbour hath done thee wrong, and given you juſt ground of diſpleaſure with him; yet you ought to uſe endeavours to get the difference removed by ſeeking to convince him of his fault, and ſhewing your readineſs to forgive him, and be reconciled with him.

3dly, Suppoſe thy neighbour, after all Chriſtian methods taken with him, perſiſts in his injuries without repentance or reparation; it is no uncharitableneſs to be diſpleaſed with him, if thy anger keep within juſt bounds, and thou doſt not hate his perſon, or ſtudy revenge againſt him. The Apoſtle ſaith, Eph. iv. 26. *Be angry and ſin not,* whence we ſee, that anger may be ſeparated from ſin. Now, what is not ſin, doth not make us unfit for this holy ordinance. A man may be innocently angry, when he is juſtly diſpleaſed with another both for offending God and himſelf; but in the mean time, is ſo far from deſiring revenge or ſeeking his hurt, that he pities and prays for the injurious perſon, and is ready to render good for evil. Now, when this is the caſe, as our anger or diſpleaſure doth not indiſpoſe us for the ſacrament, ſo neither ſhould our neighbour's unchriſtian behaviour and backwardneſs to reconciliation deter us from our duty, or tempt us to deprive ourſelves of the benefit of this ordinance.

4thly, But if you be of the number of theſe who keep up quarrels with your neighbours, are of unforgiving and revengeful ſpirits; you are altogether unfit for this ordinance, and ſhould tremble to approach it in ſuch a condition; ſeeing in effect you renounce Chriſt as a Saviour, reject his example, and deſpiſe his precepts. You cannot pray as he directs, *forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us;* for this were no other than a fearful imprecation of wrath againſt yourſelves. Would you then have forgiveneſs of the injuries you have done to God; would you have this bleſſing ſealed to you in the ſacrament, and openly declared at the great day? Then be ready to forgive theſe that wrong you, lay aſide quarrels, abhor revenge, let not the ſun go down upon your wrath, ſeek peace and friendſhip with all. Remember, that theſe who harbour wrath and malice in their hearts, are as unfit to appear at God's tribunal, as at his table.

Obj. VII. *Tho' we be not in caſe for this, yet we may reſolve to prepare and go to the next communion.*

Anſ. 1ſt, All delays in well doing are highly dangerous, and particularly in the preſent caſe. For, firſt, your lives are wholly uncertain, you may not live to ſee another communion. Many were alive at the laſt communion, that are now dead, and fixed in their everlaſting lot; and many now living will, in all likelyhood, be in the ſame ſtate before the next communion; and you know not but you may be among them. And, if ſo, conſider what ſtinging reflections the ſlighters of Chriſt and his inſtitutions will have through eternity; therefore neglect not the preſent opportunity.

2*dly*, Tho' God ſhould ſpare you to ſee another occaſion of this ſort, what ground have you to think you ſhall be more willing or fit to communicate then, than at preſent? Do you not know that by delays the heart is ſtill the more hardned, and the habits of ſin the more ſtrengthned? And, if you refuſe to hearken to God's call now, he may refuſe to hear your cry afterward, Zech. vii. 13.

Obj. VIII. But, ſay ſome ſcrupulous and doubting ſouls, *this is an awful and tremenduous ordinance; and it is not ſafe for ſuch poor, unworthy and unprepared creatures as we are to middle with it.*

Anſ. 1*ſt*, It is very ordinary for people to run into extremes about this ordinance. Either they entertain too low an opinion, or elſe they have too frighful thoughts of it: And both theſe are to be equally guarded againſt. Remember, that the ſacrament was not inſtituted to terrify believers, but to bring them into converſe and familiarity with their Lord and Saviour, and to give them the tokens and intimations of his love. And, why ſhould a feaſt of love be terrible to us?

2*dly*, Every man in a legal ſenſe is unworthy to approach to his holy table: We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteouſneſs is as filthy rags before God. But he is graciouſly pleaſed to accept of them who abhor themſelves for their pollution, and ſeek ſhelter under the covert of Chriſt's righteouſneſs.

3*dly*, How long will ye make uſe of this excuſe of unfitneſs and unpreparedneſs? Do ye intend to do it all your days? Or, will it be of any uſe to you when you are called to die? When God commands you to die, will you have confidence to ſay, Lord, I cannot obey at this time, for I am not prepared? No, no; it would be in vain then to hang back, ſeeing death will not ſpare when it gets commiſſion, whether prepared, or unprepared. Would you not therefore in ſuch a caſe ſet about immediate preparation, and do what you are able to get yourſelves prepared for death? So do in this caſe: When Chriſt commands you to come to his table, tho' matters be ſadly out of order with you, yet ſet about the work in obedience to his command, prepare what ye are able, and look to him for ſtrength, who pities the weak, and accepts of ſincere mints at duty.

Obj. IX. *But* (ſome may inſiſt to ſay) *we are unworthy; for we have not only many defects in our lives, but alſo many inward diſtempers, heart-plagues, hardneſs, deadneſs, darkneſs, prevailing corruptions,* &c.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, No wonder you complain of many diſtempers, when you refuſe the means of healing. May not God look upon it as diſſimulation, to complain of the hardneſs of your heart, while you come not to apply the blood of Chriſt to ſoften it; or of the prevailing of your corruptions, while you come not to Chriſt's croſs to ſubdue them. No wonder that God withdraw from your ſouls when you withdraw from your duty. No wonder you are ſtrangers to ſpiritual joy, when you will not come to draw water out of the wells of ſalvation. No wonder you complain of the weakneſs of grace, when you will not make uſe of the means for ſtrengthning it. Many have found at this ordinance a cure for all their diſeaſes, a ſupply to all their wants, and an anſwer to all their complaints.

2*dly*, Study to do your part by ſerious preparation, and you may expect God will not fail to do his part: Spread out your ſores and diſeaſes before the great Phyſician, and look unto him for healing; preſs through all doubts and diſcouragements towards him, believing you ſhall be healed if you can but touch the border of his garment. If you ſincerely, heartily and impartially repent of all known ſins, and rely on Jeſus Chriſt for mercy and pardon, you have no reaſon to queſtion but you ſhall be welcome gueſts at the Lord's table, altho' you find in your hearts many infirmities and plagues, and in your lives many defects and ſhort-comings.

Obj. X. *But* (ſay ſome) *that word* damnation *frights us,* 1 Cor. xi. 29. *It is terrible to eat and drink damnation to ourſelves, as unworthy communicants do.*

Anſ. It is very true, unworthy communicants are liable to damnation; but ſo alſo are all other ſinners: Whoſoever hears the word unworthily, or prays unworthily, incurs the peril of damnation, as well as he that communicates unworthily; and yet you do not think you ought to deſiſt from hearing or praying on that account, and why only from communicating? Every ſin indeed is damning in its own nature, and ſo is unworthy receiving in a ſpecial manner: But ſincere repenting and believing in Chriſt is an expedient againſt this as well as other ſins; for *the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſins.*

Obj. XI. *We are afraid* (ſay ſome) *to come and enter into covenant with God, and take on vows at the Lord's table leſt we do not keep them, but fall again into new ſins, and ſo increaſe our guilt.*

Anſ. 1*ſt*, If it were left as a matter of indifference to come to or abſent yourſelves from the Lord's table as you pleaſed, your objection might be pertinent; but remember, this is a duty injoined under the higheſt pains. You ſee what fearful deſtruction came upon them that refuſed to come to the marriage ſupper, Mat. xxii. 7.

2*dly*, It is good always to be jealous of ourſelves; for we have good reaſon for it, conſidering the deceitfulneſs of our hearts. But this ſhould not keep us from the ordinance, or make us to neglect our duty.

3*dly*, Breach of vows, or ſins committed after a ſacrament, tho' they be of greater guilt than other ſins, yet we are not to judge them unpardonable; for, who is it that *liveth and ſinneth not?* Such a notion perhaps hath poſſeſſed the ignorant Muſcovites, who endeavour to fall aſleep as ſoon as they have received the ſacrament to prevent by that means the occaſion of ſin.

4*thly*, There is ground to ſuſpect that this excuſe or pretence is not real with many; but rather that they are unwilling to come under new bonds and engagments to a holy life. They entertain ſome affection to their old ſins, and are not willing to renounce them altogether, and prepare ſincerely for this holy ordinance.

5*thly*, If you be ſo much afraid of ſin, and of ſinning after the ſacrament; why are you not afraid of this ſin of neglecting the ſacrament, which I ſhewed before to be very heinous? Now, why do you live in this ſin ſo quietly? Surely, if you were afraid of all ſin, you would be afraid of this heinous ſin too; and ſo would make conſcience of preparing yourſelves for the Lord's table, that you might be preſerved from the guilt of ſlighting this ſolemn ordinance.

Laſtly, Conſider, you are not to vow and engage here in your own ſtrength, but in the ſtrength of the Lord Jeſus; you are to truſt and rely upon him, *who performeth all things for us,* Pſal. lviii. 2. for he is become ſurety for our duty, as well as for our debt. Now, whatever be or own weakneſs, we ſhould not ſcruple to engage with ſuch an able ſurety.

DIRECT. III. *Believe and be perſuaded, that communicating is not only a duty, but that it is a duty incumbent upon you to communicate frequently.*

BAptiſm being a ſacrament appointed for the initiation and implantation of believers into the church, it is to be received but once by the ſame perſon, and not to be reiterated: But the Lord's ſupper being a ſacrament inſtituted for the nutrition, increment and growth of believers, it is often to be received and repeated by them. And this may be confirmed by many reaſons;

I. "Frequent partaking of the Lord's ſupper is injoined by the ſame authority which inſtituted it." For Chriſt tells us, that we are not only to eat of this bread and drink of this cup, but we are to do it *often*; as is recited by the apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xi. 25. "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. *And again*, *Ver.* 26. As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come." Now, when our Lord doth expreſly command the duty in theſe words, *Do this in remembrance of me*; and doth twice over annex the word OFTEN as neceſſary in the doing of it; it is all one as if he had ſaid, *Do this often in remembrance of me.* So that for Chriſtians to communicate ſeldom, is diſobedience to Chriſt, and a contempt of Divine authority: For our Redeemer is God, and we are to look upon his commands as the ſame with the commands of God the Father, ſeeing he approved of our Mediator and of every thing he did. Had not his inſtitutions been agreeable to his Father's will, he had not been ſo welcomed at his return to heaven, and advanced to ſuch royal dignity to ſit upon his throne of glory.

II. "In obedience to Chriſt's authority, the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians did frequently partake of the Lord's ſupper;" yea, it was their ordinary practice every Lord's day, as is evident from Acts xx. 7. "And upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them." The Chriſtians there are brought in as meeting together for partaking of the ſacrament (which is oft expreſſed by breaking of bread) without any previous warning becauſe it was their ordinary cuſtom ſo to do. And this practice was kept up in the church for ſeveral centuries after the apoſtles death as is teſtified by the hiſtorians and fathers of the ancient church. And, from their practice of conſtant breaking of bread every Lord's day, the day was anciently called *Dies panis*, *Auguſt. Epiſt.* 118. And this primitive practice (according to ſome) was grounded upon the word, Ezek. xliii. 27. "And when theſe days are expired, it ſhall be on the eighth day and ſo foreward, the prieſts ſhall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings, and I will accept you, ſaith the Lord God." Now, this viſion containing a prophetical deſcpription of the goſpel times, and of the ceaſing of the ceremonial law for daily-ſacrifices, by the *eighth day* they underſtand the Lord's day, as being the *eighth day* following upon the 7th, *viz. the Jewiſh ſabbath*, in room whereof it was to ſucceed. By burnt-offerings, the Lord's ſupper, as being the remembrance of the great burnt-offering whereby our peace was made. By peace-offerings, prayer and thankſgiving, which are called ſacrifices, Heb. xiii. 15. and are the proper work of every Lord's day. The primitive Chriſtians were peculiarly fond of the Lord's ſupper; when they had the opportunity of a public aſſembly tho' upon a week-day (as ſeverals do obſerve from Acts ii. 46.) they could not think of parting till they had celebrated the memorials of Chriſt's dying love. They reckoned this piece of worſhip a principal part of the Chriſtian religion which in a manner doth comprehend all other parts of it, and is an *Epitome* of the whole. they accounted it a chief means of conveying to them the benefits of their Redeemer's death. And they would not ſlight the occaſion of taking this proviſion and *viaticum* in theſe ſtormy times, when they knew not but they might be ſnatched away by the fury of perſecutors before the next day of public meeting.

III. *The Lord's ſupper was appointed for the commemoration of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt, and of his love to us manifeſted therein*; and therefore we ought frequently to celebrate it for that end. Tho' gratitude to a merciful God, and love to him that loved us, and waſhed us in his blood, ſhould engage us conſtantly to remember redeeming love: yet, alas! We are naturally unmindful of God, ungrateful to Chriſt our Saviour, and apt to forget his matchleſs love: And therefore we frequently need this help (which he of purpoſe hath inſtituted) to renew our remembrance of him. Say not, you can remember Chriſt frequently without this; for this were to make yourſelves wiſer than the inſtituter of this ordinance. Beſides, may not experience tell you what faint thoughts and languid remembrance you ordinarily have of him, notwithſtanding of the word read and preached, until this ſolemn ordinance doth return and revive the memory of his love, and fix your thoughts more ſolemnly upon him. Ah! the body of death doth hinder us from remembring the Lord of life. It is not ſufficient to commemorate his love once a year; there ought to be a conſtant and habitual remembring of our Redeemer's death, and this habit muſt be acquired by frequent and reiterated acts of communicating. But ſuppoſing we would remember him without this, yet ſurely it would be baſe ingratitude to neglect to remember him in his own method, and by the means of his own chuſing, when he might have put far harder conditions upon us.

IV. *Chriſt hath appointed this ſacrament as a ſpiritual meal for the nouriſhment and ſtrength of his people, and for the growth and increaſe of their graces*: And therefore it ought to be frequently received. Meals for the nouriſhment of our bodies muſt be often repeated, becauſe of the frequent recurring of our needs; we are all ſo ſenſible of it, that we do not refuſe to come frequently to our ſtated meals: And tho' it be not told us how often we ſhould eat and drink, yet our craving appetites, and the ſenſe of our want of food and ſtrength, are ſufficient to direct in this matter. And, ſhould not the ſenſe of our ſouls need of ſpiritual food and ſtrength direct us to frequency in communicating? We are in a journey, and we need ſtrength to go foreward. We are weak of ourſelves, and the beſt are liable to frequent decays of grace, and we have all need of frequent ſupplies of ſtrength to enable us to perform duties, bear croſſes, reſiſt enemies, and beat down luſts: And conſequently we have frequent need of this quickning, reſtoring and ſtrengthning meal, which Chriſt hath graciouſly provided for us in this ordinance. It is hereby that faith is ſtrengthned, repentance renewed, love inflamed, deſire ſharpned, and the ſoul encouraged and confirmed in the ways of God.

V. *This ordinance was inſtituted for bringing us to near communion with God;* and therefore ſhould be frequently celebrated and attended by us. Hence it is that we call it the communion, according to that word, 1 Cor. x. 16. And as the Apoſtle tells us there, Ver. 19. 20. that the partaking of things ſacrificed to idols, was a fellowſhip with devils; ſo here the partaking of that which was ſacrificed to God, is a fellowſhip with God. In this ordinance there is more communion to be had with God, than in any other; more than in prayer or praiſe: For we have not ſo near communion with a prince or great man by petitioning him, or returning him thanks for a favour received, as we have by ſitting with him at his table, and partaking of the ſame bread, and the ſame cup with him. It is here that believers ſit, feaſt and converſe familiarly with Jeſus Chriſt. Chriſt was *made known to the diſciples in the breaking of bread*,, tho' they knew him not before in the opening of the ſcriptures, Luke xxiv. 30. 31. Now if it be our duty to ſeek frequent communion and converſe with God, and frequent views and diſcoveries of Jeſus Chriſt; then ſurely it is our duty to make frequent approaches to the Lord's table. Do we think that we can too oft behold a crucified Jeſus? Can we too oft claſp about our bleeding high Prieſt? Can we too oft hear the muſic of his voice, or ſee the beauty of his face? Surely, if we love him, we will deſire frequently to be in theſe ways where we may meet with him.

VI. *This ſacrament is an excellent mean for the weakning of ſin, and keeping it under;* and therefore we ſhould frequently attend it. The ſoul is moſt animated and reſolved againſt ſin, when it ſees God's wrath and indignation manifeſted againſt it: Now, where can we behold this ſo well as in this ordinance, which repreſents the dreadful agonies and ſufferings of Chriſt our ſurety? Here we may ſee Chriſt ſacrificed to juſtice, overwhelmed with blood, made a curſe, and bearing all that wrath and vengeance which the law threatned for ſin. The ſouls looking upon Chriſt here, doth open the ſpring of ſorrow for ſin, Zech. xii. 10. Our frequent approaches to a wounded Saviour here, do kindle frequent reſolutions againſt ſin that pierced him, and make us look and cry to him for grace to ſubdue it. Now, this is what we are conſtantly needing: For there is ſtill a root of bitterneſs in us, always ſprouting up; but frequent approaches to this ordinance do contribute to curb and crop it. Sins and luſts of themſelves are apt to revive and gather ſtrength, but the ſacramental cup is poiſon to them. Do you think then, that we can too oft take this cup into our hands, or put our hands into Chriſt's wounds, or take a view of the ſin-killing blood?

VII. *This ordinance is a choice mean for ſtrengthning our faith in the promiſes, and confirming us in the ſenſe of Chriſt's love;* and therefore it ſhould be frequently celebrated. It was upon this account, that ſo great joy and gladneſs did attend the keeping of the paſſover of old, 2 Chron. xxx. 21. 26. It was the frequent breaking of bread, that made the primitive Chriſtians to continue in their gladneſs of heart, Acts ii. 46. And no wonder a man's heart be glad, and be encouraged to go on his way rejoicing, when he gets a new ſeal of his pardon and peace with God. We frequently contract guilt, and thereby blot our evidences and diſturb our peace; and therefore we need to come frequently to this ordinance to get the blood of ſprinkling applied, for removing our guilt, clearing our evidences, ſealing our peace, and renewing our joy. It is matter of joy to ſee the rainbow appearing frequently in the clouds, as a ſign of God's minding his covenant, and ſecuring the world againſt a deſtroying deluge: In like manner it ſhould rejoice the heart, and ſtrengthen faith, frequently to behold this ſacrament, which (like the rainbow in the clouds) is a ſign of God's ſecuring the believing world againſt the overflowing flood of God's wrath.

VIII. *We need frequently the influences of the holy Spirit,* and therefore ſhould come frequently to this ordinance. For in this ſacrament it is moſt likely that the Spirit will work and exert himſelf; when the office of the Spirit and end of the inſtitutions do meet and agree in one. The office of the Spirit is to bring things to our remembrance, and the chief deſign of this ordinance is to bring a crucified Jeſus and his love and ſufferings to remembrance; now, ſurely it is the moſt likely time for the holy Spirit to come and exerciſe his bleſſed function, and join in with the end of the ſacrament. Hither then ſhould becalmed ſouls frequently repair, and wait for the Spirit's gales.

I might add many other arguments; but ſurely, if we had a due ſenſe of our ſouls neceſſities, we ſhould need no more to convince us of the neceſſity of frequent communicating. Do not we feel our needs frequently recurring, our graces languiſhing, faith weakning, love cooling, affections turning dead? Are we not apt frequently to grow cold and formal in hearing and praying, yea, dull and lukewarm in all our performances? And, have we not frequent need of this reviving and enlivening ordinance to recruit us with new ſtrength and quickning? But alas! we have little ſenſe of our ſouls wants, and little ſenſe of our Saviour's love; otherwiſe we would not be ſo unwilling frequently to remember ſuch an incomparable Friend and Benefactor, who took our ſins upon himſelf, and caſt upon us the robe of his righteouſneſs. Did primitive Chriſtians think once a week little enough to commemorate his love; and, ſhall modern Chriſtians reckon once a year ſufficient? Is this our kindneſs to the always lovely and loving Jeſus? O will we not remember him frequently, who remembers believers perpetually?

Objections anſwered.

OBJ. I. BUT (ſay ſome) *the zeal and devotion of the apoſtolic age is now gone; and Chriſtians are become more careleſs and formal in religious duties than in thoſe days, and ſo are unfit for frequent partaking of this ſolemn ordinance.*

Anſ. 1ſt. I grant indeed the firſt Chriſtians were animated with more life and love, and were habitually in a better frame for this love-feaſt, than alas the moſt of us are: Yet I am perſuaded you will not deny but we are under the ſame obligations of love and gratitude to our dying Redeemer that they were, and have as much need of the frequent application of his blood, and of a confirmed intereſt in his meritorious death, as they had. And, ſeeing our obligations and exigencies are the ſame, our differing ſo widely from their practice cannot be juſtified.

2dly, The ancient church did follow the example of the

Apoſtolic age, in communicating generally every Lord's day, for ſeveral hundreds of years after the Apoſtles days; as might be made appear by many quotations (if it were needful) out of the hiſtories and writings of *Euſebius, Socrates, Cyprian, Chryſoſtom, Ambroſe, Auguſtine*, and many others of the ancient fathers. As the blood of Chriſt is as freſh and efficatious in the preſent, as the firſt centuries of the church; ſo it ſhould be as dear and precious to Chriſtians in this, as any former age.

3dly, It is moſt ſad that Chriſtians ſhould be ſo eaſy under the decay of piety and love to a crucified Jeſus, that is ſo viſible in theſe latter days. Should not the conſideration hereof be matter of bitter lamentation and complaint to all the lovers of Chriſt, and put us inceſſantly to cry to heaven, *Wilt thou not receive us again? Renew our days as of old.*

4thly, Is there not ground to think that the decay of piety and Chriſtian love, in our days, is much owing to the neglect and unfrequent uſe of this ſoul quickning ordinance? No wonder that our hearts turn hard, when we ſo ſeldom have recourſe to Chriſt's blood for ſoftning them; that our graces grow weak and withered, when we ſo little uſe Chriſt's appointed means for cheriſhing and ſtrengthning them; and that we have but little of the ſmiles of his face, when we ſo little regard his dying words. Frequent communicating in Chriſt's own way and method, might be a mean (thro' his bleſſing) to revive decayed religion, to keep ſin under conſtant rebukes and diſgrace, and Chriſt in continual eſteem and reſpect among us. This might contribute to cure and prevent that formality in duty, careleſneſs of ſpirit, and forgetfulneſs of Chriſt, which ſo wofully prevails in our land.

Obj. II. *If we communicate as often as you urge us, we are afraid frequency will breed formality in this duty.*

Anſ. 1ſt, The Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians found no ſuch bad effect of their frequent partaking; but were farther from formality, and far more ſerious, fervent and ſpiritual in this duty, than theſe Chriſtians who now partake but once a year.

2dly, Our formality in attending this ordinance is nowiſe chargeable upon the inſtitution of Chriſt, or its frequent adminiſtration; but upon the corruption and careleſneſs of our hearts, which all Chriſtians ſhould carefully watch and wreſtle againſt, and labour in the ſtrength of Chriſt, ſo oft as they partake, to prepare for it with all ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity.

3dly, Were this a good reaſon againſt frequency in this duty, it might be pleaded againſt frequency in other duties alſo; and ſo we ſhould ſeldom read or hear the word, ſeldom meditate on God, pray, or ſing pſalms, leſt frequency ſhould beget formality therein. But it is a bad way of arguing, to ſay, becauſe frequency in prayer, hearing or communicating, may occaſion formality and heart-wandrings, therefore I will ſeldom pray, *&c.* No; the inference ſhould rather be, Therefore I'll watch over my heart more carefully, I'll look for the renewed influences of the Spirit, and ſtrive to be more ſincere and fervent in duty.

4thly, Tho' frequency in partaking ſhould have a bad effect on ſome, yet it hath and will have a good effect upon others who make conſcience of preparing for the duty. Inſtead of breeding formality, it doth beget the greater livelineſs and ſpirituality in them, and raiſe their appetite the more after the heavenly manna. It is certain, the oftner we carefully and believingly communicate, the better diſpoſed we ſhall be for new approaches.

Obj. III. *The Jews did partake of the paſſover only once in the year.*

Anſ. God fixed the paſſover to a certain day of the year, to mind them of their temporal deliverance from Egypt, as well as of their future redemption by the Meſſiah's death at that time; and therefore it was annual. But, beſides that, they had their daily ſacrifices of ſlain beaſts in the temple, which were lively types of Chriſt, and a remembrance to them of his death; ſo that the Jews did not need ſuch a frequent celebration of the paſſover for that end. But in the new-teſtament church Chriſt hath ſettled only his ſupper as the great ordinance of commemoration of his death and ſufferings; and therefore we ought not to confine ourſelves to the Jews annual cuſtom: Nay, on the contrary, Chriſtians now, to whom Chriſt hath made ſuch bright diſcoveries of his love, in ſacrificing himſelf upon a croſs for their ſalvation, ſhould far exceed the Jews (who lived in ſuch dark times) in expreſſing love to their Saviour, and in celebrating the memorials of his love to them. The love of the primitive Chriſtians was ſo warm this way, that they thought themſelves bound to celebrate their goſpel paſſover in remembrance of a crucified Chriſt once a week, which the Jews did but once a year.

Obj. IV. *But* (ſaith one) *my buſineſs and calling in the world is ſuch, that I have not liberty for frequent communicating, neither have I occaſions near me for doing it.*

Anſ. 1ſt, I grant that all men cannot communicate alike often, ſeeing the worldly calling and affairs of one man do adminiſter more diſtraction than theſe of another: And ſome cannot command their time ſo much as others.

2dly, People ſhould do what lies in them to order their affairs ſo beforehand, that they may have freedom for frequent communicating. But if perſons have buſineſs brought on them, not by themſelves, but by the providence of God, they are excuſable for their omiſſion at one occaſion; but then they ſhould be careful to lay hold upon the next. In keeping of the paſſover, there was a diſpenſation allowed to theſe that were under ceremonial uncleanneſs, or engaged in buſineſs on a journey, Numb. ix. yet it was allowed, not for a year, but for a month's omiſſion. For, when they could not keep it upon the 14th of the firſt month, they were ordered to keep it the 14th day of the next month, and not to ſtay until the next annual revolution, Numb. ix. 10. 11. As it would be agreeable to this injunction, ſo it would be a deſirable attainment in the church and an advantage to the members of it, if matters were ſo ordered among us, that, when perſons are neceſſarily hindered from partaking of the Lord's ſupper in their own congregation, they might be ſure of an occaſion to do it next month, if not in their own, at leaſt in the neighbouring congregation.

Obj. V. *The laſt time I was at the Lord's table I got no benefit by it, nay, I fear I communicated unworthily: Now, for me to come frequently in this manner, I fear to contract greater guilt, and do myſelf more hurt than good. Therefore I will not ſoon adventure upon another approach.*

Anſ. 1ſt, There are ſome good things implied in this objection, ſuch as, a review of former actions, ſome ſenſe of ſin and trouble for it, and a loathneſs to offend God; which are ſome deſirable tokens of repentance;

and may yield ſome comfort to an exerciſed ſoul.

2dly, In this caſe, long deferrings will do you more hurt than frequent communicating: For, as, by too much faſting, we often loſe our ſtomachs, ſo, by long withdrawing from the Lord's table, you may come to loſe your deſire after the food of your ſouls, and to have a low eſteem of Chriſt, and of his ſolemn ordinance.

3dly, There is no communicant, but upon a review may ſpy many defects in his frame and preparation, for which he could not anſwer if God did enter into judgment with him: But he muſt not therefore abandon his duty, but flee to Chriſt's fountain for waſhing, and to the covert of his righteouſneſs to ſkreen all his imperfections. We read of ſeverals in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chron. xxx. that were not ſo ſuitably prepared for the paſſover as they ſhould have been, and ate it otherwiſe than it was written; and yet, upon Hezekiah's praying for them, God pardoned their ſin, and healed them.

4thly, It may yield comfort to a troubled ſoul, if upon a review he can ſay, it was his earneſt deſire to communicate humbly, with a lively frame, and the exerciſe of all the ſacramental graces; and whatever ſhortcomings he was chargeable with, they were not wilful and allowed but matter of grief and mourning to him. If this be your caſe, then your defects are ſins of infirmity, which your gracious God will pardon for Chriſt's ſake.

5thly, Whatever your ſhortcomings formerly have been you ought to be humbled for them, flee to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and reſolve in his ſtrength to come more reverently, humbly and believingly to his table for the future, and that in order to renew your covenant with God, and receive a ſeal of the pardon of all your former ſins, and particularly of the ſin of unworthy communicating. And this you may expect, if you perſevere in the road of duty looking to God in Chriſt, who is ſtill ready to welcome and pardon the penitent believer: But to abſent and withdraw from God's ordinance, is to put yourſelf out of the road of his mercy, and to aggravate your former ſin of unſuitable partaking.

Obj. VI. *If we did communicate ſo frequently, we would not have ſuch time to prepare ourſelves for this ordinance as were needful, and as now we have.*

Anſ. If we did partake more frequently, leſs pains and time about preparation-work might be more ſucceſsful, and ſooner reach the end, then all the pains and time we now beſtow that way: For thus we might be helped to keep up a communion frame habitually, and it would be no ſuch difficulty (as now we find it) to get the tears of repentance poured out, or the fire of divine love blown up, when called to celebrate this ordinance. The believer, when in a frame, the oftner he comes to the communion he adds the more nouriſhment, and hath the greater delight in it; and ſo he comes to have ſuch a longing for the ordinance as the child hath for the mother's breaſt.

DIRECT. IV. *Be perſwaded of the neceſſity of ſolemn preparation before you approach to the Lord's table.*

IF we be required to take head to ourſelves when we enter the houſe of the Lord, Eccleſ. v. 1. much more doth it concern us to look to ourſelves when we approach the table of the Lord. Why? This holy table is under the goſpel the ſolemn tryſting place of the great God, where he uſeth to meet with men, and to entertain converſe and communion with them. And, have we not then ground to call you in the prophet's words, Amos iv. 12. *Prepare to meet thy God, O* Iſrael? Remember who it is that tryſts with you; it is God, even thy God. Did an Angel tryſt to meet you at a certain place againſt ſuch an hour, would you not prepare with all ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity to keep tryſt with him? Oh, but it is the God of Angles that tryſts with your here; even that God, before whom all the Angels adore and the devils tremble: a holy and jealous God, who hath declared that he will be ſanctified in them that come nigh to him, Lev. x. 3. And can you come ſo near him any where in the world, as at his holy table? What Samuel ſpoke to the Elders of Bethlehem, in the caſe of offering ſacrifice, may well be applied to communicants in the caſe of approaching to the Lord's table, 1 Sam. xvi. 5. *Sanctify yourſelves, and come with me to the ſacrifice.* So, well may your miniſters ſay to you, *Sanctify yourſelves, and come with me to the ſacrament.* Come here and behold the ſacrifice of the lamb of God unto divine juſtice for your ſins: For *even Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. v. 7. Here he is repreſented as a lamb ſlain, to pacify a holy God for our impurity and unholineſs. It is moſt fit then that we prepare and ſanctify ourſelves when we adventure ſo near this holy God, and take upon us to celebrate the commemoration of this bleſſed ſacrifice in our goſpel-paſſover.

The Jews had their preparation for their paſſover, John xix. 14. They took the paſchal lamb and ſet it apart from the reſt of the flock on the tenth day of the month, but did not kill it till the *fourteenth*, Exod. xii. 3. 6. And during the four days the lamb was kept alive (Jewiſh rabbies tell us) they tied it to their bed-poſts, that hearing the bleatings of the lamb as they came in and went out, lay down and roſe up, two things thereby might be brought to their remembrance; *1ſt.* They might look back to Egypt, and remember the ſorrows and bondage they endured there and be thankful for their redemption; and eſpecially for their deliverance from the deſtroying angel that night he paſſed over their houſes which were ſprinkled with the blood of the lamb. *2dly*, They were to look forward to the Meſſiah, and remember the bitter agonies and ſufferings he was to endure for their ſins. Thus the Paſchal lamb for ſeveral days was to be prepared for its ſufferings, to teach the people of God ſolemnly to prepare themſelves for eating thereof, and therein to celebrate the memorial of the Meſſiah's ſufferings, which were thereby typified. That the four days ſeparation of the lamb was a continual ſtanding ſermon, preaching and preparation to the Iſraelites, as if God had ſaid to them, *Be ye alſo ſequeſtrated from the world, and take time to think on the bleatings of the lamb, the agonies of Chriſt, and prepare yourſelves for this ſolemn ordinance.* Oh what ſhall we ſay of theſe who, inſtead of *four days*, never ſpent *four hours* in ſerious preparation for our great *goſpel-paſſover!* O worthy communicant, aſſoon as you hear the Lord's ſupper intimated, let the lamb be tied to your bed-poſts; entertain the lively meditation of your Redeemer's ſufferings, and beg preparation of heart from God for celebrating the memorial thereof. Was our Lord ſo long a time in preparing for them, and ſhall we take no time in preparing to behold them, eſpecially when it is ſo highly for our advantage ſo to do?

We read that the primitive Chriſtians and ancient fathers uſed to ſit up whole nights at prayer before they approached to the Lord's table, which they called their *Vigiliæ*.

In this ordinance God makes great preparations for us; he hath provided a feaſt which hath coſt more than ten thouſand kingdoms, or a million of worlds: And, ought not the gueſts, who are honoured with an invitation to it, to make great and ſolemn preparation for it? Were we called to dine with an earthly prince, we would dreſs ourſelves and ſee to have every thing about us in good order: but here we are called to feaſt with a holy and all-ſeeing God, who will infallibly ſpy out every unprepared communicant, *when he comes to ſee the gueſts*, Matth. xvii. 11.

If the linen on the communion-table, or the veſſels that contain the elements were foul, you would be ready to cry out, It is a horrid ſhame and abomination to ſee them in ſuch a caſe; and ſo indeed it would, for there ought to be an outward decency in theſe things; our Lord would have the very room in good order, where he was to eat the paſſover. But O it is a ſmall crime to have a foul cloth or veſſel for receiving the outward elements, in reſpect of what it is to have a foul heart, an unprepared ſoul to receive the body and blood of Chriſt.

Joſeph prepared himſelf, by ſhaving himſelf and changing his raiment, before he went in unto Pharaoh; and, wilt thou not prepare thyſelf, by putting thy ſoul in the holieſt dreſs and humbleſt poſture, when thou art to go in to the King of heaven and earth? O communicant, thou exceedingly wrongeſt thine own ſoul if thou do it not. *Preparation* is the ſeed time, *receiving* is the harveſt: *As a man ſoweth, ſo ſhall he reap. He who ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: And he who ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap alſo bountifully*, 2 Cor. ix. 6. It is in the duty of *partaking*, as in the duty of *praying*, the more prepared the heart is to pray, the greater is a man's return from heaven, Pſal. x. 17. *Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear.* So in the caſe of receiving it may be ſaid, *Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine hand to give.* When God gives us a heart prepared for duty, it is a token he hath a hand prepared for mercy.

Hence it is, that the Lord makes that gracious promiſe, Pſal. lxxx. 10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* I'll enlarge my hand as you enlarge your hearts. He ſaith as Joſeph to his ſteward, Gen. xliv. 1. *Fill the mens ſacks with food, as much as they can carry.* According as Joſeph's brethren prepared ſacks in number and largeneſs, ſo did they carry corn away; and the fewer and ſmaller ſacks they had, the leſs they carried away. So here, if you bring prepared and enlarged hearts to the ordinance, you ſhall be ſupplied with as much as you can carry.

DIRECT. V. *Conſider, that both habitual and actual preparation is requiſite for worthy communicating.*

1. Habitual preparation is neceſſary to every communicant, *that is*, that he be a believer, a man in a gracious ſtate, furniſhed with the graces of the Spirit, endued with knowledge, faith, repentance, love and new obedience. No man is fit to approach the Lord's table, till he have theſe gracious habits planted in his ſoul. He muſt be a man that is renewed inwardly by the Spirit of God, and aims at holineſs in all manner of converſation. This *new wine* muſt not be put into an old veſſel, elſe the wine will be ſpilt, and the veſſel periſh. It was an ancient abuſe of this ſacrament, condemned by the Carthaginian council, to give to dead men; ſo it is an abuſe condemned by the word of God, to give it to dead ſouls, and thoſe who have no ſpiritual life. Under the law, God did forbid the offering of ſacrifices that either were blind or lame, Mal. i. 8. and they that were ceremonially unclean, could not keep the paſſover. The ignorant perſon's ſacrifice is blind, for he cannot give account of his own work: The hypocrite's ſacrifice is lame, for he halteth in God's way. The profane man is morally unclean, and ſo cannot entertain communion with a holy God. Holineſs becomes God's houſe, and in a ſpecial manner his table. Habitual holineſs is requiſite for all that would be worthy communicants. You muſt be holy univerſally, holy in the frame of your hearts, and in all the actions of your lives; holy in your ſhops by diligence and juſtice; holy at your tables by ſobriety and thankfulneſs; holy in the ſtreets by an innocent uſeful converſation; holy in your cloſets by prayer and meditation. Yea, you muſt account your whole lives nothing but an opportunity of ſerving a holy God, and of mortifying ſin and corruption; and this habitual holineſs would diſpoſe your ſouls for the acts of immediate worſhip.

But unholy perſons are altogether unprepared for ſuch a near approach to God. Hearts full of rancour and malice are not meet to come to this feaſt of love: Feet that walk in the ways of ſin are not fit to tread in God's holy place: Hands ſtain'd with injuſtice are unfit to handle theſe holy myſteries; Mouths that are polluted with ſwearing and evil ſpeaking, are not fit to eat and drink the ſacred ſymbols of Chriſt's body and blood; eyes defiled with unchaſte looks, and bewitched with the world's vanities, are unfit to look on the holy Jeſus; ears that entertain reproaches of God's people, and harken not to the counſels of his word, are not fit to hear the joyful ſound of pardon intimated at his table. They who expect the King of glory to enter into their ſouls at the ſolemn occaſion, muſt have the doors thereof cleanly and pure. Unhallowed ſinners are not fit to receive this hallowed bread and wine. Our Lord's body never ſaw corruption in the grave, nor will he lodge in theſe bodies that are as nauſeous ſepulchres, and corrupt ſinks of ſin. It lay only in a *Virgin womb and ſepulchre*, to ſhew that he will only reſide in *virgins ſouls*, that are devoted and conſecrated to his uſe, and kept pure and chaſte for his ſervice, and do not entertain his rivals. I grant indeed, impure thoughts will ſometimes be crowding in to the beſt hearts; but if we do not entertain them, but ſincerely ſtrive againſt them, and earneſtly wiſh for better company, it is a token Chriſt's ſpirit hath entered, and is about his work of purifying the heart.

If we would be habitually prepared for the Lord's table, we muſt be daily acquaint with the work of mortification and true repentance. We muſt always eye ſin as our Saviour's deadly enemy, have no pity on it, but ſeverely condemn ourſelves for every treſpaſs, inſtantly grieve for it, look to the blood of ſprinkling for pardon, renew our reſolutions to amend, and pray for ſpecial ſtrength againſt every particular ſin. We muſt daily mediate on precious Chriſt, and upon his firſt and ſecond coming, and live continually in the view of death. And, if we lived thus, it would not be ſo hard to prepare ourſelves for the Lord's table. If we lived in a habitual preparation for the day of death, we would alſo be habitually prepared for the day of communion. Had we God, frequently in our thoughts, and lived conſtantly under the ſenſe of his all ſeeing eye; on the communion day we ſhould find little elſe to do but to revive our graces by the exerciſe of prayer and praiſe.

II. Actual preparation is alſo neceſſary before our approach to the Lord's table. Seeing alas, the moſt part of Chriſtians in this degenerate age, are ſo defective in their habitual preparation for this ordinance; they ought to be the more diligent in actual preparation for it. And this doth conſiſt of a great many particulars; ſuch as 1. Sequeſtrating ourſelves from the world. 2. Self examination. 3. Humiliation for ſin. 4. Renewing our perſonal covenant with God in Chriſt. 5. Reformation of what is amiſs. 6. Exciting of all the graces to a lively exerciſe. 7. Meditation on the death and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt. 8. Earneſt prayer to God for preparation and aſſiſtance in the work. All theſe belong to our actual preparation for the Lord's ſupper; and of them I ſhall afterwards treat more particularly.

Only I ſhall here obſerve, that both habitual and actual preparation muſt go together, if we would be worthy communicants. We muſt both have grace in the habit, and grace in the lively exerciſe. All wiſe virgins that wait for the coming of the bridegroom, do take care to have oil ſtill in their veſſels, as well as in their lamps: Nay, they muſt ſee to have their lamps burning every day. But when they hear that the bridegroom is actually coming, then, in order to meet him, they do ariſe and fall afreſh to the trimming of their lamps; they ſnuff them, ſtir up the light, and apply more oil to make them burn the brighter and clearer. And thus ought you to do, O communicant, if you would have a joyful meeting with your lovely bridegroom in the ſacrament. Nay, if you come not with actual as well as habitual preparation, the ſacrament may prove to you as the ſummer brooks to the thirſty traveller, of which Job ſpeaks, Job vi. 19. 20. *The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded becauſe they had hoped; they came thither and were aſhamed.* Some come to the ſacrament with a ſort of actual preparation, but have no habitual preparation, no grace in the habit. Some again have habitual preparation but not actual preparation; they want grace in the exerciſe. Both theſe will go from the ordinance as the troops of Tema, and companies of Sheba, diſappointed of ſpiritual refreſhment. If we would reap ſpiritual advantage in this ordinance, we muſt take care to be ready both ways habitually and actually; for it is only ſuch that the all-ſeeing maſter of the feaſt will look upon as worthy communicants.

DIRECT. VI. *Be convinced of the greatneſs of the ſin and hazard of unworthy communicating.*

WE are told both the one and the other in very plain terms, 1 Cor. xi. 27. 29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* And again, *He eateth and drinketh damnation or judgment to himſelf.* So that we ſee the ſin or crime is no leſs than that of murdering of Jeſus Chriſt, and of being found accomplices of the Jews and ſoldiers, who imbrewed their cruel hands in the innocent blood of the Son of God, which is a moſt dreadful charge! The hazard which this ſin expoſes to, is both temporal ſtrokes, and eternal damnation. Seeing I have ſpoke of the nature and danger of this ſin, *Sacr. Cat.* p. 107. 108. 110. &c. (*firſt Edit.*) I ſhall ſay the leſs in this place.

Only to communicate unworthily, is to approach in an unworthy ſtate, or in an unſuitable frame, or with wrong ends. When a perſon comes to the Lord's table in ignorance, without ſelf-examination, without grief for ſin, love to Chriſt, or faith in his blood, and is unprepared for this ſolemn ordinance, then he is an unworthy communicant.

Now, this muſt be a very heinous ſin; for it imports your undervaluing the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, as if it were the blood of an impoſtor or malefactor. For if you look on the ſufferings of Chriſt here repreſented, as the ſufferings of the innocent Son of God and glorious Saviour of mankind; why do you not come ſuitably affected therewith, and grieved for your ſins that were the cauſe thereof? But, if you do not really own or regard them as ſuch, then on the matter you charge Jeſus Chriſt as being the greateſt impoſtor and criminal in the world, in declaring himſelf to be the Son of God and Saviour of ſinners, when in your eſteem, he was not.

If you ſay, *God forbid we be guilty of this, we own Chriſt to be the Son of God, and the King of glory;* why then are you guilty of treaſon, and of offering the greateſt indignity to your prince, by throwing his picture or great ſeal into a mire, by defacing and defiling a ſtatue erected for his honour and remembrance? For any diſhonour done to the image or repreſentation reflects upon the original. What horrid contempt would it be for a ſubject to come in with naſty clothes and filthy hands, and offer to ſit down at his ſovereign's table, and dip into the diſh with him? Now, all this and much worſe you do, when you ſit down unpreparedly at the Lord's table, and eat and drink unworthily.

Nay, you are hereby guilty of the baſeſt diſingenuity, and of ſolemn mocking of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: For, by coming to the Lord's table, you pretend to be doing honour to Chriſt, to be deeply affected with his ſufferings, and to declare your abhorrence of ſin that was the cauſe thereof. Now, when there is really no ſuch thing, but on the contrary ſin is hugged and embraced; what is this but horrid diſſimulation with an all-ſeeing God? yea, it is an acting of Judas's part over again, *a betraying of the Son of man with a kiſs.*

But, which is worſt of all, by this ſin you become *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord:* For as he is juſtly reckoned acceſſory to a murder, who either conſents to it, makes light of it, or that abets and entertains the murderers: So unworthy communicants, who look upon the death and ſufferings of the Son of God without remorſe for their ſins that pierced him, nay, love and lodge theſe traitors in their hearts that betrayed and crucified the Lord of glory, are plainly acceſſory to the Jews horrid guilt of ſhedding the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.

It is a fearful thing to be guilty of any man's blood, even of the blood of a wicked man: But, how much more to be guilty of the blood of a righteous perſon, even of the holy one of God? Simple murder is a crying ſin, Gen. iv. 10. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground." It cries ſo, that it gives God no reſt, as it were, till he come and take vengeance on the ſhedder of it. Nature's light taught the *Barbarians*, that *vengeance would not ſuffer a murderer to live.*

Acts xxviii. 4. But, O what a cry do you think the innocent blood of Chriſt muſt have againſt the guilty communicant! It is terrible to have that blood which pleads for ſinners, crying againſt thee. Chriſt's blood applied by faith, *ſpeaks better things than the blood of Abel*: But when it is trampled on in the ſacrament, it doth ſpeak and cry worſe things than the blood of Abel; it will cry for more terrible vengeance than Abel's blood cried for. Wo to that poor ſoul, for whom Chriſt's blood ſpeaks not, but ten thouſand woes to that ſoul which this blood ſpeaks againſt.

It is the worſt kind of treaſon to ſhed the blood of an earthly king; but, what wickedneſs muſt it be to ſhed the blood of the King of kings, one drop whereof is more precious than all the blood which ever ran in the veins of the kings and princes of the world ſince its firſt creation! We ſee what David ſaid concerning the motion for killing king Saul; *Who can ſtretch out his hand againſt the Lord's anointed and be guiltleſs?* 1 Sam. xxvi. 9. But O who can be guiltleſs that ſtretches out his hand againſt the Son of God? *Had Zimri peace who ſlew his maſter?* cried Jezebel to Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 31. And thinkeſt thou to have peace, O communicant, that goeſt to ſlay thy maſter and Redeemer too? If God declared that on him who ſlew Cain, *vengeance ſhould be taken ſeven fold*? Gen iv. 15. What vengeance ſhall be taken on him that ſlayeth Jeſus Chriſt? Hadſt thou never harſh thoughts of the Jews for their cruelty to the Son of God, and yet wilt thou be guilty of worſe thyſelf? The Jews crucified him but once, but thou, by continuing to be an unworthy receiver, crucifieſt him often; they did it ignorantly, but thou doſt it knowingly. And the time when thou committeſt this ſin, makes thy guilt prodigiouſly great. Would it not be reckoned a piece of the moſt barbarous wickedneſs in a poor traveller, that was found ſtarving by the way-ſide, and out of pity taken in by a perſon given to hoſpitality, for him to riſe up, without any provocation, and ſtab his kind friend while he were entertaining him at his own table? What a monſtrous crime would this be! But, how much more ſo is it for you to pierce and ſtab Jeſus Chriſt, when he is making a rich feaſt for you, diſplaying his banner of love and inviting you to take ſanctuary in his wounds!

It was a dreadful curſe and imprecation that the Jews wiſh'd againſt themſelves, Mat. xxviii. 15. *His blood be on us and upon our children.* And now it has accordingly lien upon their heads theſe 1600 years, which has made them the moſt miſerable people on the face of the earth. And, wilt thou venture, by a raſh approach to the Lord's table, to bring the Jews curſe upon thyſelf? Nay, ſtand in awe of this ſin, and the curſe following on it, and ſay with David (when Abiſhai perſuaded him to ſlay Saul) *The Lord forbid that I ſhould ſtretch forth my hand againſt the Lord's anointed.* So, when ſatan or thy own heart would perſuade thee to be ſlight in thy ſelf-examination, formal in thy humiliation for ſin, and careleſs in thy preparation for this ordinance, that thou mighteſt be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; let conſcience then cry out, *God forbid that I ſhould ſtretch out my hand againſt Jeſus Chriſt the Lord's anointed. How can I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God,* and wrong my own ſoul?

O communicant, if thou venture on this horrid crime God will remember it againſt thee, and make it bitter to thee another day in another place if mercy prevent not. As Reuben told his brethren when they were in diſtreſs, Gen. xlii. 22. *Spake I not unto you, ſaying, ſin not againſt the child, and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, his blood is required.* So if you approach to the Lord's table in ſin, or in a formal way, and without preparation, then look for it, when affliction, ſickneſs or death comes, or at leaſt in the other world, that conſcience will fly in thy face, and ſay, *ſpake I not unto thee, ſaying, do not ſin againſt the holy child Jeſus, and thou wouldſt not hear? therefore, behold, his blood is required at your hands.* And O what wilt thou do in ſuch an hour!

If thou wouldſt prevent ſuch a challenge, take heed to thy preparation, and notice the frame of thy heart. Remember, God will take exact notice of what reſpect thou haſt to the body and blood of his Son, and how thou prepareſt to receive it, Mat. xxii. 11, 12, 13. *And when the king came in to ſee the gueſts, he ſaw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.* Chriſt obſerves all theſe that come to his table; and, if there be but one unprepared, he cannot eſcape his eye, be the number or crowd never ſo great. He obſerves with what appetite thou goeſt to this heavenly feaſt; he obſerves with what reſolution againſt ſin for time to come, thou goeſt for pardon of ſins paſt. He notices, O communicant, if thou goeſt to this goſpel ordinance in a goſpel order. And, wilt thou dare to trample on the blood of the Son of God, as the blood of a malefactor, and even when he himſelf ſtands and looketh on. Will not the ſenſe of his piercing eye overawe you at ſuch a time? Surely, if in any time of thy life thou wouldſt be extraordinarily ſerious, this ought to be the ſeaſon. Now thou oughteſt to prepare ſo for this feaſt, that the maſter of it may ſee thou art watchful of his eye, tender of his honour, and fearful of his anger. Forget not what was the fate of that man who came to the wedding feaſt without a wedding garment; when the king challenged him, *he was ſpeechleſs*, and his ſentence was, *bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt him into utter darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.*

Remember alſo what ſtrict orders were given concerning mount Sinai, when God ſolemnly appeared on it; *If a beaſt did but touch it, it was to be ſtricken through with a dart.* And, wilt thou venture to touch the table of the Lord with a beaſtly heart, a heart poſſeſſed with brutiſh luſts? Mayeſt thou not fear to be ſtricken thro' with a dart of God's wrath?

We read of ſome, as the emperor Henry, and Pope Victor II. that were poiſoned with the ſacrament, by the wickedneſs of the prieſts, who mingled poiſon with the bread and wine. Didſt thou, O communicant, apprehend that the bread and wine before thee were poiſoned, would not the very ſuſpicion make thee tremble to eat and drink of it? Well, if thou art an unworthy receiver there is poiſon in it to thy ſoul, and thou haſt ground to cry to the miniſter, as the ſons of the prophets did to Eliſha, 2 Kings iv. 40. *O thou man of God, there is death in the pot;* There is poiſon in the bread, there is wrath in the cup: How ſhall I partake, till this meal be ſanctified to me, and my ſoul ſanctified for it?

Our Lord makes a queſtion, Luke xi. 11. *If a ſon aſk bread of his father, will he give him a ſtone?* No, he will not deal ſo with a ſon that comes to his table ſincerely to ſeek bread for his hungry ſoul; but with an enemy that comes unpreparedly to him, he will give a ſtone inſtead of bread: Unworthy receiving makes a *Tranſubſtantiation* here, it changeth the *bread* into a *ſtone*; ſo that it will no more nouriſh thy ſoul, than a ſtone would do thy body: Nay like a ſtone, it will choke and kill thee, if the phyſician of ſouls do not prevent it.

We are told by the apoſtle, that unworthy receiving brings on temporal judgments, as well as ſpiritual and eternal. It brings on ſickneſs and mortality on our bodies, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep." And ſome think it was the peſtilence or ſome ſuch mortal diſtemper that the Corinthians unworthy receiving did bring on them. Well let us think on this; ſurely, if ever the peſtilence come into Scotland, we may look on unworthy communicating as a chief cauſe of this deſolating ſtroke.

What a great riſk then, O ſinner, doſt thou run when thou ventureſt to this holy table without due preparation? Thou even runneſt upon the boſſes of God's buckler, and provokeſt the vengeance of God againſt thyſelf. Thou mayeſt juſtly expect that God will turn it into ſuch a feaſt to thee, as Belſhazzar's was to him, who in the time thereof ſaw "a hand upon the wall writing his condemnation, ſo that his countenance was changed, his thoughts troubled him, and his knees ſmote one againſt another." In this ordinance you make a very near approach to God that is infinitely holy, and who is terrible from his holy places. The nearer God's altar, the fire of divine jealouſy burns the hotter: And a wrong touch or look at ſuch a time is criminal, and may coſt you dear. The Lord ſmote Uzza dead for one raſh touch which he gave the ark; he ſmote 50,000 of the men of Bethſhemeſh for an irreverent look into the ark; he devoured with fire from heaven Nadab and Abihu for offering ſtrange incenſe at his altar: And what he may do to thee for a raſh approach to his holy table, none can tell. God may make thee a monument of wrath where thou ſitteſt, ſtrike thee dead with the bread in thy mouth, or cup in thy hand: And, if it be otherwiſe, thou wilt be highly indebted to the divine patience for ſparing thee.

And indeed, we have cauſe to be aſtoniſhed at the matchleſs goodneſs and long ſuffering of God, in ſuffering ſo many thouſands of vile murderers to live ſo long in this world, and that he ſhould ſuffer them to approach his table, and to wound and ſtab his dear Son over and over again, when he hath flames and vengeance at command, and can more eaſily cruſh them all, than we can do a moth; and, which is yet more, that he ſhould unto ſuch murderers make and repeat his offers of that blood which they have ſpilt, to waſh them from the guilt of ſhedding it. And indeed it is this, and nothing but this, which is able to do it.

But, tho' God be patient and merciful, he will not bear always with ſuch criminals; no, he hath many ſpiritual and inviſible judgments, which he inflicts upon them. He makes fearful breaches upon their ſouls. He frequently lets looſe ſatan againſt them, ſo that ſatan enters in with the ſop. And, how fearful a thing is it, for the devil to be permitted to enter into a man or woman, and to do it even at the Lord's table, ſo that the man riſes up from this holy table with more eagerneſs after his luſts, and with more reſolution and ſtrength to do the devil's ſervice, than before? And thus the *table of the Lord* becomes the *table of devils*, and the *cup of the Lord* the *cup of devils*, to ſuch perſons. And, ſhould God alſo let looſe ſatan againſt their bodies, as upon Judas after the ſop, what terrible havock would he make among unworthy communicants? How fearfully would he revenge the blood of Chriſt? Many communion tables would he turn into Golgothas and Aceldamas, places of *ſkulls* and fields of *blood*.

As the ſweeteſt wine becomes the ſharpeſt vinegar, ſo communion love, when abuſed, brings the ſoreſt wrath. The death and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt are the moſt ſerious and awful things that can be repreſented in the world, and therefore not to be dallied with. The blood of Chriſt is the moſt precious thing in the world, and therefore a drop cannot be ſpilt without a cry for vengeance. And, have not the beſt of us alas, ground to fear we have contracted much of this guilt? Were our hearts never hard, our affections dead, our ſpirits carnal, and our minds wandring when we have ſit down at the Lord's table? Nay, have we not all reaſon to cry with David, Pſal. li. "Deliver me from bloodguiltineſs, O God, thou God of my ſalvation, and my tongue ſhall ſing aloud of thy loving kindneſs?" Ought we not all carefully to guard and earneſtly to pray againſt this crying ſin, and ſo prepare ourſelves for this holy table that we may not poiſon our precious ſouls with that choice cordial, which is intended for our health and eternal welfare?

DIRECT. VII. *In order to your better preparation for the Lord's ſupper, ſequeſtrate yourſelves from worldly cares and buſineſs ſome time before.*

WHEN you ſee the time of this ſolemn approach drawing near, *ſeparate yourſelves from the world*, and ſet earthly thoughts aſide, that you may the better apply yourſelf to the ſpiritual work you have in hand. Under the law, the Jews were unfit for keeping the paſſover at the time appointed, in two caſes, Numb. ix. either if they had *touched a dead body*, or were *in a journey*. The firſt made a man unclean, ſo that he behoved not to meddle with that holy ordinance, till he were cleanſed according to the inſtituted method, which took up ſome time to do it. The ſecond made him unfit, in regard his mind and thoughts would be ſo diſtracted with the buſineſs of his journey, that he could not be in a compoſed frame for keeping the paſſover: His heart would be unfixed and diſturbed with worldly thoughts.

There are not a few who ſeem to think, if they be free from a *dead body*, i. e. if they be not defiled with ſome groſs or ſcandalous ſin, they are fit enough for the ſacrament; and that they may approach to it, tho' they have their hearts *in journeys* travelling up and down after their worldly affairs. No, be not miſtaken; a *journey* unfits you for the goſpel paſſover, as well as a *dead body*; a journeying earthly heart, as well as a notour defilement by any groſs ſin. If you would be worthy receivers, you muſt be abſtracted from the cares and vanities of this lower world, and ſeek after a ſtayed, ſpiritual and heavenly frame of heart. Be not as men in a journey when ye come to the Lord's table, but lay aſide all wandring and earthly thoughts; for if you harbour theſe about ſuch a time, you will not be in caſe to anſwer the apoſtle's rule, 1 Cor. vii. 35. *Attend upon the Lord without diſtraction*.

We are told, that in the temple of Jeruſalem notwithſtanding of the great abundance of fleſh ſacrificed in it, not one flie was to be ſeen ſtirring there. And ſo it ſhould be with us at the ſacrament, not a flie or an earthly or wandring thought ſhould be allowed to buzz or ſtir there. Now, if theſe flies be not driven away before-hand, they will ſurely peſter you in the temple, and trouble you when you have moſt to do; nay they will mar the duty, and corrupt the ſacrifice, as that grievous ſwarm of flies (mentioned Exod. viii. 24.) did the land of Egypt.

It is a ſhrewd ſign then, that theſe who bring earthly and wandring hearts with them to the Lord's table are Egyptians, not true Iſraelites; ſeeing they have the Egyptian plague of flies upon them. In the forecited place we are told, that there came a grievous ſwarm of flies into the houſes of Pharaoh and his ſervants and into all the land of Egypt, ſo that the land was corrupted thereby; but in the land of Goſhen where the Iſraelites dwelt, there were no ſwarms of flies. So, if ye would be worthy communicants, ye ſhould be at the ſacrament, like the Iſraelites in Goſhen, free of that Egyptian plague of flies; you muſt not have ſwarms of earthly thoughts to trouble you there with their buzzing noiſe and importunity. And the only way to be free of them is to drive them away timeouſly before, and purge your hearts of earthly affections.

You ought to do as Abraham, when he was called by God to ſacrifice Iſaac, on mount Moriah, Gen. xxii. 4. 5. *When he ſaw the place afar off, he ſaid to his young men, abide you here with the aſs, and I and the lad will go yonder and worſhip, and come again unto you.* Abraham knew, if they had gone alongſt with him, they would have ſo diſturbed him, with their calamour and noiſe, that he could not have offered the ſacrifice with any freedom and tranquillity of ſpirit; therefore when he ſaw the place affar off, he orders them to ſtay behind. The ſame ſhould we be doing with our worldly affairs when we ſee the time affar off, and much more when we ſee the time approaching and at hand: Then we ſhould give ſtrict orders to all our earthly thoughts and buſineſs to ſtand aſide, and not only not to go to the mount with us, but not to go to our cloſets and retiring-places with us. Poſſibly at ſuch a time ſome affair of importance may offer to thy mind, and require to be conſidered; but treat all ſecular avocations as Nehemiah did Sanballat and Geſhem, when they ſent to him, Neh. vi. 2. ſaying, *Come let us meet together in ſome of the villages*, &c. But mark how he anſwers them, ver. 3. "And I ſent meſſengers to them, ſaying, I am doing " a great work, ſo that I cannot come down. Why " ſhould the work ceaſe, whilſt I leave it and come down " to you? And tho' theſe companions had ſo round and peremptory an anſwer, yet they were importuning him ſtill, ver. 4. *Yet they ſent unto me four times after this ſort.* But he ſtill anſwered them in the ſame manner. Thus it will be with a man when he begins to ſequeſtrate himſelf for actual preparation for the ſacrament; this and the other buſineſs will be calling upon him, that it may be conſidered and attended: But let your anſwer be, "I am doing a great work, I am preparing " myſelf for the ſarament, I cannot wait upon you. " Why, ſhould the work of preparation ceaſe whilſt " I leave it and atttend on you?" And tho' they haunt and importune you many times after this ſort, yet ſtill anſwer tham in the ſame manner.

Likewiſe, remember how Nehemiah treated theſe merchants that violated the ſabbath, Neh. viii. 19. "When " it began to be dark before the ſabbath, I commanded the gates to be ſhut, and charged that they ſhould " not be opened till after the ſabbath; and ſome of my " ſervants I ſet at the gates." Do ſo with your worldly affairs, ſhut up the gates on your hearts againſt them, and let them not be opened till all the duties of the ſolemn occaſion be ended. Perhaps, like theſe merchants, they will be hovering about the gates for entrance: And therefore ſet conſcience to watch at the gates, teſtify againſt them, rebuke and threaten them, as Nehemiah, did. Let thy ſpirit in a holy indignation riſe againſt them, check and chaſe them from you, as coming moſt unſeaſonably to the hurt and prejudice of thy precious ſoul.

As our Saviour ſays about prayer, Mat. vi. 6. *Enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray*; ſo may I ſay concerning preparation for the ſacrament, enter into thy cloſet, and, when thou haſt ſhut thy door, prepare thyſelf by meditation, ſelf-examination, and prayer; and eſpecially ſhut the doors of thy heart againſt ſecular cares and earthly thoughts about thy buſineſs, and then ſet about the work. The work is ſo weighty that it requires all thy thoughts to be employed about it. It concerns you to put your ſoul in the ſame order and ſtate, as if God were calling you to ſurrender it to him by death; and, if you be not ready to die, neither are you to receive the ſacrament. All communicants ſhould be in ſuch a poſture as our Lord directs, Luke xii. 35. 36. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh you may open to him immediately.* Now, if your hearts be incumbred with worldly things, you cannot be in caſe to anſwer this direction; you cannot be in a fit attentive poſture to meet with, and wait upon the Maſter of the feaſt. O communicant, wouldſt thou have this ordinance comfortable? ſay then ſometimes before it, Farewel my wife and children, friends and ſecular concerns; abide you here at the foot of the mount: Be huſhed and mortified, all irregular paſſions and affections; you are a clog to my ſoul, I have ſomething elſe to do than attend you.

It is moſt lamentable to conſider how many come to the ſacrament in ſuch an unprepared manner. Many are in their *journeys* when they ſit down at the Lord's table; many, Egyptian like, are environed with a *ſwarm of flies* wandering and earthly thoughts; many bring their *ſervants and aſſes* to the very mount of ſacrifice; many leave the Lord's work behind in the very meddle, to meet with their *Sanballats* and *Geſhems*; they open the *gates* on the very ſacrament-day to their *merchants*: Nay, the world is both in their hearts and mouths about this ſolemn occaſion.

If we ſhould aſk the queſtion at many communicants, which our Lord aſked the two diſciples he overtook going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 17. *What manner of communications are theſe that ye have one to another, as ye walk by the way?* What manner of conference and communications were theſe ye had together, when ye went home from the preparation ſermon? Nay, theſe ye had the very morning as ye walked together to the church to receive the ſacrament? How aſhamed would many communicants be to tell what paſt amongſt them! There are many who could not anſwer them with theſe two diſciples, ver. 19. *Concerning Jeſus of Nazareth*; we were talking concerning a *crucified Jeſus*, our lovely Redeemer; concerning the advantage of meeting with him in the ſacrament, and the preparation needful for that end. Nay, it is to be feared, the anſwer of many would be, if they ſhould be ingenuous, we were talking about our corn, cattle, merchandiſe, families, relations &c. theſe things alas, many bring in their mouths to the very church-doors. But ſhould we ſearch more narrowly, and propoſe another queſtion; "What manner of thoughts were theſe you entertained that night, or that morning, before the ſacrament? Oh, the world would cry, *Fy and ſhame* on the thoughts of many if they were known. Well, remember it, our all-ſeeing Lord knows them all, and you may expect he will anſwer you according to the idols of your heart. O purge your hearts from vain thoughts and ſequeſter yourſelves from worldly buſineſs if you would rightly prepare for this ordinance, and profit in partaking of it.

DIRECT. VIII. *Set ſome time apart for the work of ſelf-examination before you approach to the Lord's table.*

THIS is a duty indiſpenſibly neceſſary unto worthy partaking, 1 Cor. xi. 28. *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* The word which the apoſtle uſeth here, *dokimazeto* ſignifies a diligent and narrow ſearch into the nature and properties of a thing as a goldſmith proves the goodneſs of his metal. It lies in a cloſe and free communing with our own hearts, by ſifting our ſouls before the tribunal of conſcience, and bringing our ſtate and actions to be tried there by the rule of God's word. Self-examination is a reflex act of the mind, whereby we turn our eyes backward, and take a view of our bypaſt life; and alſo inward, in order to ranſact the ſtate of our hearts, and the principles and ſcope of our actions, by putting ſuch queſtions to ourſelves as theſe, "What have we been doing? Wherein have we offended? What are we doing now? Where am I, and whether do I deſign to go? What ſhall I do to be ſaved? Wherewithal ſhall I appear before the Lord?" This duty ſuppoſes a ſerious pauſe of the ſoul, an arreſting of the thoughts, and an awakening of our powers and faculties to be attentive to this work, that we may proceed with all calmneſs and ſerenity, ſeriouſneſs and deliberation in a matter ſo important, that we may find out the truth of our ſtate, and ſincerity of our performances, the corruptions of our hearts, and enormities of our lives. And this muſt be an exact and impartial ſearch. A general ſurvey of ourſelves will not ſuffice to diſcover things as they really are; for Satan and our own hearts are very deceitful, and ready to impoſe upon us in this matter: Therefore we muſt be very faithful and particular in our examination before the ſacrament, and not ſiſt in generals, or content ourſelves with a ſuperficial enquiry. Some at ſuch an occaſion act like Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. ii. 3. 5. "I have dreamed a dream, (ſays he) but the thing is gone from me:" So ſay ſome, *I have ſinned, I have come ſhort:* but wherein, when put to it.

If you would deal faithfully in this work, you muſt retire from the world, and ſummon yourſelves to the bar of your own conſciences, accuſe yourſelves plainly, and try yourſelves impartially by the laws of heaven regiſtered in the holy ſcriptures. And if you would have a juſt ſentence pronounced concerning your ſtate and ways, then ye muſt in the firſt place look up to God for light, direction and aſſiſtance; and then ye muſt excite and awake conſcience to do its office, and to ſpeak and judge for God: for tho' a judge be on the bench; yet if he be deaf, dumb, or aſleep, he cannot judge. Conſcience then muſt be rouſed up, and charged to act faithfully; and you ſhould pray to God for a lively and tender conſcience, that will give juſt and impartial judgment. A deaf conſcience that hears nothing, a dumb conſcience that ſpeaks nothing, a ſleepy conſcience that feels nothing is the greateſt plague in the world. But O it is a great mercy to have a waking and tender conſcience, that will faithfully do its office in the duty of ſelf-examination, eſpecially before a ſacrament.

This duty is abſolutely neceſſary; for without it we cannot know how it is with us, we cannot know our plagues and miſeries, our defects and neceſſities; and, till ſuch a time as we know theſe, we will neither value nor apply the remedy provided for us in the ſacrament. Nay, we will be ready to miſtake our condition, and think we are in a good ſtate, that we have true grace, when really we have it not. There is much *counterfeit* grace in the world, and many are deceived therewith; yea there is no grace but what hath its *counterfeit*. What did Moſes for a time, but the Egyptian ſorcerers did the like? Did Moſes bring frogs on the land? ſo did they. And the magicians blood and frogs ſeemed as real as thoſe produced by Moſes; and yet they were nothing but counterfeits and external appearances. So there is nothing a true Chriſtian hath or can do, but hypocrites may have and do the ſame as to outward appearance. Therefore it is neceſſary we bring our graces and duties to be weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary.

O communicants, would ye know how matters are with you now, and how it is like to fare with you for ever? Would you have your hearts affected with your condition, and made acquaint with Jeſus Chriſt? Would ye have a viſit from Chriſt at his table? Would you have grace quickened, and your wants ſupplied? Would ye be worthy receivers, and prevent your eating and drinking your own damnation? Then examine yourſelves before ye approach. Many a Chriſtian can declare, that the time of their ſearching themſelves in their younger years, in order to prepare for the Lord's table, was the very time their hearts were firſt engaged to Jeſus Chriſt and ſerious godlineſs. O wherefore is it that there are ſo many dead and formal communicants, why ſo many hard-hearted and impenitent ſinners, who could never yet be brought to mourn for their ſins, or turn from them to God and holineſs? The reaſon is plain from God's word, Jer. viii. 6. Lam. iii. 40. Pſal. cxix. 59. They are ſtrangers to the duty of ſelf-examination.

If you neglect to examine yourſelves, remember you have to do with an all-ſeeing and heart-ſearching God, who will not fail to examine and find out every careleſs and unworthy communicant to his utter ſhame and confuſion. Chriſt, whoſe eyes are as a flame of fire, will certainly come in and ſee the gueſts, and when he comes, he will look narrowly upon them: And, tho' the houſe be full of gueſts, he will ſpy out *one man that wants a wedding-garment*, Mat. xxii. 11. In a great ground or multitude, one ſingle man might think to ſculk and not be found out; but we ſee that not one man can eſcape his piercing eyes: far leſs then can forty, fifty or an hundred unworthy communicants think to eſcape in one of our congregations. Again, remember what was the fate of the man that came to the feaſt without the wedding-garment. In the firſt place, we ſee our Lord not only ſpied and ſingled him out, but he examined him alſo. The man had come without examining himſelf before hand whether he had this wedding-garment or no; but God ſmartly examined him. So that we ſee, theſe who will not be at the pains and trouble to examine themſelves, God will examine them to purpoſe: Yea, it will be ſuch an examination, as the chief captain commanded Paul to be examined with, Acts xxii. 24. *viz.* that he ſhould be *examined by ſcourging*. Every queſtion and interrogatory that God will put to a ſinner, or any unworthy communicant will have a laſh or ſting along with it. What a *ſcourging queſtion* did he put to that man, Mat. xxii. 12. *Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?* It was ſo ſharp, it drew blood of his conſcience; nay, it ſtunned and confounded him; it is ſaid, *he was ſpeechleſs*. Friend, ſays he, why? Thou profeſſeſt thyſelf to be a friend of Chriſt, and doſt aſſociate thyſelf with his friends; but, in thy heart thou art an enemy to Chriſt, a traitor that comeſt to ſtab him under the fifth rib, *Therefore bind him hand and foot, and take him away*, &c. ver. 13. In the mean time, the man is ſpeechleſs, Chriſt-condemned, and ſelf-condemned; he had nothing to ſay againſt the juſtice of the ſentence. The man that comes without a wedding-garment on his back, ſhall not go without chains and fetters on his feet, his hands, yea, on his heart, his will, his conſcience, and his whole ſoul. Better for the man to have examined himſelf, and ſo to have prevented this terrible examination and ſentence.

God's queſtions to unworthy receivers will be nonpluſſing and confounding. Conſider theſe ſtinging interrogatories, Iſai. i. 12. "Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" Pſal. l. 16. "What haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?" Jer. vii. 9. 10. "Will ye ſteal, murder, commit adultery, and walk after other gods, and come and ſtand before me in this houſe?" Theſe be ſcourging examinations, that fetch blood at every ſtroke; and you may look for it that God will come and examine thee thus, either by an awakened conſcience in this life, or at a dying hour, or aſſoon as thou entereſt into eternity: "And who may abide the day of his coming?" Now; the way to prevent ſuch an examination, is to examine yourſelves: For, "if we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged. David did not fear God's examination, when he had examined himſelf ſincerely before hand; nay, with a humble confidence he doth appeal to God to ſearch him, Pſal. cxxxix. 23. 24. Search me O God, and know my heart, try me, *&c.* Wouldſt thou prevent the terror of God's ſearch, then put ſearching queſtions to yourſelf before hand, and ſee how matters are with your ſoul. It is better to have conſcience awakened to ſearch thee now, than to have it awakened in hell, where there is no place for repentance.

This is a duty incumbent, not only on natural and unrenewed men, and upon theſe who were not at the Lord's table before, but even upon the beſt of men, and theſe who have communicated frequently. We can never be too ſure about our ſouls eſtate; beſides, we daily contract new guilt, are liable to new decays, new wants, new burdens and grievances: And therefore the beſt have need to examine themſelves every time they repair to this holy feaſt, but much more they who were never there before.

Now there are ſeveral things you ought to enquire into at ſuch a time. 1, The ſtate and condition of your ſouls. 2. Your ſins and ſhortcomings. 3. Your wants and neceſſities. 4. Your ends and deſigns. 5. Your graces and qualifications.

I have diſcourſed all theſe points very fully in my ſacramental catechiſm, from page 117. to page 210. *(firſt edit.)* to which the reader is referred. Some few things more I ſhall add here.

I. *Of the Examination of our State.*

Seeing this holy feaſt belongs only to the children of God, and theſe that are ſtrangers have no right to it, it highly concerns all that deſign to approach to the Lord's table to examine what ſtate they are in. As the Lord cried to Adam in the garden, *Adam, where art thou?* ſo do thou cry to thy ſoul, O my ſoul where art thou? Art thou in the broad way or in the narrow? Whether art thou in Satan's or in Chriſt's camp? Whether under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Under a cloud of wrath, or a banner of love? In a ſpecial manner, there are two important queſtions that every communicant ſhould much think upon; *Whoſe am I?* and, *Whom ſerve I?* Happy is the man that can anſwer both theſe queſtions with Paul, Acts xxvii. 22. *It is God whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve.* It is not the devil, it is not the world, it is not my luſts: but God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve. Surely Paul in this condition, tho' a poor deſpiſed priſoner, was happier than Cæſar himſelf, to whoſe bar he was then going. Alas, it is to be feared, there are many communicants, if they would anſwer the foreſaid queſtions truly, might ſay, It is not God, but the devil or the world, or fleſhly luſts, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve. "Oh, Lord, pity ſuch, and open their eyes to ſee what woful maſters and bad ſervice they are engaged unto, and deliver them ſpeedily from their bondage."

Look then to yourſelves examine your ſtate, and ſee if you be among theſe who have a right to this ſacred meal. Have you theſe Characters?

I. Are you prieſts to God? Under the law, it was not lawful for any to eat of the ſhew-bread but the prieſts, Mark ii. 26. ſo, under the goſpel, none have a right to eat of this conſecrated bread but theſe who pertain to the ſpiritual prieſthood. Try then if ye be prieſts to God, 1. Are you ſet apart and dedicated to God, by your own conſent and voluntary reſignation? 2, Are you related to the great high prieſt of the church, Jeſus Chriſt, and do you pertain to his family? 3. Are you conſecrated to God, being waſhed in Chriſt's blood? Rev. i. 5. 6. "He hath loved us and waſhed us in his blood, and he hath made us prieſts unto God." 4. Do you offer up to God the ſpritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſes? Heb xiii. 15. 5. Do you preſent the ſacrifice of Chriſt's blood and merits in the hand of faith to divine juſtice, whenever you find yourſelves accuſed by the law or challenged by conſcience? well then, if you have theſe marks of prieſts, it is lawful for you to come and eat of this holy ſhew-bread.

II. Are you members of God's family and houſhold? then have you a right to this precious food: For Chriſt's fleſh and blood in the ſacrament is the food that God provides for theſe of his own houſhold; not for ſtrangers or foreigners, not for dogs or profane perſons, Mat. xv. 26. "It is not meet (ſaith our Lord) to take the childrens bread and caſt it to dogs." Are you children of the family ? then may you eat of the houſhold proviſion. But ah may ſome ſay, how ſhall we be numbred among the children ? Have ye faith in a Redeemer ? then are ye among the children, Gal. iii. 26. *Ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.* Are ye born in his houſe ? Is there a ſaving change wrought upon you ? Have you the natures of children ? Are ye friends of Chriſt, and ſincere well wiſhers to him, his family and intereſt in the world ? then you have a right to the childrens bread.

III. Obſerve the characters of theſe who were admitted to eat of the paſſover in Ezra's time, Ezra. vi. 21. "And the children of Iſrael who were come again out of captivity, and all ſuch as had ſeparated themſelves from the filthineſs of the heathen of the land, to ſeek the Lord God of Iſrael, did eat." Now, there are three characters of theſe ancient partakers mentioned ;

1. They were ſuch of the Iſraelites *as were come out of captivity* ; for, while they were captives in Babylon, they did not eat the paſſover. Well, try yourſelves if you be among Chriſt's ranſom'd captives, delivered from the bondage of ſatan, the reigning power of ſin and captivity of your luſts.

2. They were ſuch *as had ſeparated themſelves from the filthineſs of the heathen, viz.* Swearing, whoring, drunkenneſs, profanation of the Lord's day, &c. theſe things are the filthineſs of the heathens. Examine, if you be ſeparated from all theſe abominations, not only from the practice but even from the love of them.

3. They were ſuch as deſigned ſincerely to ſeek the Lord God of Iſrael. Well, can you ſay, it is the great aim of your ſoul in approaching to the Lord's table, to ſeek the Lord and Maſter of the feaſt ; it is not the outward ordinance, but a gracious meeting with the God of ordinances, that your ſouls thirſt for ? Then you may come and eat of the goſpel-paſſover.

By theſe and ſuch like characters, let communicants examine what ſtate they are in, before they adventure to this holy table. This is a feaſt for Chriſt's friends to eat of, Cant. v. 1. And if enemies thruſt themſelves in among them, it is at their higheſt peril. This ordinance ſuppoſes you to be within that covenant which it doth ſeal ; for theſe who are out of the covenant have nothing to do with the ſeals of it. It ſuppoſes you to have ſomething of that ſpiritual life which it doth ſuſtain and nouriſh ; ſo that theſe who are dead in ſin have no right to meddle with it. Uncircumciſed perſons were not to eat of the paſſover ; ſo neither are unrenewed perſons to eat of the Lord's ſupper. You muſt be born before you can eat ; you muſt be united to Chriſt before you can feed on him ; you cannot receive juice or ſap from the vine except you are a branch in it. It very much concerns you then at ſuch a time to enquire narrowly into the ſtate of your ſouls ; and, in order to attain a true diſcovery thereof, you ought to put plain and particular queſtions to yourſelves, and charge your conſciences as in the preſence of God to give free and ingenuous anſwers thereto. And for inſtance, ſee what anſwers you can give to theſe queſtions following.

Queſt. 1. *Have I never been ſpiritually inlightned,* and got my eyes opened to ſee the depravation of my nature, and the ſinfulneſs of my heart and life, and that I am all as an unclean thing before God ?

Queſt. 2. *Have I been truly convinced and made ſenſible of the exceeding evil that is in ſin ?* Is my heart touched with a deep remorſe for it, and brought to lothe it, and willingly to forſake every known ſin ? Was I ever brought the length, even to be willing to be looſed from this body of fleſh, that I may be freed from the body of ſin ?

Queſt. 3. *Have I been brought to ſee my abſolute need of Chriſt* to ſave me from ſin and wrath, to bring me unto God, and to give me grace and glory ? Have I ſeen ſuch beauty, and taſted ſuch ſweetneſs in Chriſt, that he is truly precious to me, and altogether lovely in my eſteem, ſo that I would gladly part with all things for him ?

Queſt. 4. *Have I a covenant relation to and intereſt in God, as mine ?* Have I made choice of him as my God, and portion, and have I reſigned and given up myſelf to him ? Can I ſay, I am thine, Lord, and all I have both body and ſoul ? Are my eyes the Lord's to behold his wondrous works ? Are my ears his, to hear his heavenly word ? Are my taſte and ſmell his, to reliſh his ſurpaſſing ſweetneſs in the creatures ? Is my tongue his, to proclaim and triumph in his praiſe ? Are my hands his to work what is good, aud to help his people ? Are my feet his, to walk in his ways ? Is my underſtanding his, to know his will, and contemplate his perfections ? Is my memory his, to treaſure up his counſels and promiſes ? Is my conſcience his, for a deputy to accuſe or excuſe under him ? Is my will his, to chuſe or refuſe according to his pleaſure ? Is my grief his, to mourn for what is offenſive to him ? Is my hatred his, to abhor and flee from what is hateful to him ? Are my deſires his, to long and pant for his preſence ? My love his, to embrace him ? My delight his, to acquieſce fully and contentedly in him ?

Queſt. 5. *Is ſin in ſome meaſure mortified in me ?* Do I find it weaker, or have I more ſtrength to reſiſt it than formerly ? Is it now my grief and burden to find it moving and ſtirring in my heart ?

Queſt. 6. *Doth the intereſt of God my Creator and Redeemer prevail in my heart* above the reſt of the world or of the fleſh ? Do I ſeek chiefly and above all things the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs ? Do I prefer Jeruſalem above my chief joy ?

Now, if you thus examine yourſelves, and commune with your own hearts in ſecrcet, you may, by the bleſſing of God, come to find out the truth concerning your ſpiritual ſtate and condition.

Obj. *But may we not miſtake in examining our ſtate ? Do not we ſee the moſt part of men preſuming that their ſtate is ſafe and good, and having little doubt of their right to the childrens bread ?*

Anſ. 1ſt. There are many, we need make no great queſtion anent their ſtate ; ſuch as the groſly ignorant, who know not the miſery of a natural ſtate, nor their need of Chriſt ; and the openly profane, who go in the broad way of ſwearing, lying, drunkenneſs neglect of prayer, *&c.* He that runs may read their character, that they are Chriſtleſs and unconverted : Whoever they be that are in this ſtate, and go on in it, they are unfit for this ordinance, they are not invited gueſts, they have no part nor lot in this matter. Ignorant perſons cannot examine themſelves, nor diſcern the Lord's body ; profane perſons mock God, when they pretend to ſeal a covenant with him : And, if they thruſt themſelves upon this table, they affront Chriſt, and ſeal their own condemnation. We would reckon it a lothſome ſight to ſee ſome death corps, or men full of plague-ſores ſit down beſide us at our tables: And, do you think that living and holy God can look with pleaſure upon dead ſinners, or theſe with the running ulcers of ſwearing, drunkenneſs, *&c.* ſitting at his holy table? Let all ſuch ſtand off; for they will find poiſon in the bread, and death in the cup, and go away worſe than they came. This is not a converting but a confirming ordinance in its own nature, and therefore doth ſuppoſe that they are converted, and in Chriſt, who come to it.

2. There are others who come the length of a form and profeſſion of religion, that yet are in a bad ſtate; and if they would allow themſelves the free uſe of their reaſon, and compare their caſe with the word, they might eaſily perceive the badneſs of their condition. Upon a ſmall ſearch they might diſcover, that tho' they perform ſome duties, yet it is not for the glory of God, but to be ſeen of men, or to ſatisfy a natural conſcience; they reſt upon their duties, and make a ſaviour of them: And tho' they read, hear, or pray, yet they never notice heart-work; they love the world more than God, and mind the things of the fleſh more than the things of the ſpirit; they are careleſs about ſecret prayers, and allow themſelves in known ſin; they ſuffer pride, covetouſneſs, malice, revenge, and other luſts to reign in their hearts, without reſiſting them, or mourning for them: And ſurely theſe are black marks of a Chriſtleſs ſtate. And if ye would ſet up a tribunal in your own breaſts, and hear what God's word and your own conſciences would conclude concerning your condition, ye would find yourſelves ranked among the unclean, and ſuch as have no right to the childrens bread, while you remain in your preſent ſtate: But, alas, how many ſuch do ruſh upon this ſolemn ordinance, without any heart-ſearch, or acquaintance with themſelves! They truſt to their outward form, and hence flatter themſelves that they are ſafe enough; and ſo, like the *fooliſh virgins*, they ſlumber away their time, ſtill dreaming of heaven and happineſs; and nothing that God's word or miniſters do ſay will undeceive them till the *cry at midnight* awaken them; and behold then, when they open their eyes, they meet with an eternal diſappointment: When they thought on nothing but open gates at the firſt knock, behold, the draw-bridge of mercy is taken up, and the gates of heaven ſhut in, and they hear nothing but that terrible voice, *depart from me, I know you not.* O that he who ſearcheth Jeruſalem with candles, and knows the heart, would undeceive you and awaken you in time!

3. There are others who are really in a good ſtate, tho' the evidences of it are not ſo clear to them; Satan raiſes many fogs and miſts to obſcure the ſight of grace, and the ſaving change that the ſpirit of God hath wrought in their ſouls. Beſides what I have formerly ſaid, I ſhall add theſe few marks or queſtions more whereby you may diſcern it;

1. *Have ye got new diſcoveries of things which ye had not before?* Tho' perhaps ye cannot tell exactly the time, manner and ſteps of the change; yet can ye ſay, with the *blind man*, John ix. 25. *One thing I know, that whereas once I was blind now I ſee.* "Once I ſaw little evil in ſin, but now I ſee it exceeding vile and damnable: Once I thought there was ſome good thing in me, but now I ſee my heart is deceitful and deſperately wicked, and ſwarming full of baſe luſts: Once I ſlighted heart-holineſs, but now I ſee it to be moſt beautiful and neceſſary: Once I ſaw little need of Chriſt, but now I ſee he is more neceſſary to my ſoul, than meet and drink to my body: Once I ſaw little beauty in Chriſt, but now I ſee him to be the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, nay, among all the thouſands in the world." Then to be ſure there is a change wrought; tho' ye were once darkneſs, yet now are ye light in the Lord.

2. *What are theſe things you are moſt taken up and concerned about?* Can you ſay, once it was my queſtion, *What ſhall I eat, what ſhall I drink, and wherewithal ſhall I be clothed?* But now my great queſtion is, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Once my main care was to ſecure and increaſe my temporal enjoyments; but now it is to lay up my treaſure in heaven, and clear up my evidences for it: Once the world and temporal things were my uptaking buſineſs; but now my Saviour, my ſoul, and eternity, are my chief concerns, and ly neareſt to my heart.

3. How ſtand your hearts towards ſecret and ſpiritual duties, and towards ſecret and ſpiritual ſins? 1. As for the firſt, Do you earneſtly deſire and ſtudy patience under affliction, meekneſs under injuries, and contentment with your lot and condition? Do you ſtudy humility and lowlineſs of mind, and deſire to have pride brought down, that you may be ſtill lower in your own eyes? Are ye delighted with ſecret mourning for ſin? Are ye deſirous of intimate converſe with God by ſecret prayer and meditation? Wherever grace is wrought in the heart, it bends towards God, and centers in him. It is the voice and very firſt cry of the new creature in the ſoul, Pſal. lxxii. 88. *It is good for me to draw nigh to God. Nearneſs* to God is the mean of its livelihood and ſubſiſtance. This is given as the mark of Paul's change, Acts ix. 11. *Behold, he prayeth.* The Spirit of grace is never a dumb Spirit, Zech. xii. 10. Gal. iv. 6. But, if thou art a ſtranger to converſe with God in ſecret duties, it is a ſad ſign of thy eſtrangement to a ſaving change upon thy ſoul.

4. How ſtand you affected to ſecret and ſpiritual ſins? Are you grieved for your pride and ambition, envy, unbelief, atheiſtical thoughts, backwardneſs to duty? *&c.* Do ye feel the ſtirrings of indwelling corruption and heart-luſts, and earneſtly ſtrive againſt them? Doth the eye of God, or the love of Chriſt, reſtrain you as much from ſecret ſins as from open tranſgreſſions? Do you abhor the temptations to ſin, and ſtart at the firſt appearance thereof like Joſeph, Gen. xxvi. *How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God.*

Obj. *Alas, I am a poor, dark, confuſed creature; I know not what to make of my caſe; I would ſometimes fain lay claim to ſome of the foreſaid marks, but preſently I am beat off, and all is darkned to me: For when I begin to conſider narrowly, I cannot ſay that I have any true love to Chriſt, or that I ever rightly cloſed with him by faith; I know a little of a work of grace in my heart; I cannot take up the beauty of Chriſt and of holineſs.*

Anſ. I pity theſe poor trembling and doubting ſouls, who cannot attain to any light or clearneſs about their condition; who yet are labouring for it, and would give all the world to obtain it: And tho' in the mean time they dare not renounce all hope, yet they can ſee no ſolid ground to build upon, and are often tempted to give over all further endeavours.

To ſuch I would ſay, that you ought to wait on God, and hold on in the way of duty to your lives end, whatever diſcouragements you meet with therein; God in his own time will let you know, that your labour is not in vain. In the mean time, for thy comfort, I would aſk thee ſome few queſtions;

1. Thou ſayeſt, thou haſt no love to Chriſt, nor haſt thou cloſed with him by faith. But, *is love to Chriſt* that which thou wouldſt faineſt have of any thing in the world? Is it thy greateſt grief, ſo that ſometimes it forceth tears from thine eyes, that thou canſt not get thy wretched heart to love him? Then, to be ſure, thou art not deſtitute of love to him. Haſt thou not ſo much love to him as makes every thing that bears his image amiable in thine eyes? You are feared you love him not; but, can you ſay there is nothing in all the world would pleaſe ſo much as one ray or love-blink of his countenance? And tho' he ſhould never own you, yet you reſolve to lie all your days at his feet, and look up to him, and to none other for ſalvation: Then be of good cheer, poor ſoul, for theſe are comfortable degrees of faith and love.

2. What is the object in all the world that thy reſtleſs heart is moſt pointing out after? Canſt thou ſay, if thy heart deceive thee not, it is an *intereſt in Chriſt, communion with God, and love to his ways*; and obtaining of theſe would yield thee more content than all the gold of Ophir? Then, to be ſure there is true grace wrought in thee. There are many true diamonds that are but like ſparks in reſpect of bigger ſtones, yet theſe are as true as the other. Every degree of grace is grace; and ſincere deſires after grace, are certainly true grace.

3. Upon what is it that you ſpend the ſtrength of your prayers, and what are you moſt earneſt for? Is it, O doubting ſoul, for the death of ſin, the removal of heart-plagues, the curing of heart-wanderings, heart-deadneſs and backwardneſs to duty? Again, doſt thou ſpend another great part of thy prayers for the increaſe and lively exerciſe of grace, and for the actings of faith and love? Then this is a ſure mark of the Spirit's work in thy ſoul; for, if thou ſaw not the evil of ſin and beauty of grace, thou wouldſt not ſpend the ſtrength of thy prayers for killing ſin, and quickning grace in thy ſoul.

But, laſtly, O doubting ſoul, if thou canſt not win to clearneſs, by poring on the marks of grace and faith, (as indeed ſometimes doubting believers cannot, ſince there is no mark that can be given, but a ſcrupulous conſcience will find a back door) then try another way, endeavour to act faith in a direct manner upon Jeſus Chriſt; for many times a believer will ſooner come to a clearneſs of his intereſt by the direct acts of faith, than by the reflex acts. Therefore, if thou canſt not ſee faith in thy ſoul, then preſently flee to Chriſt, and lay hold upon the offer and promiſe of life, as if thou hadſt never done it before. Run as a malefactor to the city of refuge for protection, as if you had never fled there before: Go as a wounded man to the phyſician for a plaiſter to thy wounds, as if you had never got one applied before. Go tranſact and covenant with God in Chriſt, as if you had never eſſayed any thing like it before; for whatever you have been, Chriſt ſtill tenders himſelf to you to be your Saviour, and you cannot poſſibly be ſo willing to accept of him as he is to accept of you. Try this method, and there is good ground to hope, that light will break up, and fears evaniſh; and ſo you may with comfort come to this ſealing ordinance.

II. *Of the Examination of our Sins.*

Examine yourſelves of your ſins and ſhort-comings; take an account of your debts, and ſee how great they are: Put the queſtion to yourſelves, which the unjuſt ſteward put to his Lord's debtors, *How much oweſt thou to my Lord?* And ſee that ye tell the truth, and do not for a *hundred* write down *fifty*, as many a falſe conſcience doth: But deal truly and ingenuouſly, for an all-ſeeing God is looking on. Do as the Jews, who, before the celebration of the paſſover, ſearched their houſes for leaven very narrowly; they lighted candles, and ſought every corner and hole therein; and, when they found it, they threw it away with deteſtation. Some think it is with alluſion to this cuſtom, that the Lord is ſaid *to ſearch Jeruſalem with candles*, Zeph. i. 12. In like manner you muſt narrowly ſearch every corner of your hearts for the leaven of pride, avarice, malice and hypocriſy, 1 Cor. v. 7. 8. The iniquities of wicked men will find them out, but good men will find out their iniquities. Now, if ye will find them out, ye muſt ſet time apart, and conveen your ſouls before God and conſcience, and compare your hearts and lives with God's word, and the rule of his commandments. Look back upon your actions, recal the paſſages of your lives, and remember your faults before the Lord. If you would have your repentance full, ye muſt endeavour to take a full and particular view of your ſins, both original and actual, of omiſſion and commiſſion, of youth and riper age, of purpoſe and of practice, of heart and of life. View your ſins both ſecret and open, againſt the firſt and ſecond table; conſider how ye have wronged God, your neighbour and yourſelves; how ye have tranſgreſſed every commandment, either in thoughts, words or deeds: Think upon the luſts of your hearts, the ſins of your tongues, and outbreakings of your lives. Particularly, ſearch out your predominent and beloved ſins, and alſo the heinous circumſtances and aggravations of your ſins; and forget not to examine yourſelves concerning the breach of former vows, and the guilt contracted ſince the laſt ſacrament. Let no wound or ſore be concealed or ſkinned over, but ſearch them all to the bottom, if you would have them perfectly cured. Let it not ſatisfy you to aſk conſcience in an overly way concerning the foreſaid ſins, but wait for an anſwer, nay, urge it to give it, and put it hard to it.

III. *Of the Examination of our Wants.*

Examine your wants and neceſſities, and come ſenſible of them to this ordinance, where ye may find all needful ſupplies treaſured up in Chriſt's fullneſs, which is here exhibited; ſearch out your defects and needs, and come to Chriſt with them. Are you polluted, heavy loaden, and under bonds and terror? Do you ſee yourſelves blind, naked, lame, ſick or wounded? Come ſenſible of thy miſeries, O ſinner, to Chriſt, who has a broad plaiſter for every ſore. Doſt thou find thy graces weak? Doth thy faith ſhake, thy hope ſtagger, thy love decline, thy holy deſires abate? Doſt thou want wiſdom, ſincerity, ſelf-denial, meekneſs, humility or brokenneſs of heart? Then come ſenſible of theſe defects to Chriſt for new ſupplies and reinforcements. Do you want a ſight of your intereſt in Chriſt, a ſeal of your pardon, clear and unclouded evidences of grace, a view of the King's face, or ſtrength to vanquiſh your luſts ? Nay, are you tryſted with bodily wants and infirmities, croſſes and loſſes, and many outward preſſures and afflictions ? Then come with a due ſenſe of all theſe wants and burdens upon your ſpirits to Jeſus Chriſt, and caſt them all upon him. In this ordinance Chriſt ſets himſelf upon a throne of grace, with a ſceptre of mercy in his hand, and waits to hear his peoples complaints and petitions. A feaſting time is a time of granting requeſts ; ſee then that ye be ready to preſent yours at this feaſt. Chriſt here ſaith to thee as the King did to Eſther at the banquet of wine, Eſth. v. *What is thy petition ? and what is thy requeſt ? and it ſhall be granted thee.* Or as he ſaid unto the blind men, Mat. xx. 23. *What will ye that I ſhall do unto you ?* Be ready with them to anſwer, " Lord, that our eyes may be opened ;" or Lord, that our hearts may be ſoftned ; Lord, that ſuch a weak grace may be cheriſhed, that ſuch a ſtrong luſt may be vanquiſhed, that ſuch a plague may be removed, *&c.*

IV. *Of the Examination of our Ends.*

Examine your ends and deſigns in approaching to the Lord's table. Chriſt examines the peoples ends in going to hear John, Mat. xi. 7. *What went you out for to ſee ?* Much more ought we to examine our ends in going to the Lord's table. See that it be not to obſerve the faſhion of the country where you live, or to get a name, and be the better thought of by miniſters, friends or neighbours, or to make atonement for your ſins, as ſome ignorant perſons among us do apprehend, who reſt upon the bare ordinance and outward ſigns and elements for pardon and juſtification, without looking to Chriſt for it : Thus, alas, many content themſelves with Elijah's mantle, without aſking for the God of Elijah ; give them the ſhell, they aſk not for the kernel : Let them have their communion (as they call it) tho' it really be nothing but a bit of bread and a ſip of wine, they think all is well, their ſins are pardoned, they are ſure of heaven, they are ready to die, the devil can have no power over them ; and ſo they uſe this ſacrament as a charm, being ignorant of the true ends and uſes of it.

Queſt. *What are theſe ends and deſigns we ought to have in our approaches to this ſacred table ?*

Anſ. It is of great conſequence to be well inſtructed hereof, and to try ourſelves diligently concerning them. Examine then,

(1.) If it be your deſign ſincerely to give obedience to our Lord and Saviour's call. Can ye ſay, that his authority hath a powerful influence upon you in this matter and ye dare not ſlight it, and that ye cannot think of neglecting Chriſt's dying charge, and the command he hath left behind him to his diſciples, to ſolemnize and celebrate the memorial of his dying love ?

(2.) Is it your deſign *to ſhew forth Chriſt's death ?* This ſhould be your great buſineſs in this ordinance, 1 Cor. xi. 25. 26. You are to ſhew forth and annunciate Chriſt's death three ways ;

1. With reſpect to yourſelves, you are by this ſacrament to give a lively repreſentation to your mind of Chriſt's death, and keep up a freſh remembrance of his ſufferings and dying love, and of the great propitiatory ſacrifice he offered for you upon the croſs, and the great things he hath thereby purchaſed for you ; and hereby you are to raiſe your faith and hope in a crucified Saviour.

2. With reſpect to the world, you are hereby to teſtify your reſpect to a crucified Chriſt, and that ye publicly own yourſelves to be his diſciples ; and are not aſhamed of a crucified Jeſus, or his ignominious death, but glory in it, as the wiſdom of God, and power of God ; and count it your honour to be his followers. As alſo, ye declare that ye look to his death and merits as the only hope of your ſalvation, and reject all other ſaviours beſides him.

3. With reſpect to God, and that two ways ; 1. ſhew forth Chriſt's death to a juſt and ſin-revenging God, in a way of faith and prayer : Preſent and plead this ſacrifice as a ſkreen and defence againſt the ſword of juſtice, the wrath of God, and curſe of the law ; plead it as the ground of all your hopes and deſires. 2. Shew it forth to a good God, in a way of thankſgiving and praiſe. Praiſe God for ſuch a glorious Redeemer, and ſuch an excellent ſacrifice ; bleſs him that ſent him, and bleſs him that came. Thankſgiving to God is a ſpecial deſign of this ordinance, and upon this account it is called the *Euchariſt* or thankſgiving. Here is it we ſhould celebrate the praiſes of our Redeemer, who came from a throne to a dunghill, yea from the height of glory to the depth of miſery, to ſave us from periſhing eternally.

(3.) Is it your deſign to renew a ſeal and covenant with God in Chriſt, ratify your baptiſmal vows, and ſolemnly bind yourſelves to be the Lord's people ? As believers here come to get God's ſeals of his covenant, for confirming their right to the benefits of it ; ſo alſo they are to ſeal their covenant engagements, to take God for their God, accept of Chriſt for their prince and Saviour, give up themſelves to him, renounce ſin and walk in the ways of goſpel-obedience. Now, becauſe many profeſs to covenant with God in this ordinance, who yet deal falſly with him, you ought to be at great pains to try the ſincerity of your hearts in this matter. And, for trial of it, ſee if you can ſay, that your wicked hearts are a greater burden to you than all the croſſes and troubles you meet with in the world ; and that you are more deſirous to be rid of ſin and heart-plagues, than of any affliction whatſoever. Or, can you ſay that you deſire heart-holineſs, and further degrees of grace, of faith, love and brokenneſs of heart for ſin, more than any honours, profits or pleaſures this world can afford ? Or, can ye ſay, that the world's beſt things are in your eyes as dung or nothing, in compariſon of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs and an intereſt ſecured therein ? And, can ye ſay that ye are ſenſible of your own inſufficiency and weakneſs to make or keep any covenant with God ; and therefore ye are made to renounce all confidence in yourſelves, and to ſay, *In the Lord only I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength ?* Then theſe are good ſigns that you are honeſt and ſincere in the making of this bargain and are likely to be found ſtedfaſt in God's covenant.

(4.) Is it your deſign to draw near to God, and hold intimate communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt in this ordinance ? And, do you earneſtly deſire that *ye may ſup with him and he with you ?* This table is inſtituted for the kindly correſpondence of Chriſt and his people, and their mutual feaſting one with another : For, as Chriſt here ſets before you the *dainties and comforts of heaven,* and invites you to feaſt thereon ; ſo you are to ſet your graces and affections before him, and invite him to come into his garden and eat his pleaſant fruits. You are to come here, not only to receive the tokens of

Chriſt's love to you, but alſo to give the expreſſions of your love to him. Here there is a mutual communication of ſecrets betwixt Chriſt and his people.

(5.) Is it your deſire to get your manifold wants ſupplied out of Chriſt's fulneſs? Is it your earneſt deſire that his ordinance may be an effectual mean, thro' the bleſſing of God, for the weakning and killing of your ſins and luſts, the nouriſhing and ſtrengthning of your ſouls, the curing of your diſeaſes and plagues, the increaſe and exerciſe of your graces; particularly for ſtrengthning faith, inflaming your love, kindling your deſires, quickning your hope, and renewing your repentance and reſolutions againſt ſin.

Again, is it your deſign to get clearer evidences of your intereſt in Chriſt, the ſmiles of his face, and comforts of his ſpirit? Would ye have a ſeal of your pardon, a diſplay of the riches of free grace, a ſight of the *Sun of righteouſneſs*, *the love of God ſhed abroad in your hearts*, and all your fears removed? Would ye have at this feaſt furniture for your ſpiritual journey, ſupport under affliction, ſtrength againſt temptations, and preparation for ſuffering? Would ye have a pledge and foretaſte of heaven, and the eternal communion that is above? Then theſe are good deſigns; and, if you be ſincere in them, you may expect a welcome from the maſter of the feaſt.

V. *Of the examination of our Graces.*

A fifth thing you muſt examine yourſelves of, in order to prepare you for this holy table, is your graces and qualifications. Search diligently if you have theſe ſacramental graces requiſite in worthy communicants; ſuch as *knowledge, faith, love, repentance, hungring deſires, and new obedience.*

I. We muſt examine our *knowledge*, and ſee if we have a competent underſtanding of the principles and grounds of Chriſtianity, and of the nature, ſignification and uſe of the Lord's ſupper. Without this, we cannot know God nor ourſelves; we can neither know God's infinite juſtice and purity, our own natural corruption and miſery, nor Jeſus Chriſt our great help and remedy, the knowledge whereof is abſolutely neceſſary to worthy communicating. In ſome churches in ancient times *infants* and *children* were admitted to the Lord's ſupper, and the *Greek* and *Armenian* churches do the ſame at this day: But we juſtly diſſent from them in this practice, becauſe it is neceſſary in order to our being fit and worthy partakers, that we *examine ourſelves*, and *diſcern the Lord's body* in the ſacrament, according to 1 Cor. xi. 28. 29. neither of which can be done by theſe that are not come to the years of underſtanding and diſcerning.

A man without knowledge is not in covenant with God, and therefore hath no right to partake of the ſeals of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10. 11. *This is the covenant I will make,* &c. *all ſhall know me from the leaſt to the greateſt.* So that theſe who know not God have no intereſt in this covenant, and conſequently can have no title to his benefits, nor any gracious communion with God. Obſerve how the promiſe runs, Jer. xxiv. 7. *I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God.*

It is threatned as a heavy judgment, for perſons to die without knowledge, Job xxxvi. 12. *They ſhall die without knowledge:* It is as much as if it were threatned, they ſhall die in their ſins, and periſh for ever. Now, if it be a ſad caſe to die without knowledge, ſo is it to come to the ſacrament without knowledge; for that which makes a man unfit to die, makes him alſo unfit to communicate. No man is ſafe to partake in that caſe, which he is not in ſafety to die in.

Neither children nor fools are fit to receive the Lord's ſupper, becauſe they are not capable to examine themſelves and diſcern the Lord's body. Now, ignorant perſons in God's account are both children and fools; ſo he reckons them, Jer. iv. 22. *For my people is fooliſh, they have not known me, they are ſottiſh childern, they have no underſtanding.*

Under the law it was reckoned an abomination to offer that which was blind unto the Lord, Levit. xxii. 22. Now, a blind offerer, that hath the eyes of his underſtanding darkned, is more abominable than a blind offering.

Error or ignorance makes a man morally unclean before God. When the leproſy affected the head, then the prieſt was ordered to pronounce the man *utterly unclean*, and exclude him from the *camp of Iſrael*; why? becauſe *his plague was in his head*, Levit. xiii. 44. Every ignorant man has a plague in his head, a plague of ſpiritual blindneſs and darkneſs, beſides many woful plagues in his heart; for without knowledge *the mind is not good;* (whatever ignorant folk ſpeak of their good hearts, and good meanings) it is full of earthlineſs, enmity and backwardneſs to what is good, Prov. xix. 2. 1 Pet. i. 14. Surely then ſuch unclean perſons are not fit to come to the holy table of the Lord. It concerns us then to examine our knowledge before we approach. As for the objects, properties and uſefulneſs of this knowledge, I refer the reader to *Sacram. Cat. (firſt Edit.)* p. 165, *&c.*

II. Examine your faith, before you approach to the the Lord's table; for faith is abſolutely neceſſary here. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God* in any duty, and far leſs in this, where faith is highly needful, and ſo much to be employed. He that would receive Jeſus Chriſt in the ſacrament, muſt have an eye to ſee Chriſt and his worth, a *foot* to come to Chriſt, a *hand* to lay hold on Chriſt, and a *mouth* to feed on him; all theſe are neceſſary in order to partake of Chriſt at the Lord's ſupper. Now, *faith* is all theſe to the believing communicant. 1. It is the eye of the ſoul, by which it ſees Chriſt, Iſa. xlv. 22. *look unto me and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth.* 2. It is the *foot* whereby we come unto Chriſt, John vi. 35. *He that cometh unto me ſhall never hunger and he that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt.* 3. It is the *hand* whereby we receive and lay hold on Chriſt, John i. 12. *To as many as received him he gave power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* 4. It is the *mouth* wereby we feed on Chriſt, John vi. 35. *Except ye eat the fleſh and drink the blood of the Son of God, ye have no life in you,* i. e. except ye believe on Chriſt. Now, what can you do at the Lord's table without faith? Can a man ſee without an *eye*, come without a *foot*, receive without a *hand*, and feed without a *mouth?*

Moreover, without faith you can have no right to this holy table, for it is childrens bread; and it is by faith you become children. Without it you cannot enter into covenant with God; for faith is the very aſſent and conſent of the ſoul unto the marriage covenant which is tranſacted and ſealed in the Lord's ſupper.

Without faith you can have no communion with

God in this or any ordinance; God will ſurely hide his face from them that come without it, Deut. xxxii. 20. *And he ſaid, I will hide my face from them;* and the reaſon he gives for it is, *for they are children in whom is no faith.* So that without faith you can't ſee God in the ſacrament; for, how can a man ſee a vailed or hidden face? Unbelief cuts a man off from God, Rom. xi. 20. *Becauſe of unbelief they were broke off.* And, how can a man, cut off from God, have any communion with God?

Without faith you can derive no virtue from Chriſt, nor benefit from this ordinance: For as a rich jewel can do you no good unleſs it be accepted, nor a ſovereign medicine unleſs it be applied, nor a deep well without a bucket to draw with; ſo neither will Chriſt's ſhed blood or purchaſt ſalvation avail you, unleſs you bring faith to apply it to your ſouls. *The well is deep,* ſaid the woman to Chriſt, *and thou haſt nothing to draw with.* So may I ſay to thee, if faith be wanting. Moſes ſaith to God's kindneſs to Iſrael, Deut. xxxii. 13. *He made him to ſuck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.* Now Chriſt is a rock that yields all manner of neceſſaries to believers, honey and oil, ſweetneſs and fatneſs, quickning and comfort. But, how do they come by it from this rock: It is ſaid, *He made him ſuck honey out of the rock:* There is no honey or oil to be had without ſucking, and there is no ſucking without the mouth of faith. He that hath faith can ſuck this honey and oil from Chriſt in the ſacrament; but he that wants it can ſuck nothing: Unbelievers then muſt have a dry ſacrament of it; for they cannot ſuck, tho' the breaſts be full. Nay, which is worſe, unbelief lays reſtraints on the virtue and healing power of Chriſt in the ſacrament: For we are told, Mark vi. 5. 6. *He could there* (i. e. in his own country) *do no mighty work becauſe of their unbelief.* Why? Could any thing bind our Redeemer's hands, or limit his mighty power? No; but he lays down this order of working which he will not alter, to *put forth his mighty power in and unto theſe that believe,* Eph. i. 19. So that unbelief doth enervate the force and operation of the ſacrament.

Without faith you can neither prepare for this ordinance, nor partake of its virtue. Without faith you cannot put on the wedding-garment, you cannot diſcern Chriſt through the elements, you cannot feel the print of the nails, you cannot flee to the city of refuge, you cannot take hold of the horns of the altar, nor grip to the plank of mercy to ſave thy periſhing ſoul. And, what good can you get at the ſacrament if you do none of theſe? Precious faith is the wing whereby the poor trembling dove doth fly to the window opened in the ſide of the ark; it is by this that it doth take ſhelter in the clifts of the rock. In a word, faith is the grace that puts life and vigour in a dead ſoul, it is the ſpring and *primum mobile* of all the other graces; it doth ſet repentance, love, deſire, and all the reſt on work: So that a man can do nothing at the Lord's table without faith, except it be to wound Chriſt, and bring wrath on himſelf.

You ſee then what need you have of faith at this ordinance, and to examine if it be true and not counterfeit. As Philip examined the Eunuch of his faith before he admitted him to the ſacrament of baptiſm, Acts viii. 37. *Believeſt thou with all thine heart?* So ſhould every man examine himſelf before the Lord's ſupper; *Do I believe with all mine heart?* Do I eſteem Chriſt moſt precious? Doth my heart bleed for piercing him? Do I embrace him in all his offices, and ſay, He is all my ſalvation and all my deſire? Well, if thou canſt truly ſay ſo, thy faith will make thee whole, and thou mayſt expect a kind welcome at thy Saviour's table. The Lord has furniſhed you with abundance of marks in his word, for the trial of your faith. See *Sacram. Cat. (firſt Edit.)* p. 172. &c. Try your faith now; for you know not but your faith may come to a fiery trial, as did the martyrs faith of old: And, how will you be able to abide ſuch a trial? "If thou haſt run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how wilt thou contend with horſes?" How wilt thou abide a fiery trial, that cannot endure a cloſet-trial? Men will not buy oxen for plowing, but they are deſirous to put them to trial, Luke xiv. 19. *I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them;* and, will communicants pretend to ſuch precious jewels as faith, love, *&c.* and yet not deſire to prove them, and eſpecially at a time when it is ſo highly requiſite, and ſo very much depends on the doing it?

III. Try your repentance before you partake: For, without a *broken heart,* you cannot expect to meet with a *broken Chriſt* in the ſacrament, but a *broken and a contrite heart is a ſacrifice he will not deſpiſe.* You muſt *ſow in tears,* if you would *reap in joy:* for a wet ſeed time doth here prognoſticate a ſun-ſhiny and plentiful harveſt. It was of water that Chriſt made the choiceſt of wine at the marriage-feaſt in Cana of Galilee; ſo the water of true repentance will produce the choiceſt wine of conſolation in the ſacrament. When Joſeph's brethren came to be ſenſible of their ſin in ſelling him, then it was, and not till then, that he made them a feaſt, and kindly entertained them at his table: So till ſuch time as we be ſenſible of our ſins, and repent for piercing our Redeemer, he will not feaſt us, nor ſmile upon us at his table.

Now, becauſe there is much counterfeit repentance in the world, go retire in ſecret, and put queſtions to yourſelves concerning your repentance: Say, "Am I a penitent in heart, and a ſecret mourner for ſin, when no eyes ſee me but God's? Do I mourn for inward and ſecret ſins, as well as for outward and open ſins? Do I mourn for the diſhonours done to God by the ſins of others, as well as by my own? Am I troubled more for the evil of ſin, than for the evil of affliction? Am I more grieved for abuſing the mercy and goodneſs of God, than for expoſing myſelf to the ſword of his juſtice? Do I cry with the penitent prodigal in my confeſſions, as in Luke xv. 18. *Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee?* Alas, I have wronged a kind and loving father, whoſe goodneſs towards me hath been as the dropping dew: Ah, I have pierced my compaſſionate Redeemer, and crucified him over again by my ſins; and, what do I deſerve at his hands?" Again, What are the effects and fruits of your repentance? Doth it beget in you a vehement hatred and indignation againſt ſin, and a watchfulneſs to prevent it. Wherever there is true repentance, there will be a hearty averſion to ſin. As *a burnt child will dread the fire,* ſo a Chriſtian, who hath truly repented of ſin, is ſo ſenſible of the weight of ſin and the wrath of God, that he is reſolved never more to touch theſe burning coals. David who before his repentance had his conſcience ſo hardned, that he could even drink the blood of Uriah; yet after his repentance his conſcience was ſo tender, that he refuſed ſo much as to drink of that water which had been but the occaſion of hazarding mens lives.

And, *laſtly*, Doth thy repentance work in thee a holy revenge againſt ſin? Doſt thou look upon it as the enemy of God, the murderer of Chriſt, and deſtroyer of thy ſoul? and upon that account, that it doth not deſerve to live? It was Eſau's expreſſion, Gen. xxvii. 41. *The days of mourning for my father are at hand; and then will I ſlay my brother Jacob.* But ſay thou, O communicant, “The days of mourning for the death of my dear Saviour, and everlaſting Father, are come; and now will I ſlay my moſt beloved luſts, now will I be revenged on them for ſeeking to rob me of my ſpiritual birth-right, and wrong me of my eternal bleſſing, and, which is worſe, for actual crucifying of my glorious Redeemer. Shall ſin be ſuffered to live in my ſoul, that would not ſuffer my Saviour to live in the world? Away with it, away with it; crucify it, crucify it. By ſuch marks as theſe try the ſincerity of your repentance.

As for the trial of your love, deſires, ſpiritual appetites, new obedience, and other graces, ſeeing I have no new thing here to add, I refer you to *Sacra. Cat. (firſt edit.)* p. 193. &c.

Some objections of doubting Chriſtians, relative to the former doctrine anſwered.

Obj. 1. BY *what I have heard* (may ſome ſay) *I fear I am not fit nor prepared for this ſolemn ordinance; and it being a thing ſo dangerous to come to it unpreparedly, I tremble and fear to go foreward to that holy table.*

Anſ. 1. Did you always keep the fear of God in your ſouls, preparation work would be leſs painful, and an approach to God leſs frightful than now it is: For then you might go to the Lord's table with holy fear and reverence, and ſlaviſh fear would not ſo much haunt you. Did you keep more at a diſtance from ſin, and fear to do what God has forbidden, you would not ſo much fear to do what he hath commanded.

2*dly*, Tho' you be not ſo prepared for this ordinance as you deſire, yet if you ſincerely make conſcience of preparation-work, and do your utmoſt to get yourſelf ready, you ought to go foreward in obedience to God's command, *Do this in remembrance of me.* I know there are not a few exerciſed Chriſtians brought to great ſtraits betwixt a ſenſe of their unfitneſs, and the obligations of God's command, ſo that they know not what to do; their fears and diſcouragements are ſo great, they are like to be overwhelm'd with them. But let ſuch mind the word of the Lord to the children of Iſrael, when they were in great perplexity at the Red-ſea, and their hearts ſinking for fear, Exod. xiv. 14. “And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Speak unto the children of Iſrael that they go foreward.” Foreward might they ſay, and the deep ſea before us) as good go backward to the Egyptians, or ſtand ſtill and let them come up and put us to the ſword, as go foreward into the ſea, and be drowned; ſurely the deep ſea, will have no mercy on us more than the Egyptians.” But, for all this, *Speak to the children of Iſrael* (ſaith the Lord) *that they go foreward.* Let them obey my commandment, and truſt me with their lives. Here is encouragement to the doubting believer, that in all ſincerity makes preparation for this ordinance, tho' he hath many doubts about his right to it, and great fears about the event of the duty: The Lord bids us ſpeak to ſuch a man, that he go foreward; let him obey God's commandment, truſt God for his through bearing and ſucceſs.

Obj. 2. *But* (ſaith another) *none ſhould come to this table, but they who are in a ſtate of grace; and I apprehend I have no grace, I cannot lay claim to any of the marks of grace before mentioned, and particularly I want faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and, how ſhall I go to the Lord's table?*

Anſ. There may be true grace and true faith in a ſoul, ſincere and acceptable before God, tho' yet the degrees of it may be ſo ſmall, and the operations of it ſo weak, that it can hardly be diſcerned by us. Now, tho' you cannot lay claim to the foregoing marks, yet ſee if you can at leaſt anſwer the following queſtions;

1*ſt*, Do you not ſee yourſelf undone and loſt for ever without Chriſt, and that none but Chriſt can ſave you, and you never reſolve to look to any other?

2*dly*, Are you not grieved for the ſins that have undone you, and would as willingly be free of them, as ever a ſick man would be free of his ſickneſs, or a priſoner of his chains?

3*dly*, Do ye not conſcientiouſly practiſe whatever you are convinced to be your duty, and dare not omit it when you know it? Do ye not ſincerely aim at prayer, ſearching the ſcriptures, mourning, meditations and other duties?

4*thly*, As you dare not omit theſe duties, can you ſay alſo, that you dare not reſt in them, nor rely on them, becauſe you ſee your prayers for pardon have need of pardon, and your tears for ſin have need themſelves of being waſhed in the blood of Chriſt?

5*thly*, Do you unfeignedly deſire Chriſt, and hunger and thirſt for him and for his righteouſneſs, as that which only can be ſufficient to cover the nakedneſs of your ſouls? Are you willing to accept of him on any terms, willing that he ſhould ſanctify as well as ſave you, bring you to obedience as well as to glory? Doth your judgment value Chriſt above all, and doth your will chuſe him before all things? If you doubt whether you love him, yet tell me whether you would love him if you could? If you doubt whether you have already received him, yet tell me whether you are unfeignedly willing to receive him? Then theſe are ſome degrees of grace, ſome workings of faith well-pleaſing in God's ſight; and, do you cheriſh and improve them in the uſe of God's appointed means, they will increaſe.

Obj. 3. *But* (ſaith one) *we are required to draw near to God with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith; and how can I be accepted who have a heart full of fears and doubts?*

Anſ. 1. The aſſurance of faith is indeed to be ſought and endeavoured by all in their approaches to God, but yet it is not the attainment of every believer in his approaches to God: For there are ſome who have come to him with much fear, and yet have gone away with much comfort, Mark v. 32. the woman that had the bloody iſſue came fearing and trembling, and fell before Chriſt; and yet Chriſt ſaid to her, ver. 34. *Daughter go in peace*; ſhe came to Chriſt in fear, and yet went away in peace.

2. The beſt courſe we can take, under a burden of

fears and perplexities, is to go with them to Jeſus Chriſt for relief. David, when he was overwhelmed therewith gets to the *Rock that was higher than he*, Pſal. lxi. 2. and on this rock he lays all his burdens, and founds all his hopes. O believer, your rock Chriſt is higher than you, higher than all your enemies, higher than all your fears and temptations; he is ſufficiently able to overmatch them all: Get yourſelves to this ſtrong Rock, and ſhelter your ſouls in the clefts thereof.

Obj. 4. *But* (ſaith another) *I have little hope of meeting with Chriſt at his table; and, what ſhould ſuch a hopeleſs creature do there?*

Anſ. 1ſt. It is indeed the duty of all believers to come to this ordinance with raiſed hopes and expectations of meeting with Chriſt; for ordinarily *his mercy is upon us according as we hope in him*, Pſal. xxxii. 23. Yet, *2dly*, A believer may ſometimes meet with Chriſt, when he has leaſt hopes to find him. For Mary, when ſhe met with Chriſt, John xx. 15. and ſuppoſed he had been the gardener, and had enquired of him as ſuch for Chriſt, ſhe had little hope; for, before he anſwered her ſhe turned herſelf from him, and thought it wholly needleſs to ſtand talking with him about finding Chriſt; and this appears by her turning herſelf to him, as we are told ſhe did, when he ſpake the word that gave her comfort. Chriſt called her by her name, Mary, and made himſelf known to her, juſt then when ſhe had turned from him as hopeleſs of finding him. It is good then, O diſcouraged communicant, to be in uſe of means, ſearching and trying yourſelf, and making preparation for this ordinance, however ſmall your hopes may be of ſucceſs: For a poor ſoul may ſometimes find Chriſt, when he hath leaſt hopes of doing ſo. *Or ever I was aware* (ſaith the ſpouſe) *my ſoul made me like the chariots of* Amminadib, Cant. vi. 12.

DIRECT IX. *Set time apart for deep humiliation and mourning for your ſins before you approach to the Lord's table*

HAving found out your ſins by ſelf-examination as before directed, you ought to be deeply humbled for them, and ingenuouſly confeſs them before the Lord in ſecret; and, that you may ſpeed the better in this work, join faſting with your humiliation, for we are commanded to turn to the Lord (Joel ii. 12.) *with faſting, with weeping, and with mourning.*

Faſting, ſo far as the ſtate of the body and health will allow, is one of God's appointed means for removing that drouſineſs and heavineſs, that dulneſs and deadneſs of ſpirit, which we are otherwiſe liable to; and alſo for bringing the body more in ſubjection to the ſoul, and fitting both for the better performance of holy duties, as meditation, prayer, reading, hearing, examining, judging and reforming ourſelves. It tends to promote ſpiritual mindedneſs, kindle zeal, quicken prayer, and to wean the heart from the world; and the ſoul being hereby for a time taken off from the thoughts, cares and pleaſures of this life, is the more diſpoſed to be wholly intent and taken up in the work and ſpecial duties of the day. Faſting likewiſe carries in it ſomewhat of a holy revenge upon the fleſh for its former exceſſes, which, in a ſincere penitent, is acceptable to God, tho' it cannot make ſatisfaction to divine juſtice for the leaſt ſin. It doth alſo imply a deep ſenſe of our guiltineſs and ill deſervings before God, and is a plain acknowledgement of our unworthineſs of the leaſt mercy, even of the common neceſſaries of life, and far leſs of the heavenly ſacrament. Now it is the humbled and ſelf condemning ſinner that God is pleaſed to lift up and comfort. But it is not enough that the head be bowed down as a bulruſh for a day, that the outward man be humbled, or the body chaſtned; this is not the faſt which God hath choſen: The ſoul muſt be afflicted before the Lord, and the man inwardly troubled and caſt down for offending God.

O communicant, believe it, and be firmly perſwaded of it, that repentance and humiliation for ſin is a moſt important and neceſſary work for thee before the ſacrament. Antinomians do vilipend this doctrine of repentance, and ſay, it is no part of the goſpel, that it is a legal duty, and not neceſſary to the obtaining of pardon. But, to ſhew you a little the excellency and neceſſity of this duty, conſider, that our Saviour the great prophet of the church, doth teach it as one of the firſt and chief leſſons of the goſpel. When he ſent John Baptiſt as the harbinger of the goſpel, the firſt text he preached on was *repentance*, and his doctrine was, Mat. iii. 2. *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* When Chriſt the author of the goſpel appeared himſelf, the firſt ſermon he preached was a ſermon of repentance alſo, Mat. iv. 17. *From that time Jeſus began to preach; and to ſay, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Yea, our Saviour tells us, that it was for this very end and purpoſe he came down from heaven, and was made man, that he might preach repentance unto the world, Luke v. 32. *I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.* And accordingly, the firſt and chief thing that Chriſt commanded his apoſtles to preach was repentance, Mark vi. 12. Luke xxiv. 47. And, in obedience to theſe orders, the firſt thing that Peter preached to the Jews was repentance, Acts ii. 38. Nay further, our Saviour tells us, that repentance is a chief part of his purchaſe for ſinners, and one of the chiefeſt gifts which he beſtows upon them. He not only came from heaven to preach repentance, but alſo to ſhed his blood to purchaſe repentance, to us; and therefore he inſtructs his diſciples, Luke xxvi. 47. 'to preach repentance to the world in his Name,' *i. e.* as his purchaſe; and his apoſtles aſſure us, that he aroſe and aſcended for this very end, that he might beſtow the gift of repentance on his people, Acts v. 31. Now certainly, if repentance had not been ſo excellent a work, and ſuch a neceſſary goſpel-duty, Chriſt and his apoſtles had not inſiſted ſo much upon it, our Saviour had not begun his public miniſtry with it, nor had he told us ſo peremptorily, and ſo often, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*

Tertullian ſays of himſelf, that he was born to nothing elſe but to repentance: A ſaying well worthy of our moſt ſerious obſervation. Likewiſe it was the ſaying of a godly miniſter, "That if he were to die in the pulpit, he would wiſh to die preaching repentance; and, if out of the pulpit, he would wiſh to die practiſing repentance.' This is a duty always in ſeaſon, and never more ſeaſonable than when we go to ſeal a covenant with God, or go to receive the ſeal of God's Spirit in the ſacrament. We know hard wax will not receive the impreſſion of the ſeal; wherefore we muſt firſt melt or ſoften the wax before we apply the ſeal; ſo the heart muſt be firſt ſoftned and melted by repentance and humiliation for ſin, before any impreſſion be made thereon by the heavenly ſeal of God's Spirit in the ſacrament.

What Bathſheba ſaith, Prov. xxxi. 6. 7. is very applicable here, "Give ſtrong drink unto him that is ready to periſh, and wine to thoſe that be of heavy hearts (or bitter in ſoul.) Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his miſery no more." So the wine in the ſacrament is not for the ſecure and impenitent, but for thoſe who by repentance and humiliation for ſin are in poverty of ſpirit, bitterneſs of ſoul, and heavineſs of heart for grieving and offending God. The Lord is graciouſly pleaſed to appoint this wine for them, to refreſh and comfort their hearts againſt the ſenſe of their poverty and miſery. "Bleſſed are they that mourn (at this occaſion) for they ſhall be comforted; their ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy."

But, if you come with impenitent, inſenſible and hard hearts to the Lord's table, you will kindle the Lord's wrath againſt you for crucifying his beloved Son. As king Ahaſuerus's wrath was kindled againſt Haman for his bloody plot againſt his beloved Eſther and her people, even while he was at the banquet of wine, and preſently gave ſentence againſt him: So may the King of heaven's wrath be kindled againſt thee, while at this ſpiritual banquet, and paſs ſentence on thee preſently, and ſay, "Let Satan enter in with the ſop, and ſeal him up under his hardneſs and impenitency, and carry him on to all ungodlineſs till he be ripe for hell.

What Chriſt ſaid of the Phariſees proſelyte, Matth. xxiii. 15. "He was made two-fold more the child of hell than themſelves," may well be ſaid of impenitent receivers; by their communicating in this caſe, they make themſelves two-fold more the children of hell and the devil than they were before: For thereby they fall more under the power of ſatan; they increaſe their hardneſs, ſtrengthen their luſts; and to all their former ſins they add the guilt of profaning God's ordinance, crucifying the Son of God afreſh, and trampling his precious blood under foot.

Impenitent partaking is a crime ſo offenſive to a holy God, that it will bring all your other ſins freſh into God's remembrance, and excite him to viſit you for them, according to that word, Hoſ. viii. 13. *They ſacrifice fleſh for the ſacrifice of mine offerings, and eat it; but the Lord accepteth them not:* That is ſad enough, but worſe follows; *Now will he remember their iniquity, and viſit their ſins.* Now will he do it, even while they are offering their ſacrifice. O impenitent ſinners, God remembers your ſins at all times, but eſpecially when you come to the ſacrament in a hardned caſe; then will he remember how you have formerly abuſed his mercies, wounded his Son, grieved his Spirit, mis-ſpent your time, neglected his worſhip, dealt hypocritically with him, been unjuſt to your neighbours, hated his people, *&c.* So that he will, at the very time you are receiving, come and viſit your ſins, ſmite you with his wrath, and give ſatan power over you. O then, were it not far better for you, before you come to the Lord's table, to be remembering your ſins, and humbling yourſelves for them before the Lord; than to have God remembering them in wrath againſt you, when you are at the table?

Now, for your help in this matter, ſet time apart before the ſacrament, read over our Larger Catechiſm upon the ten commandments; and, as you read, carefully obſerve and mark the duties you have omitted, and the ſins you committed againſt every one of the commands; and from this you may form a black catalogue of your ſins, which you ought to ſpread, as Hezekiah did Sennacherib's letter, *before the Lord,* and likewiſe before the face of your own conſciences. Had we but our eyes enlightned by God's Spirit to take a view of ourſelves, and our manifold ſpots in the glaſs of God's holy and extenſive law, then would we go humbly to God with ropes about our necks, ſorrow in our hearts, tears in our eyes, and confeſſions in our mouths, caſt ourſelves down at the footſtool of his mercy, and make full and particular acknowledgments of our guiltineſs before him.

And, to give ſome inſtances: When we view the firſt commandment, let us be humbled for our ſins againſt it, and confeſs them; "Ah! have I not been guilty of much heart atheiſm? Have I not doubted of the being or providence of God? Have I not much ignorance, and many wrong thoughts and miſapprehenſions of God? Have I not been forgetful of God my maker and preſerver? Have I not put the creature, the world, ſelf, and other things in his room? Have I not aſcribed my mercies to others, fortune, to my own wiſdom and induſtry, rather than to God? Alas, for my ſelf-love, ſelf-ſeeking, unbelief, diſtruſt hatred of God, grieving his Spirit, diſlike of his image in his ordinances, his children *&c.*

2dly, How have I ſinned againſt the ſecond command, by deviſing or approving other ways of worſhip than God hath appointed, by not prizing pure ordinances, by repreſentations of God in my mind, and entertaining wrong conceptions of him?

3dly, Againſt the third command, by abuſing God's name, his ſcriptures, his ordinances; by irreverent approaches to God, hypocriſy, careleſs hearing and communicating; by perjury, ſwearing raſhly, breach of oaths and vows; by having a hand in the perjury or falſe-ſwearing of others; by wreſting the word, miſapplying providences, unthankfulneſs for mercies, inſenſibleneſs and incorrigibleneſs under judgments and afflictions.

4thly, Againſt the fourth command, by forgetfulneſs of the ſabbath before it came, not preparing for it, not labouring to prevent what might diſtract me in the duties of the ſabbath: By profaning the ſabbath when it came, by idleneſs, needleſs viſits, unſuitable thoughts, words and actions; by worldly cares and buſineſs on the ſabbath; by needleſs recreations, ſeeking my own pleaſures, not performing, or careleſs performing of the duties of the ſabbath, both in public and private. Alas, I have been ſo far from calling the ſabbath a delight, that oft times my heart hath ſaid, what a wearineſs is it? Ah, the ſtrict obſervation of the ſabbath hath been tedious to me, I have ſhifted it over, and ſaid, when ſhall the ſabbath be gone? *&c.*

5thly, Againſt the fifth command, by not behaving myſelf anſwerably to my natural, eccleſiaſtical and political parents; not loving them, praying for them, and covering their infirmities: By not behaving ſuitably towards my inferiors, and not admoniſhing and encouraging them in well-doing, not correcting children, or doing it unduly provoking them to wrath: And alſo carrying unſuitably towards my equals, envying their gifts, proſperity, or grieving at their advancement.

6thly, Againſt the ſixth command, by ſinful anger, hatred, malice, deſire of revenge, immoderate uſe of meat and drink; by quarrelling, fighting, ſtriking, wounding, and doing ſeveral things that tend to take away the lives of others; ſowing ſtrife and diſcord among friends, *&c.* by not being duly concerned for the preſervation of the lives of others, whether of their ſouls or bodies.

7thly, Againſt the ſeventh command, by unchaſte thoughts, words and actions; by unclean imaginations, obſcene ſpeeches, wanton geſtures, immodeſt apparel; not watching over my ſenſes, heart, words, actions; by going into bad company, occaſions of uncleanneſs; by drunkenneſs, gluttony, and other temptations thereunto.

8thly, Againſt the eight command, by ſtealing, defrauding, oppreſſion, extortion, unfaithfulneſs in bargains and contracts, idleneſs, prodigality, inordinate prizing of worldly goods.

9thly, Againſt the ninth command, by ſlandering, backbiting, reviling, lying in jeſt or earneſt, concealing the truth I ſhould have ſpoken, ſpeaking the truth unſeaſonably, and to a wrong end, ſuborning falſe witneſſes, pleading for an evil cauſe, raſh cenſuring, aggravating ſmaller faults, countenancing evil reports, extenuating groſs ſins.

10thly, Againſt the tenth command, by diſcontent with my own condition, envying and grieving at my neighbour's good and welfare, impatience under affliction. Alas, for my innumerable breaches of God's holy commandments!

In the next place, take a view of the particular aggravations of your ſins, and be deeply humbled for them, and lay them out before God in their blackeſt and bloodieſt colours: "Ah, I have ſinned againſt more light and knowledge than others, againſt many checks of conſcience, warnings, admonitions and reproofs. I have ſinned againſt more mercies and experiences of God's kindneſs than others. I have had many gracious offers of peace and pardon, nay, God has given me ſweet intimations of his love and good-will to my ſoul; he hath ſometimes ſmiled on me in duty; given me enlargements, breakings and meltings of heart in prayer, hearing and communicating; but I have been moſt unthankful to him: Alas for my ingratitude for mercies! I have ſinned againſt more reſolutions, vows, covenants and engagemnts to the contrary, than others have done. Ah, I have ſinned with deliberation, and fallen into the ſame ſins over again. I have ſinned againſt my confeſſions, my lamentations and prayers. I have ſinned againſt God's rods and chaſtiſements upon myſelf, and againſt terrifying inſtances of God's judgments upon others. I have ſinned againſt the patience and long-ſuffering of God, that hath waited upon me for many years. Alas, I have ſinned againſt reaſon, conſcience, intereſt, and a thouſand other obligations. I have diſhonoured God, hardned the wicked, and opened their mouths againſt religion. I have gratified Satan, and brought up an ill report on the ways of God by my ſins, more than many others.

Moreover, how grievouſly have I ſinned againſt the goſpel, by ſlighting, not ſufficiently eſteeming, admiring, and being thankful for the infinite love of God diſplayed in man's redemption. By not loving and rejoicing in Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified: By reſting on my duties, and not improving Chriſt, and relying on him in all his offices, not accounting all things loſs and dung for him: By not dying daily to ſin, nor ſorrowing for it; but often making light of that which nothing but the blood of Chriſt could expiate. Ah, I have not ſought the things of Chriſt as my own, I have not preferred Jeruſalem to my chief joy. My heart hath not (like Eli's) trembled for the ark of God, nor hath my ſoul (like Lot's) been vexed from day to day with the unlawful deeds of theſe among whom I live. I have not mourned for the afflictions of God's people, for the ſigns of God's anger, or for the ſins of the times. Alas for the infirmities, imperfections, and iniquities of my holy things! Oh, the heart-hardneſs, formality, earthly-mindedneſs, deadneſs, indiſpoſition, wanderings, wearineſs, unpreparedneſs, and want of reliſh that hath attended my attendance on holy ordinances, and particularly this of the Lord's ſupper! I have reſted in the mere out-ſide of duties. I have had little appetite after this refreſhing ordinance of the Lord's ſupper. I have not approached to it with which ſolemn preparation, examination, humiliation, renewing of covenant, as I ought to have done. I have walked unanſwerably after the communion, and have not minded my reſolutions and engagements as becomes a worthy communicant.'

Having thus accuſed yourſelves, and confeſſed your ſins before God, as far as you can remember; proceed alſo to judge and condemn yourſelves for them, ſaying, "O what a wretched rebel againſt God have I been, yea, even a den of filthineſs, a ſty of uncleanneſs, and a ſink of miſery! I have been a heaven-daring, God-provoking Chriſt-crucifying, ſpirit-quenching, law-breaking, goſpel-deſpiſing, and ſoul-murdering ſinner! Lord can thy arms of mercy open to receive ſuch a monſter of wickedneſs as I have been? Surely I deſerve rather to be trampled under the feet of thy juſtice, than to be embraced in the arms of thy mercy; for, alas, I have trampled under my feet thy glorious attributes. I have abuſed thy mercy and patience, and contemned thy wiſdom and power. I have deſpiſed thy goodneſs, that hath been unto me like the dropping dew. I have incenſed the infinite power of my dread Sovereign againſt me, who by a word can unhinge the world, and tear up its foundations as eaſily as he laid them. I have exaſperated the juſtice of that mighty One who by his breath can crumble me to duſt, and conſume me to powder. Lord, I have ſinned againſt the cleareſt light and deareſt love: Nay, I repeated and reiterated my heinous ſins; I have gone from committing ſin to confeſſing ſin, and from confeſſing ſin to committing ſin again. Ah! I have lived as careleſly and irreligiouſly, as if their had been no God to puniſh, nor devil to torment; no ſweetneſs in heaven, nor bitterneſs in hell. O what indignities and affronts haſt thou born with from me a poor, undeſerving, ill-deſerving, yea, hell-deſerving wretch! Never were the wages more due to the labourer, than damnation is due to me. If every ſin brings down a curſe, and deſerves hell, how many thouſand hells, how many millions of curſes do I deſerve? O how miſerable ſhould I be for ever, if thou, Lord, ſhould deal with me according to my deſervings! I have forfeited all intereſt in thy favour and all claim to thy mercy: I deſerve not to live in thy world, nor to breathe in thy air; but to have my name blotted out from under heaven, yea, to have all the curſes of thy book, and all the vials of thy wrath poured out on me, even a deluge of fire and brimſtone rained upon me without intermiſſion. I deſerve to be hung up in chains of everlaſting darkneſs, to be a monument of juſtice, and a deriſion of devils for evermore. I caſt down my ſoul, Lord, at thy feet; tho' thou ſhould take it up and fling it into hell, I behoved to ſay, *Thou art righteous*: for the hotteſt place in hell is too good for me.

Oh, ſhall ſuch a wretch as I think of approaching to thy table? What may I expect there but frowns from the Maſter of the feaſt? While the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſeth with healing in his wings to thoſe that fear thy name, thy wrath may burn againſt me as fire, and devour me as a ſtubble. The day of feaſting and rejoicing, ſacrifice and atonement for thy ſincere ſervants, may be a day of wrath and trouble, darkneſs and gloomineſs unto me. While they are ſaying, *Come, let us go unto the houſe of the Lord, our feet ſhall ſtand within thy gates, O Zion, within thy courts, O God;* I may juſtly be ſaying, The great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand? And when thy children, Lord, ſhall go with confidence and preſent themſelves before thee, arrayed in the righteouſneſs of thy Son, lifting up their heads with joy, knowing the time of their redemption draws nigh; I may be hiding myſelf in the dens and rocks of the mountains, ſaying, *Fall on me, and hide me from the face of him that ſits on the throne.* I may ſee them taken in and ſet down at the table above with the King, and myſelf thruſt out, And, while they are feaſted and rejoicing at thy table, I may juſtly be lying under the wrath of the Lamb.

Oh Lord, I have made light of the goſpel-feaſt, and preferred the things of the world before it; ſo that thou mayeſt juſtly ſay to me, that I ſhall never taſte of thy ſupper; or, if I go to it, that it ſhall not be for the better but for the worſe; I ſhall meet with a frown inſtead of a ſmile, a curſe inſtead of a welcome, a breach inſtead of a welcome, a breach inſtead of a bleſſing. Lord, thou mayeſt inſtead of bread give me a ſtone, and for the cup of the new teſtament give me a cup of wrath and trembling. Thou mayeſt juſtly turn my hard heart into a ſtone, inſtead of turning my ſtony heart into a heart of fleſh."

When thou haſt in this manner aggravated thy crimes and condemned thyſelf, yet do not deſpair; but as the poor condemned criminal may cry for mercy, ſo let a poor, humbled, ſelf-condemned ſinner cry to a merciful God for pity. Say, "Lord, I am aſhamed and confounded at my former madneſs and folly; I have nothing to plead for myſelf, except with the poor publican ſtanding afar off, to ſmite upon my breaſt, and lift up mine eyes to heaven, and ſay, God be merciful to me a ſinner. All my refuge, all my hope is in the free mercy of God, thro' Jeſus Chriſt. Lord, make me a monument of free grace to all ages of eternity. But, alas, I am aſhamed to ſpeak of mercy and grace, who have already abuſed ſo much thereof, yea, trampled on the blood that ſhould ſave me. But, Lord, what can I do, or whither ſhall I go? Should I deſpair with Cain, or make away myſelf with Judas? Oh, no; This, Lord, were to affront thy mercy yet more, and utterly to reject the goſpel-remedy which thou valueſt ſo highly. This thing I will not do; but, ſeeing I have heard ſo glorious a report of the mercy of the king of Iſrael, I will even venture to his throne of grace, where free mercy reigns to pardon abounding ſins, and where Jeſus Chriſt ſits to ſave the chief of ſinners. Lord Jeſus, reach from heaven thy merciful hand, to ſave me a poor ſinner, who like Peter, am ready to ſink in the ſea of my ſins and miſeries; that ſo the bleſſing of a heavy laden ſinner, that is ready to periſh, may come on thy head for ever. *Lord ſave me, or elſe I periſh:* waſh away the guilt of my many heinous ſins, with the merit of that blood, which ran down from thy wounds on the croſs, that I am to ſee repreſented in the ſacrament, or I am undone. Lord, I am told of the efficacy of this blood, that it hath a mighty current, and the higheſt mountains of guilt cannot ſtop its courſe; Oh let the bleſſed experiment be tried on me, as it hath been on thouſands before me. I am alſo told, that thou haſt ſought after many ſinners while running from thee, nay, followed them to the very gates of hell with a pardon in thy hand; and, when ſatan has been ready to tumble them in, thou haſt caught them and brought them back again. And, wilt thou now refuſe me, who am ſeeking after thee? Lord, thou heardſt and helped, nay, died for enemies, before they cried to thee for help: And, wilt thou reject me, who am come to lay down my arms, and cry to thee for mercy? Haſt thou not ſaid, that he that confeſſeth and forſaketh ſhall find mercy? Thy word was never yet kown to fail,? Lord, be it to me according to thy word."

And, having betaken thyſelf to Chriſt thy Surety's merit, humbly plead it with God for thy pardon and acceptance, ſay, "Lord, I have indeed broken all thy commands, but, hath not my Surety fulfilled them all? I have, alas, affronted thy juſtice; but, hath not my Surety ſatisfied it? I have deſerved thy wrath, but he hath endured it. The chaſtiſement of my peace was upon him; O let the merit of his righteouſneſs be upon me. Lord, remember not what I have done againſt thee, but remember what he hath done and ſuffered for me. Oh, when I conſider thy greatneſs and my own unworthineſs, thy purity and my uncleanneſs, thy glory and my vileneſs, I am confounded and diſcouraged to draw near to thy table: But when I conſider thy bounty and goodneſs, my Saviour's merit, and thy mercy and readineſs to forgive, I am encouraged to come. And, O that I could come with a broken and contrite heart, which is a pleaſant ſacrifice to God!"

Obj. *But* (ſaith ſome poor diſcouraged ſoul) *I would fain ſet about the work of humiliation, in order to prepare me for the ſacrament; but O my hard heart will not break; alas, it is ſo hardned and bound up, that I cannot get one tear for ſin.*

Anſ. Remember that it is Chriſt who hath purchaſed, who hath promiſed, and who freely beſtoweth repentance on poor ſinners; therefore go to him and ſeek it: And, that it may be wrought in you, plead for the bleſſed Spirit, which he hath alſo promiſed, to be ſent to take off the ſcales of blindneſs from your eyes which ſatan hath put on, that ſo you may ſee ſin in its blackneſs and deformity. Cry with Job, *What I ſee not, teach thou me. O make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my ſin.* God hath ſet before you ſeveral looking-glaſſes to repreſent the evil of ſin to you, O make uſe of them. You have the glaſs of God's holy nature, the glaſs of his holy law, the glaſs of the damned's torments, and the glaſs of Chriſt's ſufferings: Look frequently into theſe. View the infinite purity and ſpotleſneſs of God's nature; conſider his holy law in its ſpiritual meaning and large extent; meditate on the eternal ſhrieks and howlings of damned ſouls: And, in a ſpecial manner, behold Chriſt's bloody agonies for ſin. A right look of him whom ye have pierced, will cauſe you mourn, Zech. xii. 10.

Come then, O hard hearted ſinner, and behold how thy ſins pierced Chriſt's head with thorns, his hands and feet with nails, his ſide with a ſpear, and his heart with ſorrows: Behold how they preſſed him down in the garden, till he ſwate blood: Behold how they bound a heavy croſs on his back, till he fainted with the load: Behold how they nailed him to the curſed tree, and made God frown upon him, ſo that he was forced to cry out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* O canſt thou look on Golgotha or Gethſemane with dry eyes, or an unconcerned heart? Canſt thou ſee Chriſt's eyes weep, and his heart melted like wax within him, and yet thy heart continue hard, and thine eyes dry? Come hearken to his dying grones, and look to his bleeding wounds: Think you hear him ſaying to you, *Behold what your ſins have done! Is there any ſorrow like my ſorrow?* O wilt thou not ſay to thy hard heart, "What is this that thou haſt done? Is not this the Son of God and the King of glory, that thou haſt murdered by thy ſins; and wilt thou not be grieved for them? Shall the hard rocks rent, the dead earth ſhake, the temple's vail rend, the ſun vail its bright face, the heavens put on a mourning habit, and the whole creation look ſad, when Chriſt is ſuffering for thy ſins, and thou the guilty criminal, that ſhould have eternally howled in hell's flames, ſtand only unconcerned?" *Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens, at this!* and let thy hard heart bluſh and be aſhamed for it. Ah! ſhall the hiſtory of Joſeph in the pit move your heart more than of Chriſt upon the croſs? Shall the news of the tragical death or ſufferings of one of your friends or countrymen among the Turks, move your heart ſooner than the death and ſufferings of the innocent Son of God? O then go to God and complain of thy hard heart; take it and lay it before God's promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and plead that he would take it away, according to his word, "Lord, thou curedſt all manner of plagues and diſeaſes which were brought to thee while thou waſt on earth: And, haſt not thou the ſame bowels of mercy now in heaven? Surely thy goodneſs is ſtill the ſame, thy hands are not ſhortened that they cannot ſave: Nay, there are holes now in thy hands, to let bleſſings drop through them the more freely on us. Thou art my only phyſician, and to thee I will look for the cure: Lord, nothing will do it but the plaiſter of thy blood."

Mourning is abſolutely neceſſary for thee, O communicant, if thou wouldſt have the wine of conſolation in the ſacrament. When did Jacob find God in Bethel, but when he wept and made ſupplication to God? Hoſ. xii 4. When did Mary meet with Chriſt, but when ſhe ſought him weeping and ſorrowing? John xx. 11. If you caſt out a flood of tears in Chriſt's way, he will not be able for his compaſſionate heart to paſs over it, but will turn in and lodge with you.

Object. *Alas! I cannot win to tears for ſin. Are tears abſolutely neceſſary?*

Anſ. They are very deſirable where they are; the penitents tears are the joy of angels, and the delight of God, he keeps a bottle for them: But yet all conſtitutions are not alike moiſt; a tender heart may be matched with a dry brain that cannot eaſily command tears; and ſome perhaps may lay more ſtreſs on tears than on the frame of the heart that produces them, not minding that God looks more to the inward frame than to the outward expreſſions. But the truth is, if thou be one that canſt get tears for other things, for worldly loſſes and croſſes, and yet can find none for ſin, it is a ſign thy heart is not right. How many, alas, can weep abundantly for the loſs of a child, yea, for a horſe or cow, and yet have not one tear for the loſs of their ſoul, or of Chriſt's favour or preſence!

DIRECT. X. *Flee to Jeſus Chriſt by faith, and embrace him as he is offered to you in the goſpel, before you come to his table.*

NONE have a right to Chriſt's table, but thoſe who come firſt to him in the way of faith; for it is a feaſt deſigned only for believers.

What hath been ſaid above, concerning the multitude and heinouſneſs of your ſins, for which you ought to be humbled and mourn, may ſerve to ſhew your great need of Chriſt to deliver you from them. Think not that your repentance, confeſſions, or tears for ſin, can any way ſatisfy the juſtice of God for it, or merit acceptance or pardon for you: This were to put theſe things in Chriſt's room, that are only means to lead you to him; and to take up with a righteouſneſs of your own, inſtead of his, that allenarly can atone the juſtice of God for ſinners. O then, ſee that ye look beyond all to Chriſt alone for atonement, righteouſneſs, pardon and ſalvation, and count all things but dung and loſs in reſpect of him.

Now ſince the goſpel offers Chriſt to all that hear it, and the call and command to receive and embrace Chriſt as a Saviour is given to all and every one, even to the vileſt of ſinners; you have a full warrant to lay hold on him for pardon, and flee to him for mercy; and you heinouſly ſin againſt God and your own ſoul, if you neglect to do it. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great a ſalvation*, and ſlight ſo great a Saviour.

I ſhall therefore make uſe of ſome motives to preſs poor periſhing ſinners to flee from ſin and wrath to Jeſus Chriſt the only Saviour, and to receive and reſt upon him for life and ſalvation; and then come to the ſacrament, to get their right and title to Chriſt and all his purchaſe ſealed and confirmed.

I. Take a view of the miſery of a natural and Chriſtleſs condition; and O that God would open your eyes to let you ſee it, and convince you, that, while thou art in this ſtate, thou art a rebel to thy God, a prodigal to thy father, a ſlave to thy luſts, and an alien to the common-wealth of Iſrael! If thou comeſt not to Chriſt with thy burdens, the whole burden of unpardoned ſin lies upon thy own back; and this is a burden that will ſink thee lower than the grave; nay, it will preſs thee to the loweſt hell, and keep thee eternally ſinking there. Conſider alſo, how vile and lothſome thou and all thy actions, whether natural, civil, or religious, are in the ſight of a holy God, while thou art out of Chriſt: Thy ſoul is naked, and ſwarms with the vermine of filthy luſts; and thou haſt neither a garment to cover thee, nor a fountain to waſh thee: The leproſy of ſin ſpreads over all, ſo that, from the *crown of the head to the ſole of the foot, there is nothing but bruiſes and putrifying ſores;* ſo that there is no mire ſo unclean, no vomit ſo lothſome, no carrion ſo offenſive, no peſtilence ſo nauſeous, as thou art in thy Chriſtleſs ſtate in the eyes of a holy God who cannot look upon iniquity but with abhorrence. Again, conſider, thou art a ſlave to Satan the worſt of tyrants; he rules and works in your hearts, as a workman doth in his ſhop, Eph. ii. 2. He uſes your powers, faculties, ſenſes and members, according to his pleaſure: He ſays, *Go, and you go: Do this and you do it.* Your bondage is worſe than the Iſraelites under Pharaoh; for they groned under theirs, but alas! you are not ſenſible of yours, neither will you believe it. The devil knows, that if you perceived your ſlavery, you would ſeek to make your eſcape from him; therefore, to make ſure work, he deals with you as the Philiſtines did with Sampſon, put out your eyes, that you may not ſee your chains, nor look to Chriſt for liberty: O that God would open them, and cauſe you grone under your fetters, and look to Chriſt for relief!

Moreover while thou art in thy Chriſtleſs ſtate, God's wrath is ſtill burning againſt thee, the flaming ſword of Juſtice is always over thy neck, Pſal. vii. 11. *God is angry with the wicked every day*, every day of the week, and every hour of the day: When thou goeſt out and comeſt in, riſeſt up or lieſt down, God is ſtill angry with thee; yea, *he hath bent his bow, and made ready his arrows*, which are ſteeled with wrath, and headed with vengeance: Nay his bow is drawn, and his arrows are at the flight; and, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, thou art the only butt thereof; and if he let them fly, they will pierce thee to the very ſoul, and who will heal that wound? What a dangerous ſtate is this?

And further, all the curſes of the law are levelled againſt thee, and a juſt God is engaged by his oath to ruin thee if thou abideſt in this ſtate, Heb. iii. 18. *To whom ſware he, that they ſhould not enter into his reſt but to them that believed not?* Should not the thoughts of this make thee tremble? Were it but the oath of a man or company of men to procure thy death, as of theſe forty men that bound themſelves with an oath, they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, it would bereave thee of thy night's reſt and quiet till they were made friends with thee: And, will the oath of the great God have no effect upon thee, nor move thee to flee to Chriſt for protection and reconciliation? Who can help thee or deal for thee, if Chriſt be neglected? With what face canſt thou look to him, or cry for mercy from him, when he comes to judge thee at the laſt day? If thou remain Chriſtleſs now, thou wilt be ſpeechleſs, helpleſs and hopeleſs then. O think, what pale faces, quivering lips, fainting hearts, and trembling conſciences will be among Chriſtleſs ſinners then! How will their heads hang down and knees knock together, and cry, *Alas for the day!* They can look no where for comfort; for the Judge frowns on them, the ſaints deride them, their own friends upbraid them, the Angels mock them, the devil ſcoffs at them, the earth flames about them, and hell grones for them, and down they will go roaring and howling for ever.

O Chriſtleſs ſoul, how canſt thou think to ly in that dark dungeon for ever, where there is nothing but weeping and gnaſhing of teeth to be heard, and utter darkneſs to be ſeen, but never a blink of the light of God's favour to all eternity? How wilt thou live in that pit where there is no water? Not a drop of comfort or refreſhment to the thriſty ſcorched priſoners; no, not ſo much as one drop to cool their tongue; the torments there are both endleſs and eaſeleſs. O poor Chriſtleſs ſoul, thou art as it were, apprehended by Juſtice for thy debt, and brought the length of this priſon door, and there are hundreds of diſeaſes and devils waiting for a warrant to open the door to let you in; and, wilt thou not employ a ſurety nor ſeek for a ranſom, when Juſtice is waiting a while to ſee if tho wilt do it, and Chriſt is earneſtly offering himſelf to be thy cautioner, and his blood to ranſom thee from this pit? and to be ſure no other thing will do it. See Zech. ix. 11.

II. As it is God's command that you ſhould receive and believe on his Son Jeſus Chriſt; ſo he declares that it is a work above all others moſt pleaſing to him, John vi. 29. It is emphatically called his *commandment* 1 John iii. 23. being a command he values more than all other commands in the bible: And ſo, upon the other hand there is no ſin ſo provoking to God, as unbelief and rejecting of Chriſt; yea, he is more offended with it, than with the breaking of all his other commands. See Heb. x. 28, 29. Put all your ſins in one ſcale, and unbelief in another, and you will find that unbelief weighs down all the reſt; ſo, it is a ſlighting of the whole work of redemption, which is the maſter piece of all God's works, being that which his heart is moſt ſet upon, and he hath been at moſt pains about, 1 John iv. 9. O be perſuaded then to do the work that is moſt acceptable to God, and obey his great command of *believing upon the name of his Son.* The whole creation obeys his commands; he commands the ſun to run its daily courſe, and it obeys him; he commands the ſea to ebb and flow twice a day, and it obeys to a minute; he commands the angels and all the hoſt of heaven, and they punctually obey him: And will you only be diſobedient to him, and that to his beloved command, when yet he hath done more for you than for the whole creation?

III. Conſider what an unſpeakable mercy and happineſs it is to you, to enjoy the free offers of Jeſus Chriſt, and to have God commanding you to receive him. How would the fallen angels value ſuch a mercy, if they had it! They would not be loth to leave their dungeon and accept of a Saviour, as you are: But their ſtate is eternally hopeleſs and deſperate, there is no remedy for their miſery. O do not put yourſelves in the ſame caſe with them, by ſlighting the offered remedy. How would damned ſouls prize ſuch an offer! The leaſt news and remoteſt hopes of it would make them leap in their chains, and ſing in the flames. O how glad would they be to lift up their flaming heads to grip to the cords of love and mercy if they could be let down to them in that dark dungeon! Why then ſhould ye wilfully put yourſelves into the ſame hopeleſs condition with them by your unbelief? Nay, your neglecting ſo many offers will ſink you far deeper in that ſcalding lake of fire and brimſtone, and increaſe your flames to more vehemency than theſe of others who have not been ſo privileged. O how will devils, Turks, Jews, and Pagans upbraid you here, for your inexcuſable folly in ſlighting your mercy, and deſtroying your ſouls! Be wiſe then in time, prize your privilege, and *conſider the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes.*

IV. Conſider what an excellent and ſuitable help Chriſt is for fallen ſinners; he is well furniſhed and qualified for your caſe; he hath gold for your poverty, eye-ſalve for your blindneſs, balm for your wounds, phyſic for your diſeaſes, bread for your hunger, white raiment for your nakedneſs, a fountain for your pollution, and a ranſom for your debt and bondage. In a word, he hath a broad plaiſter for your broad ſore, a deep fountain for your deep guilt; he is the chief of Saviours for the chief of ſinners. Behold how one deep calls to another, the depth of thy miſery to the depth of his mercy. Are your ſins and miſeries very extenſive, then view the large dimenſions of his mercy: Who can fathom the height, the depth, the breadth or the length of it? As for its height, it is high as heaven, and ſurmounts the higheſt mountains of guilt; it is ſo deep, that it can bury the greateſt of your ſins; it is as broad as the eaſt is from the weſt; and, for its length, it is from everlaſting to everlaſting: So that it fully anſwers all your wants and miſeries. In Chriſt there is all you need or can deſire; there is both food and phyſic, clothing, ſtrength and cordials. O ſinner, here is blood to juſtify thee, and water to cleanſe thee; here the water of life, O believer, that will reſtore thy ſoul again, renew thy youth as the eagles, cure all thy diſeaſes, and heal all thy pains. In a word, you have in Chriſt all that can make you good, all that can make you great, and all that can make you happy.

V. Conſider how near you are to Chriſt and mercy. The remedy is prepared, and ſalvation is brought to your very door: So that you need not ſay, *Who will aſcend to heaven, and bring me down the water of life?* For it is brought to earth to thy hand: You need not ſay, *Who will roll away the ſtone from the well-mouth?* For Chriſt hath done it for thee; and as it is now a fountain opened and running by your door, O why will ye be ſo mad as periſh for thirſt beſide this fountain? Or ſtarve for hunger beſide a full ſeat? Or die of your wounds beſide a phyſician? And all for want of heart to accept the offer? O it would be ſad to be ſo near Chriſt, and yet eternally miſs him; to periſh like the thief on the croſs with a Saviour at your ſide; to be within a ſtep of him, and yet never touch him; yea to ſink into hell betwixt the outſtretched arms of his mercy, and with the ſweet calls ſounding in your ears. What a heart-ſtinging conſideration will this be to you in that place of torment for ever! O then, ſtir up yourſelves to take hold of Chriſt, when he is ſo near and in your offer: Strive earneſtly, while there is an ark prepared, and a window opened in the ſide of it, and the hand of mercy put forth to pull in ſhelterleſs doves that can find no reſt elſewhere; I ſay, ſtrive to come near by the wings of faith, make your neſt (at leaſt) beſide the hole's mouth: Be not found hovering without, leſt the flood waſh you from the ſides of the ark, and ye periſh miſerably. If you be ſo fooliſh, you will wiſh eternally that you had never heard of Chriſt, or that you had been born among the wild Indians or Mahometans, that never heard a ſermon or witneſſed a communion.

VI. Conſider how importunate Chriſt is in his offers, and how much he preſſeth you to receive him. *Wiſdom crieth in the ſtreets,* Prov. i. Chriſt makes loud and open proclamation of himſelf, and oft repeats his calls, Iſa. li. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come,* &c. Behold, how earneſt he is with ſinners, that he bids them come to him three times in one verſe, *Come, come, come.* What alluring methods hath he taken to gain your hearts! How tenderly and affectionately doth he call and court backward ſouls! Iſa. li. 4. *Hearken unto me, my people, give ear unto me, O my nation.* What melting expreſſions are theſe? *My people, My nation!*

But, If calls do not prevail, he comes himſelf to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt. He came perſonally in the days of his fleſh, and now he comes by his Spirit in his word and ordinances. The three wiſe men came from the eaſt a long journey to ſeek Chriſt; but now Chriſt hath come from heaven to earth, a long journey; yea, come to every one of your congregations to ſeek you: And, are you not willing to be found of him?

Nay, he is content to follow you when you run away from him, and purſue you with his gracious offers. As the rock followed the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs with its running ſtreams of water, ſo Chriſt our ſpiritual rock follows you now with the ſtreams of his mercy and blood, to waſh and ſave you. O ſinner, if you will not hear the words of his mouth, hearken to the call of his wounds, which are opened as ſo many mouths to plead with you. He hath ſuffered his bleſſed ſide to be opened, that ye might look into his bleeding heart, and ſee it panting with love, and alſo hear the ſounding of his bowels towards you. Will not this prevail? Then behold him by faith with a heavy croſs on his back weighed down with your ſins, and the curſes of a broken law following you, and calling after you. Hear him knocking with his nailed hands, at the door of your hearts, ſaying, Open to me, poor periſhing ſinner; give me harbour in thy heart, behold what I have ſuffered from heaven, earth and hell for thee; look what juſtice hath done; look what the devils, the Romans, the Jews, and my own diſciples have done. View my head, my ſide, my hands and my feet, my wounded body and my bruiſed ſoul. O canſt thou find in thy heart to keep Chriſt at the door, when thus wounded, bleeding, mangled for thee? Wilt thou let him ſtay all day long, when he hath put on his dyed garments and red apparel, to court thy backward heart, and when he is ſaying, O ſinner, if thou wilt not believe, *reach hither thy hand and feel the print of the nails; yea, thruſt it into my pierced ſide, and feel my warm bleeding heart, and ſee if I love you not?* Wilt thou deny him acceſs, who has done ſo much for thee?

Will not this prevail? Then behold him diſplaying his glorious beauty and excellency before thine eyes in a preached goſpel, to win thy heart. Will not miniſters commendations of him move thee? Then hear how he commends himſelf; *I am the roſe of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys; I am the true vine; I am the good Shepherd,* &c. And, will you not believe his own report, who cannot lye? Surely he is in good earneſt with you when he takes this courſe.

Will not this do? Then hearken how mournfully he complains when he wants ſucceſs, and paſſionately regrets your folly in rejecting him. He ſighs when he mentions it, Pſal. lxxxi. 37. *O that my people had hearkened unto me!* He bitterly laments it, Matth. xxiii. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!* He doubles the name, to ſhew his tender affection; as David when he regrets his ſon Abſalom, *O my ſon Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon!* &c. *How often would I have gathered you under my wing?* How many an affectionate ſermon, call, and invitation have I given you, but all to no purpoſe; ſhall I go through a ſea of wrath and blood to ſave you, and will ye not accept of me when I have done it? Shall I ſhed my blood in vain? Shall I bear the wrath of God, the ſcorn of men, the terror of death and curſe of the law to no effect? Will ye ſtill prefer your ſins before me, and hear ſatan's knocks ſooner than mine.

Hear that compaſſionate complaint, John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*: As if he had ſaid, "Why run ye ſo faſt from your Saviour? Why come ye not to me, who am come from heaven to ſeek and ſave you? It is not an enemy, but a friend, ye run from: The worſt turn I would do you is to ſave your lives; Ye will go without much preſſing to the devil, to get death and eternal damnation; but ye will not come to me to get life and eternal ſalvation. O what an inexpreſſible madneſs are ye guilty of!

Behold how he wept for ſelf-deſtroying Jeruſalem, rejecting his offers Luke xix. 41. When he ſat down to conſider their caſe, his bowels yearned with pity, his tongue broke forth in lamentation, and his eyes guſhed out with tears; ſo that his weeping even interrupted his voice, and made him utter ſhort and abrupt expreſſions, "If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this day," *&c.* Where he ſeems to pauſe at every other word, and drop firſt a word, and then a tear. What a moving ſight was this, to ſee the Son of God in ſuch a pang of grief, and flood of tears for loſt ſinners? Had he been enquired at, as he did Mary, John xx. 15. *Bleſt Lord, what ſeekeſt thou? Why weepeſt thou?* His anſwer readily would have been, I ſeek not myſelf, I weep not for myſelf; for I ſhall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord tho' ſinners be not gathered: But I weep to ſee ſinners ſo mad as to reject their Saviour and ſalvation, rather than part with their luſts, that have damnation following them at the heels; it is my grief to ſee them content rather to caſt themſelves headlong into the devil's arms, than throw themſelves into my arms of mercy, or embrace me in the arms of their faith. O! did Chriſt weep for you, poor ſinners; and, will ye not weep for yourſelves? Did his heart melt with pity for you; and will not yours melt with deſires towards him?

Can he do more to win your hearts than this? Yea, if this do not, he is pleaſed to expoſtulate the matter with you, and lay your danger before you; *Turn ye, turn ye* (ſaith he) *for why will ye die?* Yea he condeſcends to reaſon the matter with you in a familiar way; *Come* (ſays he) *let us reaſon together*, Iſa. i. *O my people what have I done for thee?* Mic. vi 3. *What iniquity have ye found in me?* What want of unſuitableneſs have ye ſeen in me? *Have I been a barren wilderneſs to you? Are not my ways equal?* Thus he ſeeks to draw you with the cords of man, and with the bonds of love, Hoſ. xi. 4. And if there ariſe obejections in your heart againſt coming to Chriſt, and receiving him for your Saviour, ſee how carefully he lays out himſelf in his word to anſwer them all; for he well foreſaw every one of them: Produce your cauſe (ſaith the Lord) bring forth your ſtrong reaſons, I am ready to hear and anſwer all your ſcruples.

O! ſaith ſome poor humbled ſoul, *I have no right to come to Chriſt, for I am a great ſinner.* O! ſaith Chriſt, *I came not to call the righteous but ſinners to repentance.*

Obj. *But I am the chief of ſinners, my ſins are red as crimſon.* O! ſaith Chriſt, *I can make thee white as wool*: Nay it was my errand into the world, to ſave ſuch as thou art, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Obj. *But I am ſick and wounded: what hath Chriſt to do with me?* O! ſaith Chriſt, it is my proper employment to be taken up with you; for the *whole need not a phyſician but they that are ſick*, Mat. xi. Am not I the good Samaritan, who am come to pour oil into thy ſores, *and tenderly bind up thy wounds?* Pſal. cxlvii. 3.

Obj. *But I have no ground to hope, for I am a loſt wretch.* O! ſaith Chriſt I came for this very errand, *to ſeek and to ſave that which is loſt*, Luke xix. 10. and many a loſt ſheep have I ſought and found.

Obj. "But I am paſt cure, for I am quite dead and rotten in the grave of ſin. *O! ſaith Chriſt*, I am the Reſurrection and the Life; he that believes in me, tho' he were dead yet ſhall he live, John xi. 25. And again he ſaith, Eph. v. 14. Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give the light."

Obj. But I am a ſlave to ſin and ſatan, and a priſoner to juſtice. *O! ſaith Chriſt I came to* "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound," Iſa. lxi. 1. *Yea*, "I have the key of David, that opens and none can ſhut;" I have the blood of the covenant, that brings priſoners out of the pit. Turn ye to the ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope, Zech. ix. 11. 12.

Obj. But I have heavy burdens that weigh me down. O! ſaith Chriſt, come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.

Obj. But my hand is withered, I cannot receive Chriſt or any thing from him. Then do as the man who had the withered hand, make a mint upon Chriſt's call, and he will enable thee to ſtretch out thy hand.

Obj. But I am lame, and cannot walk in Chriſt's ways? O! ſaith Chriſt, I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, Ezek. xxxvi. 6.

Obj. But what if Chriſt withdraw his Spirit and grace from me again? No ſaith Chriſt, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee, Heb. xiii.

Obj. But may not I notwithſtanding, leave him, and make apoſtacy? No, ſaith Chriſt the covenant runs otherwiſe, Jer. iii. 19. *Thou ſhalt call me, my father, and ſhalt not turn away from me.* Chriſt is the ſurety for thy perſeverance.

Obj. But I will be overcome by ſtrong temptations. No, ſaith Chriſt, my grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee.

Obj. But *(ſaith ſome poor ſenſible ſinner)* alas! my caſe is not yet touched, for it is ſingular: My ſins are heinous and peculiar, they are againſt light, love, conſcience, vows, and a thouſand obligations: there is none that knows what a ſinner I have been, but God and my own conſcience: Will Chriſt ever accept of ſuch a wretch as me?

Anſ. Art thou worſe than a deviliſh Manaſſeh, or a perſecuting Paul, whom Chriſt pitied and ſaved? Art thou worſe than Mary Magdalene, who was a moſt notorious vile wretch? yet ſeven devils and an army of luſts could not keep Chriſt out of her heart. Nay, tho' thy heart were as foul and black as hell, and thy life did ſwarm with the moſt abominable ſins; yet Chriſt is both able and willing to ſave thee, if thou come to him. Are you worſe than thoſe in that black catalogue? 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. Read and ſee what a black roll is there; and yet the apoſtle ſaith to the believing Corinthians, ver. 11. *Such were ſome of you, yet ye are waſhen*, &c. The blood of Chriſt is a powerful fountain, and is able to waſh away the greateſt ſins that ever were committed, be they never ſo black or bloody: God gave full proof of this, by the firſt ſin we read of that was cleanſed by this blood after it was ſhed, even the murder of the Son of God, Acts

ii. 36. 38. This was the moſt prodigious wickedneſs that ever the ſun ſaw; (yea, the ſun fainted at the ſight, as afraid to look on it) for ſuppoſe a man were able to pull heaven and earth to pieces, deſtroy the angels, and murder all mankind, he would not contract ſo monſtrous a guilt as thoſe did in crucifying the Son of God whoſe perſon was infinitely ſuperior to the whole creation: Yet thouſands that were actors in this black tragedy, were waſhen by this blood, to give us a convincing experiment of its infinite value and virtue, and that no ſin or guilt whatſoever was too ſtrong for it; *The blood of Chriſt* (ſaith John, 1 John i. 7.) *cleanſeth us from all ſin.*

Obj. *But tho' Chriſt's blood be ſufficient, yet I heve no right to it.*

Anſ. Be what you will, you have a full and ſufficient warrant from the goſpel call to flee to it. See what Chriſt injoins his apoſtles to do, Mark xvi. 15. *Go into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature, q. d.* "Make offer of my blood to all without diſtinction, even to the worſt of ſinners, every creature, be they never ſo wicked, yea, tho' they have ſinned themſelves unto the likeneſs of beaſts and devils, yet, if they be creatures of Adam's race, offer my blood, my mercy and my merits to them: Invite and preſs them to come unto me, *and him that cometh I will in no wiſe caſt out.* O ſinner! accept of the goſpel offer; and, whatever you have been, you ſhalll find there is mercy enough in God's bowels to pity you, merit enough in Chriſt's blood to purchaſe a pardon for you, and prevalency enough in his interceſſion to procure and apply it to you.

Obj. *But I have often ſlighted the goſpel offer, and trampled on this precious blood: With what confidence can I lay claim to it?*

Anſ. Since Chriſt doth not exclude you, you ought not to exclude yourſelf; but ſhould reckon that you have the greater need to haſten to this blood, the more heinous that your ſins be? yea, you have a peculiar ground to plead upon for pardon on this account. See how David pleads it, Pſal. xxv. 11. *Pardon mine iniquity,* why? *for it is great.* This would be a ſtrong argument with God. *Lord it is great,* and ſo I have the more need of pardon; *It is great,* and ſo thou wilt have the greater honour in pardoning me, even as a phyſician hath in curing a deſperate diſeaſe. The ſinning againſt Chriſt's blood, or ſlighting it, is indeed a very heinous ſin; but the more it is ſo, you have the more need to haſten to this blood, as the only fountain that can waſh away the guilt of trampling it, and this indeed can do it effectually: Nay, tho' you had actually ſhed this blood, as the Jews did, yet if you be humbled for it, you are welcome to come to it for mercy. Obeſerve that commiſſion which Chriſt gave his apoſtles, Luke xxiv. 46. 47. where he orders them to *preach repentance and remiſſion in his name to all nations, and begin* (ſaith he) *at* Jeruſalem. O might they ſay, why at *Jeruſalem?* To be ſure it is not our part to begin there, where they mocked, and pierced and crucified thee the Lord of glory. Nay ſays he, begin there, for theſe miſerable wretches have moſt need of blood to waſh them. If any thing could alienate Chriſt's heart from ſinners, the conſideration of their crucifying of him, and uſing him ſo deſpitefully, might have done it: Yet, ſays he, go make offer of my blood and mercy to theſe my murderers; accordingly it was done by Peter, Acts ii. and many of them got this blood applied to them

Obj. *But as my ſins are grievous in their nature, ſo they are vaſt in their number: they are even like the ſand by the ſea-ſhore, both weighty and without number.*

Anſ. Remember the merit of Chriſt's blood is infinite, but the number of thy ſins is not ſo; nay, tho' they were ten thouſand times more than they are, they could not ſtop the current of this everflowing and overflowing fountain. Tho' the ſands be many and large, yet the ſea can overflow them all; ſo, tho' thy ſins by very numerous and extenſive, yet the ſea of Chriſt's blood can cover them all, and hide them from the ſight of God, ſo as they ſhall never again appear or riſe up againſt you in judgment.

Obj. *But my ſins are not only grievous in their nature and vaſt in their number; but they are of very long continuance: I am an old rotten ſinner, long have I lien in the grave of ſin: Surely Chriſt will never, accept of me.*

Anſ. Your ſins may be old, yet they are not ſo old as Chriſt's mercies, which are from everlaſting. It is not the firſt old diſtemper that Chriſt hath cured; he raiſed Lazarus with a word, that had lien four days in the grave; he ſtopt a bloody iſſue with the hem of his garment, that had run twelve years; he looſed a poor woman that Satan had bound eighteen years; he cured an impotent man, that had an infirmity thirty eight years: And, can he not as eaſily cure all your old foul diſtempers? He received thoſe that came in at the eleventh hour, yea ſaved ſome at the laſt hour particularly the thief on the croſs, whom the devil thought he was ſure of, having drawn him the length of the mouth of hell, juſt ready to caſt him in; yet even then, upon his looking to Chriſt, did the arms of mercy catch hold of him.

What more canſt thou object, O ſinner? Hath not Chriſt provided anſwers to all thou canſt ſay, either againſt thyſelf or him? Hath he not given unanſwerable demonſtration of his ability, fulneſs, fitneſs and willingneſs to be thy Saviour? Hath he not given full proof of his earneſt deſire to ſave thee, by the many methods he takes to prevail with ſinners to accept of him? Will not all the pains he hath hitherto taken prevail with thy obſtinate heart? What more would you have Chriſt to do with unwilling ſinners? There is yet one ſtep further he makes and that is a very low one: He even, as it were, turns a humble ſupplicant to thee, and upon his bare knees beſeeches thee to be reconciled to him. Read 2 Cor v. 20. *We are ambaſſadors for Chriſt as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.* O wonderful condeſcenſion! Behold divine mercy kneeling down to a ſinner in the humbleſt poſture, with wringed hands and watry checks, importuning the ſinner to receive his Saviour, accept of pardon, ſave his ſoul, and be reconciled to God in Chriſt. Be aſtoniſhed O heavens! Shall the Sovereign Creator turn ſupplicant to the vile traitor, and follow him with intreaties? And, O ſinner! Will thy ſtubborn heart be able to refuſe peace, or ſlight the bleſſed peace maker Jeſus Chriſt, after all pains? If all his arguments prevail nothing, yet one would think that the humbleſt intreaties of the great God would certainly do. How can you reſiſt theſe?

Obj. *I have no ſtrength to come to Chriſt, I cannot believe of myſelf, I have a dead and bound up heart, and I cannot help it.*

Anſ. 1. Canſt thou ſay in good earneſt, that thou art willing and deſirous to embrace a Saviour, if thou waſt able ? Alas ! It is here that it ſticks; whatever you pretend, you are not truly willing. It is our unwillingneſs that ruins us : It is not ſo much for want of power (tho' indeed we want it) as want of will, that ſinners want Chriſt: Were you once willing ſtrength would not be wanting. O to get the will conquered and made to ſurrender to Chriſt ! Then the day were won : O for one pull more from *Omnipotent grace*, to make you *a willing people in the day of his power !*

2. Labour for a deep ſenſe of thy own impotency ; take your dead heart and lay it before God, and ly groaning in Chriſt's way, and plead for pity. It is true, God is not bound, in ſtrict juſtice, to hear an unbeliever's prayer ; but, if you be earneſt with him, you may expect he will do it out of his great goodneſs and mercy. *He hears the ravens when they cry* ; O then, cry to him to your utmoſt ability, in a deep ſenſe of want ; be as earneſt ſeeking faith, as your daily bread ; cry as fervently for the life of your ſouls, as ye would do for the life of your bodies, if ready to be execute : If ye would do ſo, God would not deny you. More particularly, plead theſe things ;

(1.) Take your Bible and kneel down, and caſt up that gracious free promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. Read it, and plead it ; put thy finger to it, and put the maker of it to his word ; lay thy dead heart before it, and look up and cry, *Lord make good this word to me, is it not a free promiſe ?* There is no condition required of me for getting it fulfilled, but to enquire at thee for doing it, verſe 37. Now Lord, I am come to enquire and requeſt thee to do it.

(2.) Humbly plead thy own impotency, and the inſufficiency of all others to help thee in this ſtate. This was the impotent man's plea with Chriſt at the pool of Betheſda, John v. 6. 7. It had good ſucceſs with him, and ſo may it have with you. Say, Lord, I have lain many years with this dead plagued heart beſide the open fountain of thy blood, that has ſaved many in my condition : I am impotent and unable to move it of myſelf, and have none to put me in ; I have tried others, but I find it altogether in vain ; Ordinances cannot do it, ſacraments cannot do it, the loudeſt knock or call will not do it : Thou Lord, muſt put to thy helping hand, or it cannot be done, for it is a work peculiar to thy almighty arm. I have been looking to all airths for help, but, Lord, there is none in heaven or earth but thee alone : Every one of the creatures, means and ordinances ſay, it is not in me : Every one of the ſaints and angels ſay, as the king of Iſrael did to that poor ſtarving woman, 2 King vi. 27. *If the Lord do not help thee, whence ſhall I help thee ?* So if thou, Lord, help me not I muſt periſh.

(3.) In a deep ſenſe of your own impotency, flee to God's power, and plead it. Do you feel the Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir of your own corruptions ſwelling within you ? Say with Jehoſhaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12. *We have no might againſt this great company, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.* If you could win this length, then were there good ground of hope ; for, when we ſee that we are wholly helpleſs and ſhiftleſs in ourſelves, then God's help is neareſt ; *When I am weak,* (ſaith the apoſtle, 2 Cor. xii. 10.) *then am I ſtrong.* Renounce then all help in the creature, and look to the Creator : Say, Lord, though it be impoſſible with man, yet thou haſt told me, Mark x. 17. *That with thee all things are poſſible :* Though I may deſpair of all help in myſelf and others, yet thou haſt forbid me to deſpair of help in thee, therefore I flee to thee alone. *Lord, give what thou commandeſt, and then command what thou wilt.*

(4.) Plead thy extreme need of Chriſt, and of faith to give thee an intereſt in him. The world cannot tell thee, O ſinner, how great thy need is : There is not a ſtarving man that needs meat, a wounded man that needs a phyſician, a ſhip-wreck'd man that needs a plank, a dying man with the hive-rattling in his throat, that needs breath ſo much as thou needeſt Chriſt. What wilt thou do on a death-bed, or at a tribunal, without an intereſt in him ? And, what will become of thee to all eternity ? Go to him then, and ſeek faith in Chriſt, as a malefactor going to die would do his life : Fall down at his feet and cry, Give me faith and ſtrength to carry me to Chriſt's blood, or elſe I die. I may live without friends, wealth, honours and pleaſures ; but I cannot live without faith, I am loſt, undone, a dead man, and I periſh for ever without it. Lord, deny me what thou wilt, but deny me not faith. It had been better for me never to have been born, than to live without Chriſt and an intereſt in him : If I win not to the fountain of Chriſt's blood, I will ſink eternally in that ſcalding lake of fire and brimſtone : If I go to Chriſt's table without faith, I will ſhed his blood, and eat and drink my own damnation."

(5.) Plead with God, how eaſy it is for him to help thee ; cry with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxx. 1. *O thou that dwelleſt between the cherubims, ſhine forth* : It will coſt thee no more pains to work faith in me, and do all that I deſire, than doth the *Sun to ſhine forth* ; Yea thou canſt more eaſily put forth thy power and grace, than the ſun can dart out its beams. It is no trouble or loſs to the ſun to ſhine forth ; ſo neither will it be to thee to ſhew thy power and mercy : A look or touch from thee would do it, a little thing will ſave a drowning man : Lord, ſuffer me not to periſh, when it is ſo eaſy for thee to prevent it. Were it any loſs or trouble for God to help us, we might well doubt of it ; but, ſince it is none, we may cry with hope, Lord grant ſuch an hungry beggar an alms out of the ocean of thy bounty ; for thou wilt never miſs it. As the ſun, the more it ſhines, diſplays its glory the more ; ſo thou wilt gain glory by putting forth thy power to help ſuch a helpleſs creature as I am.

Obj. *But I have often looked and cried to him for help but, alas, I am ſuch a grievous ſinner, he doth not anſwer me, unleſs it be with a frown.*

Anſ. 1. It may be there is ſome idol or ſin ſtill harboured, that thou art not willing to part with. This may be the Achan in the camp, that cauſed the Lord to hide his face: Search for it and caſt out the accurſed thing : *Let not thine eye pity it, neither do thou ſpare it.* If thou canſt not find it, go humbly to God and cry, *Shew me, Lord, wherefore thou contendeſt with me.*

2. It may be thou art not fervent enough ; God keeps the door bolted, that you may be provoked to knock the harder, Mat. vii. 7. *Aſk, and it ſhall be given you : ſeek and you ſhall find ; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.* In which one verſe, Chriſt gives you three calls to fervency and importunity in prayer, each ſtronger than another ; *aſk, ſeek, knock.* The woman of Canaan readily took up the meaning of Chriſt's refuſing to

anſwer her; ſhe turns the more fervent and importunate, and ſo gets all her will.

3. Reſolve whatever diſcouragement you meet with, you will never quit the throne of grace, but you will always lay yourſelf in Chriſt's way, and never look to another for help; yea, that you will die waiting on him. Remember the Pſalmiſt's experience, Pſal. xl. 1. *I waited patiently for the Lord, and at length he inclined his ear, and heard my cry.* There was never any yet that waited on him, had cauſe to be aſhamed. You may meet with many diſcouragements and temptations, and be put to very ſad thoughts; but you muſt be reſolute in looking to Chriſt for help, come what will: And, in imitation of the *four lepers at the ſiege of Samaria,* reaſon with yourſelf, if I live at a diſtance from Chriſt, I'll infallibly periſh, there is no hope for me: If Chriſt pity me not when I am waiting on him, I ſhall but periſh; but yet there is hope he will have pity at length: Therefore if I periſh, I'll periſh at Chriſt's footſtool, looking up to him, where never one yet periſhed, and I hope he will not let me be the firſt.

4. Make uſe of arguments in pleading with him.

(1.) Plead the freeneſs of his mercy. It needs no motive and expects no worth; but, *whoſoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.* It runs freely, that mountains cannot ſtop the current of it, more than rocks can ſtop the ebbing and flowing of the ſea. Indeed, Lord, if ſin and unworthineſs could ſtop mercy, I might deſpair, for I am as unworthy a creature as ever the ſun ſhined upon; but bleſſed be God, grace is free."

(2.) Plead God's commiſſion, Iſa. lxi. 1. He was ſent *to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of priſon-doors to them that are bound.* Lord, here is a poor priſoner, a frozen, locked, bound-up heart: Here is employment for thee: Looſe me, knock off my fetters, and *bring my ſoul out of priſon.* Thou haſt all fulneſs dwelling in thee, and thou haſt it given thee to beſtow on ſuch miſerable objects as I am; Lord, here is a naked back for thee to cover, an empty ſtomach for thee to fill, a wounded ſoul for thee to cure. *Lord thou cameſt to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt;* and, wilt thou not be found of a loſt ſinner that is ſeeking thee?

(3.) Plead the communicativeneſs of his mercy to others. He had compaſſion upon mens bodies while he was on earth, even the bodies of wicked men, ſuch as the unthankful lepers; he let none of them go without healing that came to him. Say Lord, didſt thou ſhew ſo much compaſſion to diſeaſed bodies; and, wilt thou not have ſome pity on my dying ſoul, that is far more precious than carcaſes of clay? Plead his compaſſion that he hath ſhewed to the worſt of ſinners, ſuch as Manaſſeh, Mary Magdalene, Paul, and theſe who murdered him.—Plead his compaſſion towards the finally obſtinate and impenitent, ſuch as Jeruſalem, over which he wept, Luke xix. Lord, did thy heart melt with pity to ſuch, and, wilt thou not pity a humbled ſinner, that confeſſeth his ſin, and would fain be reconciled to God? Is not mercy the work thou delighteſt in? Mic. vii. 18.

Laſtly, Labour for a ſenſe of the miſery of a Chriſtleſs ſtate, of your great need of Chriſt, and of the happineſs of being *found in him*: And in a ſenſe thereof, look to Chriſt, and make a mint to take hold of him. Stir up yourſelf to it, and reſt your ſoul on him as you can; and God will help you, and communicate ſtrength. He will not fail to notice and encourage an honeſt mint, Jer. xxx. 21. *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach to me?* He will pity and help ſuch. Try, O poor ſoul, if you can get a grip of Chriſt eſpecially upon a ſacrament occaſion, when you are nearer him than at other times; If you cannot apply Chriſt to yourſelf, and ſay, he is mine; yet apply yourſelf to Chriſt, and ſay, *I would fain be thine,* yea, I am reſolved to be thine. Go forth to Chriſt with all the faith you can win at; ſay with the poor man, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* You muſt not ſit ſtill and do nothing, but uſe all means in your power; for it is in the uſe of theſe that God works faith: Hoiſe up the ſails, and wait for the gales.

DIRECT. XI. *Come and join yourſelves unto the Lord, in a perpetual and perſonal covenant before you go to his table.*

UNleſs you be within the covenant of grace, you have no right to the ſeal of the covenant; now if ye would be found within the covenant, you muſt by faith take hold of the covenant, and heartily go in with the gracious terms and contrivance of it. And this is what we commonly call perſonal covenanting with God. And the more expreſs and diſtinct we are in this matter we will have the more comfort.

As for the nature, neceſſity and manner of perſonal covenanting, I refer the reader to my Sacramental Catechiſm, from p. 118. to 136. *(firſt Edit.)* where this ſubject is largely handled.

Perſonal covenanting is the communicant's beſt token and without it you cannot warrantably come to the Lord's table. You will mock God, and deceive your own ſouls, if you take the great ſeal of heaven and append it to a blank or ſheet of clean paper: And this you do, when you communicate without previous covenanting with God. O beware of appending heaven's ſeal to a blank, leſt the King of heaven be wroth, and fill up the blank with a curſe.

O communicant, come then, take hold of the covenant of grace, and give a hearty and fiducial conſent to its gracious offers and terms. You are miſerable while under a covenant of works; be convinced of it and ſpeedily betake yourſelves to the new covenant, and the gracious method of ſalvation thro' Jeſus Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. Cordially accept of Jeſus Chriſt in all his offices, and in him make choice of God the Father, Son and holy Ghoſt, as your God and portion: And give up yourſelves ſoul and body, and all you have, to be the Lord's, to be for him and not for another: And in Chriſt's ſtrength engage to live for God, ſerve him, and walk with him in newneſs of life. Do all this in the moſt ſolemn manner, with ſincerity, humility and ſelf-denial; and, if this you be helped to do, God will accept of you at his table and deal with you as his covenanted people.

Obj. *But* (ſaith one) *I know it is my duty to come and tranſact with God in this manner, and renew covenant with him, conform to my baptiſmal vows; and ſometimes I think I am willing to do it, but I muſt ſuſpect my ſincerity in this matter; and it is highly dangerous to deal falſly with God, in pretending to covenant with him, when the heart is not right with God?*

Anſ. You have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect your own hearts and therefore ſhould be at all pains to ſearch and try your ſelves; and for your help, I ſhall give ſome characters of thoſe who aim ſincerely to tranſact and renew covenant with God.

1. They are ſuch who are throughly convinced of their miſery under the firſt covenant, as being wholly unable to fulfil its condition or pay its penalty; and therefore ſee they cannot abide in this caſe, without being undone to all eternity.

2. They are heartily grieved for their natural eſtrangement, and long living at a diſtance from God; and are made to ſay, Oh how long have I dwelt in Meſech, far from the fountain of my happineſs!

3. They are troubled for their long ſlighting of Chriſt's gracious calls and offers of mercy in the goſpel, and for the backwardneſs of their hearts to leave ſin and Satan, and come and enter into covenant with God. Oh how long have I preferred Satan's drudgery and ſervice, to God's friendſhip and favour; lived in league with my ſoul's enemy, and at war with my beſt friend!

4. They have ſomething of a ſoul affecting view of the new covenant, and the new way and method of ſalvation contained therein. They ſee there is no righteouſneſs of man or angel that can juſtify them, none but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone, nothing but an infinite ſatisfaction can do their turn; and it is their cry, *None but Chriſt.*

5. They are fully reſolved on a rupture, and breach with all the enemies of God, and to break all leagues and covenants with ſin, Satan and the world; and that they will never be ſlaves to them as formerly: They heartily join with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 115. *Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.*

6. They are ſenſible of, and humbled for, the former treachery and falſe-dealing of their hearts with God. Are there not many who have formerly entered into covenant with God, have ſworn allegiance to him as their ſovereign, and that not only at baptiſm, but have renewed this deed at the Lord's ſupper? But may not the Lord take up the ſame complaint againſt them as againſt Iſrael? Pſal. lxxviii. 36. 37. *They lied to him with their tongues; for their hearts were not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant.* Well, if you be deeply affected on this account, the Lord will not reject you.

7. They ſincerely accept of Chriſt as their Surety and Cautioner before God; they eſteem him altogether lovely and infinitely precious. They renounce their own *righteouſneſs* in juſtification, and their own *ſtrength* in ſanctification, and look to Chriſt for both, ſaying as theſe Iſa. xlv. 24. *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* I have not ſufficiency of myſelf either to make or keep covenant with God, but my confidence is entirely in Chriſt my all-ſufficient ſurety.

8. They are content to give themſelves to the Lord, and all they are and have. Faith hath two hands; by the one it receives Jeſus Chriſt, and by the other it gives the ſoul to him. Now, if your faith want either of theſe it is lame.

9. They feel indwelling ſin as a grievous clog; they deſire heart-holineſs more than any earthly thing, and reſolve, thro' grace, upon more care and watchfulneſs againſt ſin than formerly.

Now, try your ſincerity in covenanting with God by theſe marks, and if you can lay claim to one or more of them, then you are not hypocrites, nor of the number of theſe who give God the hand without the heart; who pretend to make a covenant with God, and yet keep a ſecret league with the devil, the world, and the fleſh, who profeſs a great outward reſpect to God and his ways, and yet keep a ſecret antipathy to Godlineſs, as alas, many do who come to the Lord's table.

And if you would manage this weighty tranſaction aright you, muſt be very deliberate in it: Take many a view of the nature and frame of the covenant of grace, and conſider what God offers and promiſes therein, and what he doth require of us; and endeavour to get your hearts wrought up to a chearful compliance therewith. Your ſouls are at the ſtake, and a miſtake here ruins you eternally; but, if once it be well done, it is done for ever. This bargain is not for a ſhort term, but for life, nay, for eternity; and therefore you ſhould count the coſt of it and conſider it duly; and be reſolved, whatever trouble or perſecution ſhall ariſe, or whatever temptation you may meet with to leave Chriſt, to ſay to them, like Ruth to Naomi, when ſhe was ſtedfaſtly reſolved to go with her, Ruth i. 16. *Intreat me not to leave Chriſt; for where he goes, I will follow him, tho' it were into baniſhment: Where he lodges, I will lodge, tho' it were in a priſon: for neither death nor life ſhall part Chriſt and me.*

And again, beware of delays of making or entering into covenant with God. It is a work for eternity, and therefore requires preſent diſpatch. The time of youth is a rare ſeaſon for this work, and ought carefully to be improved, and no time loſt. And here I ſhall addreſs myſelf to the young.

O young people, and ye that never communicated before, ſet about this work of perſonal covenanting before you approach to the Lord's table. Do not delay or put off to another year, or till old age or ſickneſs come on: For, what do you know but God may be provoked to harden your hearts ſo in old age (tho' ye ſhould live till that time) that ye ſhall have no liking to religion and the ways of God? Muſt it not be highly diſpleaſing to God to reſerve for him the refuſe and dregs of your ſtrength and time? Will you give your Creator and Redeemer only ſo much of your time and ſtrength as the devil and the world have left? O what is this, but to offer the blind and lame of the flock in ſacrifice to God, Mal. i. 7. which is an abomination!

O young folk, can you diſpoſe of yourſelves better in the days of your youth, than give up yourſelves to the Lord? When you are ready to chuſe callings and ſettlements in the world, can ye take a wiſer courſe, than firſt chuſe a ſettlement in Chriſt's family, which would make all other conditions and circumſtances of life the more comfortable to you? Now, the way to be made a member of this family, is by the covenanting with God: Without this, you have no right to the childrens bread, nor the ſeals of the covenant. It is not enough that you were baptized, and are Chriſtians by your parents dedication, unleſs you be Chriſtians by your own free choice and conſent. Remember, you are now to enter into the ſtate of adult church-memberſhip, and be admitted to ſhare of the childrens privileges ſealed to you in baptiſm; and therefore now ye muſt act as rational men and women, and make a choice for yourſelves: You ought perſonally and explicitely to renew your baptiſmal covenant, and ratifying your parents deed, now when you are of age; otherwiſe your baptiſm, and parents dedication will not profit you. I call you to engage to no more here, than what you are already obliged to by your baptiſm; for it is juſt the ſame covenant you are to enter into now that ye have already conſented to by your baptiſm: Only, by your perſonal reſignation, voluntary conſent, and taking the ſecond ſeal of the covenant, you are to bind yourſelves the faſter to it; the which if you neglect to do, your baptiſm will be ſo far from profiting you, that it will be a witneſs againſt you, and cry for vengeance on you, and you will be in no better condition than the heathens that never were baptized.

O young communicants take heed to your firſt communicating; for very much doth depend upon it. You are now as it were to lay the foundation ſtone of your ſalvation-work, and this ought to be done with much ſpiritual ſkill and knowledge, if you would have a ſure building. O then dig deep, and found your houſe, your ſalvation, your hopes of heaven upon the rock Chriſt, by perſonal covenanting, and expreſs cloſing with him upon the terms of grace: For if you do it not, but approach to the Lord's table in ignorance, unbelief, or hardneſs of heart, you may provoke God to ſmite you with judicial blindneſs and obduration, and give you up to ſuch heart-hardneſs and formality in duty, as may cleave to you all your lives long, and ſo you are ruined for ever. The time of your firſt communicating is a moſt critical juncture for your ſouls; for according to the ſtate, frame, and diſpoſition of peoples ſouls at their firſt communicating, ſo it very often fares with them in ſome meaſure at all the reſt of the communions they partake of. Many have found this, ſome to their ſweet, others to their ſad experience. Some by their careleſs approach at firſt, and neglecting expreſly to covenant with God, have drawn down the plagues of heart-hardneſs and formality upon themſelves, and provoked God to leave them to wander in the dark all their days, without any ſolid aſſurance, or comfortable view of their intereſt in Chriſt and the covenant of grace. But others, by means of their ſincere preparation and covenanting with God at this time, have got a ſeal of their converſion, and a view of their intereſt in Chriſt, which hath proven very uſeful and comfortable to them all the reſt of their lives, and eſpecially in the time of diſtreſs, and when on a death-bed. Then they have remembered, how that at ſuch a time and place they joined themſelves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, and then and there God ſpake with them, intimated their pardon, owned them as his covenanted children. As their ſouls were helped to ſay to the Lord, *Thou art my God*: So God ſaid to them, *I am your ſalvation*. And thereby many have been ſtrengthened, when ready to faint under doubts and diſcouragements. Therefore, O young communicants, as ye regard the well-being of your precious and immortal ſouls for ever, look well to yourſelves at this time; if matters be right with you now, they will never be altogether wrong afterwards. Labour to get ſome diſtinct uptakings of the covenant of grace and of the nature, ends and uſes of this ſolemn ordinance, which is the compend and ſeal of it, before your firſt partaking, pray fervently for knowledge and ſpiritual illumination; apply to Jeſus Chriſt, your great Prophet, for this, and ſee to improve the means and helps which he is pleaſed to afford you for it. Retire for meditation and reading of the Bible; read and meditate much of the ſufferings of Chriſt; read our Confeſſion of Faith; Vincent's Catechiſm, Guthry's Trial of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, Doolittle, and other good books on the ſacrament, that ye may attain to ſome right impreſſions of the covenant, and the Lord's ſupper; and particularly of the obligations you already lie under by the firſt ſeal of baptiſm; and then under a humble ſenſe of guilt, and with a hopeful view of the goſpel offer, go with all ſerioußneſs and ſolemnity, and renew theſe engagements, enter into covenant with God, and next come to his table, to get the tranſaction ſealed and ratified, by getting the other ſeal of heaven appended to it.

And now, young people, I put it to your choice as Joſhua did to the Iſraelites, Joſ. xxiv. 15. *Chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve.*—Make choice at this time whom ye will be ſaved by, and whom ye will obey. Whom will you have for your maſter, whether Chriſt or the devil? Both are courting your hearts; which of them will you yield to? Lay your hands to your hearts, and ſee whether you will grant Chriſt's or the devil's deſire? Whether ſhall the devil have you ſoul and body to all eternity, or ſhall Chriſt have you? Oh, will any be ſo fooliſh as halt betwixt two opinions in this caſe, any ſo mad as ſtand in doubt whether to be ſaved or damned, whether to live with Chriſt or the devil for ever? Now Michael and his angels, and the Dragon and his angels are fighting about your hearts; the devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing: O will you not be on Chriſt's ſide, and wiſh Michael may prevail, that the red dragon's head may be broken, that the devil may get a total defeat, and that Chriſt may get your hearts for ever? Remember, Chriſt will have none but willing ſervants Pſal. cx. 3. none but theſe who freely offer themſelves unto the Lord. Amaziah the ſon of Zichri is recorded with great honour, 2 Chron. xvii. 16. becauſe *he willingly offered himſelf unto the Lord.* O for many Amaziahs, many ſuch free-will offerings among young communicants. It would be a moſt pleaſant ſight to God and miniſters, to ſaints and angels, whoſe eyes are upon you. The firſt-fruits under the law were to be offered to the Lord. *The kindneſs of youth is much remembred by him,* Jer. ii. Young folks praying, repenting and covenanting are moſt melodious muſic in his ears. O give Chriſt the firſt and beſt of your days, for he well deſerves this. Make earneſt of covenanting work in ſecret, that the communion day may be a day of your eſpouſal to the Lord Jeſus and the marriage knot may be caſt ſo ſure at this table that death nor hell may never be able to looſe it.

Need I uſe any motives to preſs you to make this bargain, which is ſo advantageous for your ſouls? God invites you to treat with him, nay, he ſummons you to do it, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. *Yield yourſelves to the Lord,* ſtrike hands with God, ſubmit to his mercy, accept of the terms of grace. O if God himſelf would ſound an alarm in your ears, and ſhew you the miſery of an unconverted ſtate!

1. While you are in this ſtate, you have no intereſt in Chriſt, no ſhare in his blood or purchaſe; you have neither art nor part in the God of Iſrael, Eph. ii. 12.

2. You are under a covenant of works, and the power, terror, threatning and curſes of a broken law. The ſentence of death is pronounced againſt you, and you may look for the execution of it every moment,

3. While you are out of the covenant, you have no right to any mercy, and all the mercies you receive are curſed to you, and you know not how ſoon God may ſtrip you of all you have.

4. Conſider what a ſad ſtroke death gives to an uncovenanted ſoul. It deprives him of all mercies, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, at one blow; and ſets him a-going for ever. And whether can you flee in the day of viſitation, when nothing but grim horror and deſpair do ſtare you in the face? When the body is on the brink of the grave, and the ſoul is on the brink of hell, how will you have confidence to cry to an uncovenanted God, to whom you have been ſtrangers all your days? Muſt it not be terrible for an uncovenanted ſoul to think, I am going to appear before that God I do not know, have no intereſt in, nor acquaintance with? Can I look for friendſhip from him now, ſince I never ſought after it before? But, on the contrary, how pleaſant then will it be for a covenanted ſoul to look death in the face, who can ſay, *I know whom I have believed*, and I know whether I am going: *The place I know, the way I know* and the God of that land I know? Why ſhould I be backward to go to my covenanted friend, with whom I have oft converſed, been long acquainted, and in whoſe preſence I have placed my happineſs?

5. Conſider how lamentable your caſe will be for evermore, if you ſlight the preſent opportunity: The treaty will not always laſt with you, nay, the day is not far off when it ſhall end, and God will treat with you no longer. The door will be eternally ſhut, and God will become inacceſſible, inexorable, irreconcileable for evermore: Chriſt the bleſſed mediator will become thy implacable Judge; and, how will you look him in the face, when on the throne, whom you ſo baſely ſlighted at a communion table? What wilt thou do when thou findeſt thyſelf ſhut up under flaming wrath, without hope? The remembrance of loſt opportunities will be as oil to thy flames. *Time was, when God treated, and would have made a bargain with me, but I would not:* this will be the burden of thy eternal lamentation. O how will you be able to bear the wrath of an uncovenanted God! Who can dwell with devouring fire? A ſmall ſhower of fire and brimſtone lighting on our heads now, would be very terrible. But O it will be infinitely more ſo, when it ſhall be poured down in whole ſtreams, and that not for a time, but for ever and ever. Will not ten thouſand years ſuffering do the turn? No, no; it will be eternal. Well, if you be able to dwell with everlaſting burnings, you need not treat with God: But O *it is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God*, One that lives and will for ever live to revenge himſelf upon you!

Hard muſt your hearts be, if they be not moved by theſe threatnings; but yet harder muſt they be, if they be not melted by God's condeſcending intreaties. Hear him, Iſa. lv. 1. 2. 3. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, Come,* &c. *Incline your ear, and come unto me; Hear, and your ſoul ſhall live, and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you.* Is God ſo willing to make a covenant with his creature, a ſlave, a worm; and are you not willing to caſt down the weapons of rebellion, and enter into a league with him? Is it not a bargain moſt ſuitable for you and all your circumſtances and neceſſities? Is it not moſt glorious and honourable for you to be betrothed to ſo great a prince? Hoſ. ii. 19. Is it not rich and advantageous for you to be infeft in ſo great an inheritance, and to have a ſealed right to ſuch bleſſed privileges as a free pardon, gracious acceſs, covenant proviſion, covenant-protection and covenant-comforts?

Obj. *Alas I have made a perſonal covenant before, but have broke it.*

Anſ. You have cauſe to be humbled for it before God; and if you be not, it is a bad ſign indeed. 2. All ſenſible and mourning backſliders are invited to return to him and renew their covenant, Jer. iii. endeavour to make the bargain ſurer than you did before.

Obj. *I am afraid of breaking over again: And is it not better not to engage?*

Anſ. 1. It is good to be jealous of yourſelves, and fear'd for breaking; for, the more you diſtruſt your own ſtrength, the ſtronger you are.

2. If you covenant honeſtly, you will get covenant grace and ſtrength which ſhall be ſufficient for you; you will get the dominion of ſin broke, and power to wreſtle againſt it: And above all, you will get Chriſt engaged for you as your ſurety; and to be ſure, tho' you be weak, he is able enough.

DIRECT. XII. *Labour for a thorow cleanſing of both heart and life from ſin, and turn unto the Lord in the ways of new obedience, before you come to the Lord's table.*

ALL that would attend a holy God, and expect a communion with him in this holy ordinance, muſt ſee to have pure hearts and clean hands, Pſal. xxiv. 3. 4. Jam. iv. 8. What was David's pious reſolution, Pſal. xxvi. 6. ought to be yours at this occaſion, *I will waſh my hands in innocency, and ſo will I compaſs thine altar, O Lord.* He alludes to the ceremony of the prieſts waſhing at the brazen laver, before they miniſtred at the altar; to let us ſee, that tho' this ceremony belonged only to the prieſts, yet the morality belongs to all; and there is a waſhing which concerns all before they meddle with holy ſervices, and eſpecially ſuch as the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper. There is a double waſhing required of all communicants; 1. A waſhing of yourſelves in Chriſt's blood by the actings of faith. 2. A waſhing of yourſelves by the exerciſe of true repentance and reformation which is an effect of the former; by the one, the guilt of ſin is taken away, and by the other, the filth of ſin is removed.

Now this cleanſing muſt be both external and internal, more than the outſide of the cup and platter muſt be waſhed, for God looks principally to the heart. Obſerve theſe parts, of the ſacrifice, that in a ſpecial manner behoved to be waſhed under the law, Lev. i. 9. *But the inwards and his legs ſhall he waſh in water.* Now, why ſhould the inwards and legs of the ſacrifice be waſhed above all the reſt? Becauſe the intrails contained the excrements of the beaſt, and the legs and the feet did tread in the mire and puddle, and ſo theſe parts were more defiled than any other part of the body. And all this to teach us, that when we draw near to God in ſolemn worſhip, we ſhould eſpecially waſh there, where moſt filth is likely to be contracted.

1ſt, Our inwards, our hearts and conſciences muſt be waſhed: O what filth and excrements, even a dunghil of filthy luſts, ly there! Jer. iv. 14. *O Jeruſalem, waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* O communicants, you muſt look well to the inwards at this time, and ſee to get all inward and ſecret luſts waſh'd out by repentance, and ſtrong reſolutions in Chriſt's ſtrength againſt them.

2dly, Our legs and feet muſt be waſhen alſo. The ſteps of our daily converſation are defiled by walking and treading in foul ways: Oh, how much pollution do even believers gather by the ſteps of their daily walk! And hence it is, that he who is already waſhed, needs daily and upon every new occaſion, to have his feet waſhed, John xii. 10. We ſhould then be in earneſt, before we come to the Lord's table, to have all the defilement of onr outward actions waſhed away by true repentance and reformation of life. Alas that we ſhould come to this holy table with ſuch inwards and with ſuch feet, as many times we have! *Lord, purge us with hyſſop, and we ſhall be whiter than the ſnow.* Our own waſhing will not do it, if Chriſt put not to his hand; yet we muſt be ſincerely uſing the means, and waiting for the help of his Spirit.

If you would be ſuitably prepared for this ſolemn ordinance, and have a gracious meeting with Chriſt at his table, you muſt not only ſearch out your ſins, be deeply humbled for them, make confeſſion of them before the Lord, and by faith lay hold on Chriſt for pardon, as before directed; but you muſt alſo be waſhen and cleanſed from ſin, forſake ſin in your life, and caſt it out of your heart: For if you come to Chriſt's table with any of his enemies and traitors lodged in your boſoms, with any of your old luſts unmortified, and ſins not put away, he will look upon you as his murderers, and ſmite you with his judgments, yea, you may expect that the wrath of God will come upon you whilſt the bread is in your mouths, as it did unto Iſrael for the ſame reaſon, Pſal. lxxvii. 30. 31. *They were not eſtranged from their luſts; but whilſt the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of them, and ſmote down the choſen men of Iſrael.* Perhaps, O ſinner, thou mayeſt not feel this wrath at the time, but it may be inflicted inſenſibly on thy ſoul; and every ſacrament thou receiveſt in this condition, thou doſt heap and treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath; every time thou bringeſt a new faggat to the heap, which will make a terrible fire at laſt, when it is thorowly kindled againſt thy ſoul.

O then you who deſign to approach to the Lord's table, be perſuaded to put a bill of divorce into the hands of all your luſts and idols; *Caſt away all your former tranſgreſſions*, and begin a new life: Reſolutely turn your back on ſins, ſatan and hell; and come take on with a new maſter, and engage in God's ſtrength to be good ſervants and faithful ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt for the time to come. If you do this, God promiſeth you mercy and pardon, and that your former ſins ſhall not ſo much as be mentioned to you, Iſa. lv. 7. Ezek. xviii. 21. 22. But, if you do it not ſevere wrath is threatned Pſal. lxviii. 21.

The ſacrament doth work and produce effects, according to the ſtate and diſpoſition of the receivers thereof; as the *water of jealouſy*, did to the woman under ſuſpicion of uncleanneſs Numb. v. 27. 28. If the woman was clean, then the water did her no hurt, nay, it did her good, made her conceive and become fruitful: But, if ſhe was defiled and unclean, it did her great miſchief; *Her belly did ſwell, her thigh did rot, and ſhe became a curſe.* It is ſo in receiving the ſacrament: If a man be in a gracious ſtate, and made clean by faith, repentance and reformation, then the ſacrament brings a bleſſing, it makes a man ſpiritually healthful and fruitful: But if he be defiled and impenitent, it doth him great miſchief; like the water of jealouſy, it doth poiſon and rot his ſoul, and he proves a more rotten and wretched ſinner than before. O then, let none venture to harbour ſin, and deal falſly with God, when he comes to drink this water of jealouſy.

The Phariſees quarrelled with Chriſt Mat. xv. 2. *Why do thy diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders? for they waſh not their hands when they eat bread.* But on many better grounds may we quarrel communicants; Why do ye tranſgreſs the commandment of the Lord? for ye waſh neither hands nor heart when ye eat bread at the Lord's table; nay, ye preſume to dip your filthy hands into the diſh with a holy Jeſus: Do you think he will bear with ſuch an affront from vile worms, when it is more eaſy for him to cruſh you, than for you to trample a worm under your feet? Remember, he is a *God of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity.*

Would you have God to draw near to you in this holy ordinance, then cleanſe your hands and purify your hearts. *Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before his eyes, ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well.* And, if ye would be accepted by God, your turning from ſin muſt have theſe properties:

1ſt, It muſt be a cordial turning with all the heart and ſoul. You muſt not forſake ſin with reluctancy and by conſtraint (as Phaltiel left Michal) but willingly and readily.

2dly, You muſt turn from your ſins preſently, and without delay. Do not adventure to lie down and ſleep with them another night, leſt your waking next day be in hell, or under a ſentence of final hardneſs or impenitency: You are not ſure the day of grace will laſt or the door of mercy ſtand open till to-morrow.

3dly, You muſt turn from ſin finally and everlaſtingly; your quarrel with ſin muſt be irreconcileable: For, if now ye declare war againſt your ſins as the traitors and murderers of your Lord and Maſter, ye muſt draw the ſword againſt them, and throw away the ſcabbard, vow never to be ſatisfied till you revenge Chriſt's death upon them, and get them utterly deſtroyed. O never entertain a favourable thought of, nor give a kindly look to the bloody knife that killed your deareſt friend. Do not like many, who only part with their ſins about the time of a communion, or when conſcience is awakened; but when that is over, they run with the dog to the vomit. Many ſay to their ſins, as Abraham to his ſervants, *Stay at the foot of the mount till I go up and worſhip, and I will return to you again.* You ought to ſay ſo indeed to your neceſſary worldly affairs at this time; but, for your ſins, you ſhould paſs an act of eternal baniſhment upon them, and ſay with Ephraim, what have I to do any more with idols?

4thly, You muſt turn from ſin univerſally. You muſt not, like Herod, part with many and reſerve ſome, but readily give up with all; with inward heart-ſins, as well as outward and groſs ſins; with ſins of omiſſion, as well as of commiſſion, with ſecret ſins, as well as open ſins. And particularly, turn from your predominant ſins whatever they be; and from theſe ſins that are common in the age and place wherein you live: Reſerve no ſin, nor darling luſt, but hew thy beloved Agag in pieces before the Lord; leave no grip of thy heart to the devil, leſt he pull thee to hell by it.

Turn from all tongue ſins, rotten diſcourſe and corrupt communication. You would reckon it a ſad diſeaſe to have your excrements come out at your mouth; and yet, alas, this is the diſeaſe of many. O ſwearer, turn from your ſwearing: What mean ye to ſtudy the language of hell, unleſs you would have the world believe that you deſign to travel thither! For theſe who are to go to a ſtrange country to live, deſire to learn ſomething of the language of the country ere they go. What profit or pleaſure have you in this ſin? Why will you dare heaven and defy God's law, without any temptation? What would you ſay, if men ſhould baffle or abuſe your name, or your father's name, as you do the Lord's name!

Obj. *O, ſay ſome, it is only the devil's name that we baffle.*

Anſ. There is nothing pleaſes the devil more than to have his name ſo frequently uſed; for thus you make him a god, whom you worſhip and pray to, by bidding the devil take this or that.

Obj. *I do not ban or ſwear but when I am in paſſion and provoked to it.*

Anſ. 1. This is an aggravation of your ſin, firſt to be in paſſion, and then to ſwear: Do you think that one ſin will excuſe another? 2. Is it juſt to flee in the face of your Creator, becauſe you are affronted by your fellow creature? Will you ſtab your father, becauſe your enemy ſtrikes you? If a man wrong you, will you put forth your anger on God that never wronged you?

Obj. *I ſwear but little oaths, by faith, conſcience,* &c.

Anſ. 1. The devil would have you think theſe but little ſins now: But, ſtay till a death-bed or a judgment-ſeat, and you will find him alter his note. 2. Do you think it a light matter to make a common baffle of faith, the precious inſtrument of your juſtification; or of conſcience, that is the deputy of the great God; or of your precious ſoul, that coſt the blood of Chriſt to redeem it?—3. Theſe are but creatures, and to ſwear by them is plain idolatry: For it is a giving worſhip, and aſcribing divine attributes to the creature.

O curſers and ſwearers, be perſwaded to forſake theſe ſins, and turn to God in Chriſt for mercy. What will God ſay to you at the great day, if you do not? You wiſht for damnation in your ordinary diſcourſe; you are now holden at your word, and damned ſhall you be. You ſwore in your ordinary diſcourſe; therefore *God will ſwear in his wrath, you ſhall not enter into his reſt:* You could not ſpeak without curſing; therefore you ſhall be baniſhed out of God's preſence with a curſe: Their tongues, that were ſo liberal of oaths and blaſphemies, ſhall fry in endleſs and eaſeleſs flames, without one drop of water to cool them."

Again, O liar, forſake your lying, and come to Chriſt. Tho' this ſin be common, yet conſider it is moſt abominable in the the ſight of God: The devil is the patron of this ſin, and the father of liars; it was with a lie he ruined all mankind. Ye ſhall be as gods, ſaid he to our firſt parents. There is never a lie thou makeſt, but the devil is at thine ear, and whiſpers it to thee. Remember what God did to Ananias and Sapphira for lying, Acts v. he ſtruck them dead with a lie in their mouth; and it will be a wonder of his patience, if he do not ſo to thee. Do you know, O liars, whoſe children you are? Not God's children, for they are children that will not lie; and therefore you muſt be Satan's children, for he is a liar from the beginning, and the father of liars. Knoweſt thou, O liar, whither thou art going? Even to thy father. Should not children be with their father? You cannot look upward, and ſay, *Our Father which art in heaven;* but thou mayeſt look downward and ſay, *Our father which art in hell;* and there it is (if thou repent not) that thy tongue ſhall be tormented in flames for ever. Tremble at this, O liar, and be aſſured it is no lie that I tell you: *Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?*

Moreover O drunkard, turn from your drunkenneſs, and come to Chriſt. While you live in this ſin, you ly under may woes and curſes, Iſa. v. 11. 12. Iſa. xxviii. 2. 1 Cor. vi. 10. God's curſes are not light, therefore make not light of them: For if ye do, O drunkard, remember what is abiding you hereafter, even a cup of red vengeance filled up with the dregs of God's wrath which ſhall be poured down your throat for ever; and yet you ſhall eternally cry out, *I thirſt, I thirſt*; and, for all the drink you have had on earth, you cannot get there a drop of cold water to cool your tongue.

In the next place, O covetous man, cheater and defrauder, turn from your covetouſneſs, your injuſtice and unrighteous gain, and come to Chriſt. If you do not, you ſhall pay dear for all your unjuſt gain in another world; *God is the avenger of all ſuch as you defraud,* 1 Theſſ. iv. 6. You think yourſelf very cunning, when you can cheat your neighbour of a little money; but, know you not, that the devil in the mean time is more cunning in cheating you of your precious ſoul, which is infinitely more valuable?

Sabbath-breaker, ſecure and prayerleſs ſinner, turn from your ſins unto God and holineſs; flee to Chriſt for ſhelter from them, and the wrath due to them; righteouſneſs and redemption are only to be found in him. Would you not count him mad, who being condemned to a cruel death for baſe crimes, and might eſcape it if he would accept of a pardon ready provided for him, and live off ſuch vile acts for the future, would yet obſtinately refuſe to do it? And, are not you yet madder, that ſlight your Saviour and hug your luſts, when your danger is a thouſand times greater? What madneſs is it to diſhonour God and damn yonr ſoul, to gratify the devil, or pleaſe a vile carcaſe that ſhortly will be ſo lothſome, that men cannot endure it above ground?

O ſinner I beſeech you in the name of the great and glorious Jehovah, and in the name of our glorious Redeemer, be reconciled to God, accept a pardon through Chriſt's blood, and engage to quit theſe ſins that would deſtroy you. Will you pleaſe God, and ſhew kindneſs to your poor ſoul by doing it? However much you have abuſed God's patience, trampled his love, ſlighted his calls, deſpiſed his threatnings, and undervalued his promiſes; yet he is ſtill ſtanding and beſeeching you to be reconciled to him. O will not all this goodneſs melt your heart, and cauſe you with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. to bemoan yourſelf, and cry, *Turn thou me, O Lord, and I ſhall be turned?* Without this turning, ſee that you venture not to this ſacred ordinance; let none with the running ulcers of ſin upon them offer to ſit down at his holy table, for God's pure eyes cannot look upon them. And if you would turn a right, ſee that ye turn believingly to God in Chriſt: For there is no acceſs to the King of heaven, without bringing the Prince of peace, the King's Son, in your arms; no atonement without Chriſt, no acceptance but in the Beloved.

Laſtly, If you would turn to God aright, ye muſt not only turn from ſin, but alſo turn to the ways of holineſs and new obedience. It is not enough to ceaſe to do evil, but you muſt alſo learn to do well. Some do part with their ſins of commiſſion, but continue ſtill in ſins of omiſſion; they leave their groſs out-breakings, but ſtill neglect commanded duties. But the tree is not only adjudged to the fire that bears evil fruit, but alſo the tree that bears no fruit: So that the neglect of duty will damn as ſurely as the commiſſion of ſin. Communicants that God will ſmile upon, are ſuch as not only forſake all known ſin, but do ſincerely endeavour thro' grace, to yield obedience to the whole revealed will of God, and in Chriſt's ſtrength do ſet about the performance of every commanded duty.

But as for theſe communicants that do not ſtudy new obedience, and do not make conſcience of performing every known duty, God will ſay to ſuch, as he ſaith to the wicked, Pſal. l. 16. 17. *What haſt thou to do, that thou ſhouldſt take my covenant* (or the ſeal of my covenant) *in thy mouth, ſeeing thou caſteſt my words behind thee?* They can expect no communion and fellowſhip with him at his table.

But, on the other hand, he makes very gracious and comfortable promiſes to thoſe that ſtudy obedience; Jer. vii. 24. *Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you ſhall be my people.* As the prophet Iſaiah ſpeaks to the Jews of the good things of the land of Canaan, ſo may we ſay to you concerning the good things of the ſacrament, Iſa. i. 19. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the good of the land.* As the land of Canaan produced very precious fruits, ſo doth the Lord's ſupper; and theſe far more excellent than thoſe. It is here that the marrow and fatneſs of God's houſe is diſtributed to his children. Well, if you be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat of the good things of the ſacrament.

But ſee that your obedience ſpring from right principles from love and gratitude to God, from a true hatred to ſin, and high eſteem of holineſs. It was an excellent ſaying of one, *Were there neither heaven nor hell, yet ſin ſhould be my hell, and holineſs my heaven.* The ſpiritually enlightned ſoul doth ſeee an unſpeakable deformity in ſin, which cauſeth him to abhor it: He ſees ſuch a charming beauty in holineſs, that he cannot but love and deſire it.

DIRECT. XIII. *Meditate much upon the death and ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, before you approach to his table.*

WOULD you have your hearts put in a ſuitable communion frame, then read and think much of the ſufferings of Chriſt; and, in a ſpecial manner, take a cloſe view of them on the ſaturday's night before the communion. Think on them till your hearts melt, and affections warm; yea, reſolve you will not give over till then; and beg God's bleſſing on your meditations for this end.

Think and wonder at the greatneſs of the humiliation of the Son of God, Admire the low ſtoop and condeſcenſion of the Son of God, and the King of glory, that he ſhould be content for us to become a creature, and ſuch a mean creature as man; that he who was equal with God, ſhould become leſs than God, John xiv. 28. yea, leſs than angels, Heb. ii. 7. yea, to be depreſſed below the ordinary condition of man, Pſal. xxii. 6. *I am a worm*, &c. Think how he denied himſelf of all his riches and glory, that though he was the heir of all things, yet for our ſakes, he became ſo poor, that he had not a cradle of his own to ly in when born, a houſe to lay his head in while he lived, nor a grave to be buried in when he died. He left his throne of ſtate, to lodge in the virgin's womb: He is born, not in his mother's houſe, but in a common inn, and the baſeſt place of the inn, a ſtable, the inn being probably taken up by perſons of richer quality: He is cradled in a manger, having no better place allowed him on earth, though the higheſt heavens were too mean for him.

Think how he was carried to a wilderneſs to faſt and watch, and live forty days among the wild beaſts, haunted and tempted by the devil, and ſadly buffeted by his own ſlaves; and all this for us.

View him going about on foot, hungry, thirſty, and weary, yet always doing good: And the more good he did to ſouls and bodies, the more was he hunted and perſecuted, reproach'd and blaſphem'd; and all this for our ſakes.

View him entering into the garden of Gethſemane, beginning to fear, turn heavy, and cry out, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful even unto death.* What made him heavy, but the dead weight of your ſins, and the curſes of the law annexed to them? Behold him complaining to his poor diſciples, that could make no help to him; neither they nor the angels in heaven durſt touch his load, nor taſte his cup: He could have helped them, but they could not help him. Yea, he got not ſo much as ſympathy from them; they fell aſleep when he was at the worſt, and left him to tread out the wine preſs alone, and all for our ſakes.

View him in his fearful agony and bloody ſweat, falling ſometimes on his knees, and ſometimes on his face, praying once, praying again, and praying the third time, that the cup might paſs from him, till he is overwhelmed and covered with his own blood. Behold the great drops of blood burſting thro' and ſtanding above his garments and falling and lying upon the ground round about him; being at this time preſt betwixt the milſtone of God's juſtice and our ſins. Behold him ſweating without heat, and bleeding without a wound; the fire and the wound were inward, even in his ſoul. How freely did the fountain of his precious blood open and run to waſh us? Every vein and pore pours out a ſtreem, not waiting for the tormentors, and all for our ſakes.

Behold him betrayed and ſold *for thirty pieces of ſilver*, taken and bound with cords like a thief; yea, bound faſt, as Judas bade, and ſo faſt (as ſome ſay) that the blood did burſt out of his tender hands. Can your hearts or eyes behold, to ſee thoſe hands, that made heaven and earth, wrung together and bruiſed with hard cords: to ſee him bound that came to ſet the priſoners free, and looſe us who were Satan's bond ſlaves! Bleſt Jeſus, had not the cords of thy own love tyed thee faſter than the cords of thy enemies, tho' they had been the ſtrongeſt cabels or iron chains, they could not have held thee; but thou waſt a willing priſoner for our ſakes.

Behold him ſtruck upon the face, ſpit upon, buffeted, blindfolded, mocked, and cruelly affronted by rude ſoldiers, a whole night; Tho' he could have breathed them into hell, yet he meekly holds his peace, and patiently ſuffers all for our ſakes.

Behold his lovely countenance all diſfigured by their plucking the hair from his cheeks with pincers, Iſa. l. 6. The ſweeteſt face that ever the ſun ſaw was all beſmeared with *blood and ſpitting, yet he hid not his face from ſhame.*

Behold him led up and down from place to place, with a ridiculous garb put upon him, and yet never reſiſts: He is abuſed and diſgraced; a *Barabbas*, a murderer, the vileſt malefactor in all Jeruſalem, is preferred before him; and yet he complains not. View him as he was uſed by his own family, his choſen diſciples; one of them betrays him, another of them denies him, and all the reſt forſake him, and leave him alone among his bloody enemies hands.

Behold him, that *clothes the lilies of the field*, ſtrip'd naked: Behold him ſcourged back and ſide; yea ſcourged above meaſure, (Pilate thinking thereby to ſave his life) till all the pavement of Pilate's judgment-hall about him is bedewed with his precious blood: *Yet he willingly gave his back to the ſmiters*, that we might be freed from the everlaſting laſhes of God's wrath in hell.

Behold him with a platted crown of thorns upon his head, with the ſharp points turned inward, and driven into his head, till they pierced his head and ſkull in an hundred places; and ſo he is content to be as the ram caught in the thickets, to be ſacrificed in our room. Behold a new ſhower of blood running down his neck and whole body: Oh! it was my ſins that platted the thorns, and they were the reed that drave them in.

Behold him, after all theſe ſufferings, put to bear his heavy croſs, upon his ſore and bleeding ſhoulders; with what patience and humility did he bear the law-curſed tree that was weighed down with our ſins, and the law's curſes faſtned to it? Yea, he bears without complaint till his ſtrength is faint, he is breathleſs, and ready to faint under the burden, till another muſt help. It was not the croſs that made him faint; he had a greater burden to bear than ten thouſand worlds, even the infinite wrath of God due to our ſins.

Behold him ſtretched out naked, and laid upon the ground, that they might take the meaſure of his body and the holes for the nails: yea, they take them longer than the truth, that they might both crucify and rack him at once. Behold the four big nails driven in through the moſt ſinewy and ſenſible parts of his body, and the croſs lift up with the Lord of glory nailed to it: and, when it fell into the hole digged for the foot of it, how did the fall rend and tear his whole body? His own weight was his torture; and the longer he lived, his wounds grew the wider. His hands and feet are fixed, he cannot turn any way for eaſe: The blood ſtreamed down for ſeveral hours, till he expired amidſt theſe tortures.

Behold him hanging on a croſs *betwixt heaven and earth*, as if had been unworthy of a place in either of them: *Betwixt two thieves*, as if he had been the greateſt malefactor of the three. His ſufferings were univerſal, and did extend over all the parts and powers of his ſoul and body; no part free but his tongue, which was at liberty to pray for his enemies. He ſuffered in all his *ſenſes*; his *ſight* was tormented with the ſcornful geſtures of thoſe that paſſed by, *wagging their heads*; his *hearing* with *taunts* and *mocks*; his *ſmell* with the nauſeous ſavour of *dead mens ſkulls*; his *taſte* with *gall* and *vinegar*; his feeling with the nails and thorns that pierced his head, hands, and feet.

Behold him on the croſs, ſuffering till his ſtrength is dried up like a potſherd; his tongue cleaves to his jaws, till he cries out, I thirſt. And no wonder he thirſted: for, beſides all the loſs of his blood, he was ſcorched with the fire of God's wrath. Yea, *the arrows of the almighty were within him, the poiſon whereof did drink up his ſpirit.*

Behold him at the worſt, crying out for relief, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* But yet no relief appears, there is none to anſwer: Yea, his own ſun, his own heaven, his own Father, his own Godhead, hid their faces and conſolations from him. He is left alone in midſt of devils and enemies inſulting over him: He falls a ſacrifice to incenſed juſtice, for our heinous guilt and provocations.

Behold the Son of righteouſneſs under a fearful eclipſe. For a candle to be put out is no great matter, but for the ſun to be darkened is marvellous and ſtrange.

In the next place, take a view of his willingneſs to ſuffer all theſe things for us. He quickens Judas to do his work, and he goes out to meet his perſecutors, and boldly tells them, that he was the man they ſought: He will not ſuffer Peter or the angels to do any thing for his reſcue, becauſe of his deſire to drink the cup which the Father had given him, John xviii. 11. And God knows, a full and bitter cup it was, being all mingled with guilt, wrath and curſes; heaped up and running over: A cup, which, if men or angels had taſted, they had all ſtaggered and fallen back headlong into hell: Yet how cheerfully did he drink it for us? He was not, like the legal ſacrifices dragged to the altar; no, he went willingly to it, and tyed himſelf with the cords of love to the horns of it.

O what affections ſhould the conſideration of theſe things ſtir up in the ſouls of communicants! Are ye going up to mount Calvary, to ſee Chriſt crucified; and, will not ye think on his ſufferings, and be affected with them, ere ye go?

You may here, as in a looking-glaſs, behold what you deſerved at the hands of a juſt God, if Chriſt had not interpoſed for you. You may ſee the wondrous love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledge, which ought to kindle a flame of love in your hearts. You may ſee the curſed nature and demerit of ſin, that expoſed Chriſt to ſo much ſorrow and ſuffering. Can you look on him whom you have thus pierced, and not mourn bitterly for ſin that did it, and hate it as the moſt ugly thing in the world? Would not your heart riſe againſt the man, yea, againſt the knife that killed your father, brother, huſband, or friend; and, will not your hearts riſe againſt ſin, that has killed him that is inſtead of all relations, and ſhould be far dearer to us than a thouſand fathers or brothers? Can we look on Chriſt's ſufferings, and not make ſolemn vows againſt ſin, and part with lying, ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, *&c.* that crucified him? When the king of Moab was preſſed hard by Iſrael, he took his eldeſt ſon, that ſhould have reigned in his ſtead, and offered him up for a burnt ſacrifice upon the walls, 2 Kings iii. 27. whereupon they raiſed the ſiege, and went home. Well, the great God hath taken his only Son, ſacrificed him to juſtice, that we might thereby be perſuaded to leave off fighting againſt heaven.

O let this ſtrange act, which is both an act of juſtice and goodneſs, ſo over-awe your hearts with fear and overcome them with love, that you may leave off to offend God any more.

DIRECT. XIV. *Be frequent and fervent in prayer before you approach to the Lord's table.*

THEY that forget God in their cloſets and families, are not fit to come and remember him at his table; therefore let no prayerleſs ſoul venture thither. You ought to double your prayers and meſſages to heaven that week, and eſpecially that night before you approach to this ordinance; if ever you prayed and wreſtled with God, now ſhould be the time of it. As the heathen ſhipmaſter ſaid to Jonah, ſo ſay I to thee, O communicant, Jonah i. 6. *Ariſe, O ſleeper, and call upon thy God, if ſo be that God will think upon thee that thou periſh not.* O ſleep not now, when you are in hazard of eating and drinking eternal damnation; but be praying when others are ſleeping. This courſe will ſurely redound to thy advantage, and be the means of procuring ſpecial bleſſings to thy ſoul. When was it that God gave commiſſion to open Paul's eyes, and fill him with the Holy Ghoſt, but then, when he was earneſt in prayer to God, Acts ix. 11. 17. *Behold, he prayeth.*——*The Lord hath ſent me* (ſaid Ananias) *that thou mightſt receive thy ſight and be filled with the Holy Ghoſt.* So, if you were earneſt in prayer before the ſacrament, God would notice you as he did Paul, and give charge to this ordinance to be the means of enlightening thy ſoul, and filling thee with the Holy Ghoſt. It was at the ſacrament of baptiſm that Chriſt's prayers opened heaven, and brought down the Holy Ghoſt upon him: So at the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper the fervent prayers of a believing communicant will open heaven, and bring down the gracious influences of the holy Spirit upon him. Your work at this time is very great and much need have you to look to God in Chriſt, and plead with him for his ſpecial aſſiſtance: You have very great encouragment to do it; for God never calls any to do his work, but he helps them in it. It is ſaid, 1 Chron. xv. 26. That *God helped the Levites that bare the ark.* One would think that the work of bearing the ark needed no more help from God than the general concourſe of his providence; and yet God helped them with ſpecial aſſiſtance. And if he helped the Levites to bear the ark, becauſe it was his work; will he not help us to receive the ſacrament, which he hath inſtituted for diſplaying his glory, if we ſincerely ſeek his help? You have many errands at this time to the throne of grace, for you have many things to pray for.

1. You ought in general to pray for preparation for this ſolemn feaſt; *for the preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord,* Prov. xvi. 1. Lay out the caſe of your heart and ſoul before the Lord, and ſay, "Lord, thou calleſt me to a very ſolemn ordinance; and, who is ſufficient for theſe things? I have neither a meet ſacrifice to offer, nor a meet temple to receive thee in. I know not how to pray, or to prepare myſelf; how to receive Chriſt, or behave myſelf at his table. Behold the bridegroom cometh, but I am not ready; I want the wedding-garment: Oh, what ſhall I do for clothing to my naked ſoul? *My beloved hath ſpoke, ſaying, Riſe up, my love, my fair one, and come away.* I have heard his voice; but Oh, I am not ſtirring for it: My heart ſaith, *Yet a little ſleep, yet a little ſlumber.* Lord, awake my heart, ſtir up my graces, and prepare me for a meeting with my Saviour. Lord, thou art the giver of grace as well as of glory, thou muſt give the frame as well as the feaſt; for without thee we have nothing, we can do nothing, thou prepareſt a table for me in this wilderneſs; but, ſhall the time of receiving come before thou comeſt into my ſoul to ſtir up thy graces in me? What commerce can a dead heart have with a living God? Lord, thou knoweſt my ſins, and the unpreparedneſs of my heart; and, if thou wilt mark iniquity, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand? My very preparations and beſt performances carry in them matter of indictment againſt my ſoul. But, Lord tho' my ſins be many and great, yet, doth not the blood of Chriſt cry louder for pardon than my ſins do for puniſhment? O that the cry of that blood may wholly drown the cry of my ſins at this time, and anſwer for the defects of my preparation. Oh, let not my ſoul, whoſe only hope is to be ſaved by Chriſt's blood, be ſent away from his table with the guilt inſtead of the comfort of that blood upon me.

2. And more particularly, you ought to pray for ſaving knowledge: Say, "Lord I am naturally alienated and eſtranged from thee, thro' the ignorance that is in me; O give me underſtanding, that I may know thee, and the myſtery of ſaving grace. Haſt thou not ſaid that the covenant thou wilt make with thy people is this, *They ſhall all know thee from the leaſt even to the greateſt?* O give me right up-takings of thy covenant, which is well-ordered in all things, and ſure! Give grace to know the nature, neceſſity, uſe and ends of this ordinance, which is the compend and ſeal of it, that ſo I may receive it with underſtanding, and rightly diſcern the Lord's body."

3. Pray for holy reverence and humility of ſpirit. "Lord, affect my heart with awful reverence of the greatneſs and holineſs of thy majeſty, to whom I am to make ſo near an approach, and with whom I am to renew covenant. Oh, how durſt I, who am ſinful duſt and aſhes, preſume to come ſo near thee, unleſs thou hadſt invited and commanded me? O for deep ſelf-abaſement and humility of ſoul when I go to receive the unſpeakable gift of God! O what a wonderful gift is Jeſus Chriſt to ſuch an unworthy and ill-deſerving creature as I am! Lord give me grace whereby I may ſerve thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

4. Pray for godly ſorrow and contrition for ſin. "Lord, take away my heart of ſtone, and give me a heart of fleſh, that I may lothe myſelf in my own ſight for all my iniquities and abominations. May I abhor them as the ſcourges, thorns, nails and ſpear that afflicted my Lord and Saviour: And may I be weary and heavy laden with the burden of my ſins, ſo that Chriſt may give me reſt. Lord, help me ſo to accuſe myſelf, that thou mayſt acquit me; ſo to judge and condemn myſelf, that thou mayſt abſolve me; and ſo to exerciſe a holy revenge upon myſelf that thou mayſt ſpare me. The days of mourning for my Redeemer's death are at hand; O that then I may ſlay my moſt beloved luſts, and be revenged on them for it, and for their endeavours to rob me of my ſpiritual birth right, my eternal bleſſedneſs? O that I may come to thy table, and receive a bleeding Saviour with a broken heart."

5. Pray for faith, both for the being and the increaſe of faith. " Lord, faith is thy own gift, as well as Chriſt; I believe, Lord help my unbelief. O for faith's eye to look upon Chriſt, faith's wings to flee to Chriſt, faith's arms to embrace Chriſt, faith's mouth to feed on Chriſt, faith's hand to apply Chriſt! When I ſee the bread and wine on the table, O let me ſee a bleeding crucified Jeſus. Let me not only eat the bread of the Lord, but the bread which is the Lord. May this ordinance be a lively reſemblance, remembrance and application of Chriſt's ſufferings to me; and may I be helped ſo to put my finger into the print of the nails, and my hand into his ſide, that I may be perſwaded of his ſuffering and dying for me; and may I *not be faithleſs but believing*, and may ſay with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God*; and with Paul, *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me*; and with the ſpouſe, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*. O that I may ſo touch him, that I may feel ſtrength, peace and virtue come from him, and be healed of all my plagues and uncleanneſſes! Let me ſo by faith feed on his bleſſed body and bathe my ſoul in his precious blood, that I may be filled with peace and joy in believing; yea, *my ſoul may magnify the Lord, and my ſpirit rejoice in God my Saviour*."

6. Pray for love to God and Chriſt. " Lord, circumciſe my heart to love the Lord with all my ſoul, with all my ſtrength. Lord, *ſhed abroad thy love in my* cold and frozen heart, and inflame it with fervent affection and deſires towards thee, that I may be a diſciple whom Jeſus loveth, and that leans on his breaſt. O that *Chriſt may dwell in my heart by faith, and that, being rooted and grounded in love, I may be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth and length, the depth and height, and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge!* O that the remembrance of Chriſt's love may tranſport me with love, captivate my will, and engage all my affections to him. Lord, tho' I cannot ſay, *I am ſick of love* to thee, yet I deſire to be ſick that I cannot love thee more. O for grace that I may be numbred among them that *love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity*."

7. Pray for love to all the people of God. " Lord, make all theſe lovely in mine eyes, to whom Chriſt is precious: That I may *know I am paſſed from death to life, becauſe I love the brethren*. O for a warm love to all theſe who are Chriſt's friends, on whom he hath ſet his heart, and to whom he hath given his Spirit, that ſo my heavenly Father may look down upon his children, feaſting together with mutual love and delight, in remembrance of that great love which he hath already ſhewen to us, and with joyful expectations of theſe great things he hath further promiſed to us. And, Lord, ſeeing thou haſt ſo loved me, let me be perfectly reconciled to every man, that I may *love my very enemies, and do good to them that hate me*. May every ſpark of anger, malice and envy be utterly extinguiſhed in me."

8. Pray for new obedience. " Lord ſince thou giveſt this heavenly feaſt only to thy diſciples, O make me one of them, and let me attain this mark of a diſciple, obedience to my maſter. Lord, I cannot eat the paſſover and ſtay in Egypt ſtill, in the ſervice of Satan, and in bondage to my luſts: *O bring my ſoul out of priſon*, and let me eat the paſſover with my loins girt, and ready to march towards the promiſed land. O help me to *waſh my hands in innocence, that ſo I may compaſs thy altar*. O make me *willing and obedient that I may eat the good* of this ordinance. And may *the love of Chriſt conſtrain me* to a courſe of ſincere univerſal obedience, that I may *run in the ways of thy commandments*. Seeing Chriſt offers himſelf to me by way of ſurrender, to receive him as a Saviour, and ſubmit to him as a prince. And, on that ſolemn feaſt of dedication, let me come and dedicate myſelf to thee, ſet myſelf apart for thee, that all my days I my live to thy praiſe."

9. Pray for heart purity, fixedneſs and ſpirituality, that you may be fit to entertain converſe with a holy God. " Lord, help me to lay aſide and leave behind me all vain, earthly and unſeaſonable thoughts and imaginations that I may attend upon thee without diſtraction. O let not worldly or wandering thoughts come in, to ſtir up or diſturb the beloved of my ſoul: Let them not come near, or diſpleaſe him: Nor call me away from entertaining and enjoying of him. Lord, bid them be gone. Alas! my heart is naturally in great diſorder, and wholly indiſpoſed, for ſuch ſolemn and ſpiritual work: But, O thou who calleſt me to it, do thou diſpoſe my heart for it."

10. Pray for ſpiritual hunger and thirſt. *Lord, thou art ready to give bread to the hungry, and the water of life to him that is a thirſt: But both the appetite and the food, the feeling of want and the relief, are from thee.* O for inlarged affections and deſires after this ordinance anſwerable to my need of it. Lord, create and ſtir up in me earneſt longings and a ſpiritual appetite after this heavenly food, that ſo with deſire I may deſire to eat this paſſover. *As the heart panteth after the water brooks, ſo let me pant after thee, O God. Lord, inlarge my heart, and open my mouth wide, that thou mayeſt fill it.*

11. Pray for ſpiritual thankfulneſs, and holy joy in partaking of this feaſt. " O make me to reliſh this heavenly food, and receive it with a thankful heart. Let me not ſit ſad and dejected, as if I liked not the proviſion, or thought myſelf not welcome: But take me into the banqueting houſe, and let *my ſoul be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, that my mouth may praiſe thee with joyful lips.* I am to feed on angels food, O let me be employed in angels work, praiſe. Let my ſoul rejoice in Jeſus Chriſt as my portion, and triumph in his mighty acts, in his victories and purchaſe."

12. Pray for the aſſiſtance of God's Spirit in this work. " Lord, caſt me not away from thy preſence, take not thy holy Spirit from me; for without thee I have nothing, I can do nothing. Lord, thou haſt promiſed, and declared thyſelf more willing to give the Spirit to them that aſk it, than parents to give bread to their children. Our love to our children is but hatred, our compaſſion hardneſs, in compariſon of thine to thy children: O do not then deny me when my need is ſo great. Thou never ſaidſt to any of the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye my face in vain. Lord, ſend thy holy Spirit to breathe on my dry bones and decayed graces, and to be the harbinger to provide entertainment for thy Son in my ſoul, that he may find it ſwept of all ſin, and garniſhed with all the ſacramental graces. O for the Spirit of God to adorn my naked ſoul, and put on me the wedding-garment, *viz.* the glorious outer garment of the righteouſneſs of thy Son, and the beautiful inner garment of

the holineſs of thy Spirit, that fine linen of the ſaints: That all my nakedneſs may be covered, and my great deformities hid from thine eyes!"

13. Pray for the cure of all thy diſeaſes, at this healing ordinance. "Lord, my plagues are great, my wounds deep, and my diſtempers many: But I have heard of the balſam of the new covenant, my Redeemer's blood that heals all diſeaſes. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there not a phyſician there? Oh then let not my pain be perpetual, nor my wounds incurable. Lord, I come to thee to get my dead ſoul quickned, my ſtrong corruptions ſubdued, my faint purpoſes ſtrengthned, and my languiſhing graces revived. O let the author of ſpiritual life uphold and preſerve life in my ſoul. Inflame my coldneſs with the fire of thy love, ſoften my blindneſs with a beam of thy light, and anoint my blind eyes with thy eye-ſalve. Let thy compaſſion pity my vileneſs, let thy mercy pardon my ſinfulneſs, let thy wiſdom inlighten my darkneſs, and let thy ſtrength ſupport my weakneſs. Oh will the head let a member periſh? Shall a branch wither for want of juice? Thou art the true vine: O communicate ſap and influence to my languiſhing ſoul. Lord, art thou not as willing to beſtow the fruit of thy blood on us as to ſhed it for us? Art thou not a ready phyſician, willing to be employed by diſeaſed ſouls? Doſt thou not beſtow thy cures without money, and without price? Lord, here is work for thee, a Job full of boils, a Lazarus over run with ſores, as poor a patient as ever came to the phyſician's door; yet if I could but touch the border of thy garment, or get but one word from thee, I ſhould be made whole: Oh, ſay unto me, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*"

14. Pray for a willing and cheerful heart in performing this and all other duties. "Oh, did my Saviour ſo cheerfully undertake to ſuffer for me, and ſhall I be ſlothful and careleſs in approaching to him? Did he go ſo willingly to the croſs to die for me, and ſhall I be ſo backward to go to the communion table to remember his death? Lord make me "run in the ways of thy commandments;" and let me pray, hear, and communicate with freedom and enlargement of heart. O draw my heart to thee, and let it be carried on with more unweariedneſs and chearfulneſs in thy ſervice. Send forth the gales of thy Spirit, that may "make my ſoul like the chariots of Amminadib."

15. Pray for nearneſs and communion with God in his ordinances, and eſpecially at the communion table. "Lord, what will a communion feaſt avail me without communion with Chriſt in it. I go not there for bread and wine, but to ſee Jeſus. What are the elements to me without Chriſt's preſence? Nothing but this can ſatiſfy me: Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Chriſtleſs? Shall I go away empty from a treaſure, hungry from a feaſt, dry from a fountain, cold from the ſun, comfortleſs from the comforter? Lord, ſtand not at a diſtance behind the wall; ſhew thyſelf through the latteſs of thy ordinance, and let me ſee the goings of my God and my King in his ſanctuary, Lord, do thou not only ſtand and knock, but do thou alſo open the door of my heart; vouchſafe to come in and abide with me, yea, ſup with me, and let me ſup with thee, that I may be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe, and drink of the rivers of thy pleaſures. And when the King ſitteth at his table, let my ſpikenard ſend forth the ſmell thereof. Deſcend into my heart by the influences of thy grace, and let me aſcend to thee by the breathings of faith, love and deſire. Lord, make this feaſt a type and earneſt of that eternal banquet above; and let me enjoy thy lightſome reviving company in the ſtate of my pilgrimage. O let Chriſt appear and be known of me in the breaking of bread; O let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth, for his love is better than wine."

Cry importunately at this time; ſay, 'I will not let thee go till thou bleſs me: If thy preſence go not with me, carry me not up hence. Wilt thou not relieve an importunate beggar, and hear the cry of a needy ſupplicant? Lord, open rivers in the wilderneſs, and ſtreams in the deſert. Let Jordan at this ſeaſon overflow all its banks, and let all the dry roots of thy people be watered. And O let me come from thy table with my pardon ſealed, my corruptions ſubdued, my graces quickned, my faith ſtrengthned, my reſolutions confirmed, my heart enlarged and my ſoul refreſhed and encouraged to run the ways of thy commandments, and ſo inſeperably united unto thee, that no temptation may be able to diſſolve the union." O for the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication at ſuch a time! for it is the praying and wreſtling ſoul that will be the joyful and praiſing communicant.

DIRECT. XV. *After you have done your utmoſt for preparing yourſelves for the Lord's table, ſee that ye lay no ſtreſs thereupon, but wholly diſtruſt your own preparations.*

O Communicants, when you have made the greateſt preparations poſſible, by ſelf examination, repentance, prayer, &c. ſay after all, *we are but unprofitable ſervants.* The greateſt ſtreſs and difficulty of the Chriſtian life lieth in this, to be diligent in duty, and yet wholly denied to our duties. Learn then this great point in Chriſtianity, to diſtruſt all your preparations, and caſt yourſelves wholly on Chriſt for aſſiſtance, as if you had done nothing at all; ſaying, it is only *in the Lord that I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* You ought to do as King Aſa did, who tho' he had raiſed a prodigious army of five hundred thouſand, all mighty men of valour, to fight againſt the Ethiopians; yet he cried to the Lord, and truſted in him for help, as if he had been left alone without one man to fight for him: For, after all his great preparations, it is recorded of him, 2 Chron. xiv. 8. 11. "And Aſa cried to the Lord his God, and ſaid, Lord, "it is nothing with thee to help whether with many, "or with them that have no power. Help us O Lord, "our God; for we reſt on thee, and in thy name go "out againſt this multitude." So let every communicant ſay. "Lord, all my ſtrength and preparations are nought, I have no power for celebrating this feaſt: Help me O Lord my God; for I reſt on thee, and in thy name I go to this great and weighty ordinance." The ſoul is never ſo well prepared, as when it is moſt ſenſible of its own weakneſs, and relies on the Redeemer's ſtrength; "When I am weak (ſays the apoſtle) then am I ſtrong." And hence it is ſaid of the ancient worthies, Heb. xi. Out of weakneſs (*i. e.* felt and apprehended) they were made ſtrong. The gaudy flower, that ſtands and grows on its own ſtalk, doth quickly wither and decay; when the plain ivy, that hangs and leans on the houſe, is freſh and green all the year. We ought then to be denied to ourſelves, and write after David's copy, who looked to the Lord both for aſſiſtance and acceptance in all his duties, Pſal. lxxi. 16. "I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord, I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only."

A man may in words diſclaim the opinion of merit and worth in his duties and preparations, and yet in his heart and ſecret practice put ſome truſt in them; for there are practical Papiſts, as well as practical Atheiſts. Hence God warns us againſt this inward truſt, and ſecret Popery, Deut. ix. 4. "Say not in thine heart, this is for my righteouſneſs." Tho' with our tongues we do not plead for merit, yet there may be a ſaying it in the heart; and God doth well underſtand the language of the heart. Let us therefore look well to our hearts, when we have done our outmoſt to duty, and by way of preparation for this ordinance, that we be wholly denied to all, and cheriſh the thoughts of our own nothingneſs, according to Chriſt's noble rule, Luke xvii. 10. "When ye have done all, ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants." David owns he had nothing to plead, when he had done all; For, ſays he, *of thine own, Lord, have we given thee*, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. Of this denied temper was Nehemiah alſo; for, when he had done all for God and his temple that he could, he makes free grace his only plea with God, Neh. xii. 22. "I commanded the Levites to cleanſe themſelves," &c. "Remember O my God, concerning this alſo; and ſpare me according to the greatneſs of thy mercy." Whatever good things he had done, yet he depends on none of them, but pleads, *Spare me according to the greatneſs of thy mercy*. Hence alſo Paul wholly diſclaimed his own righteouſneſs, and that not only while he was a Phariſee, but even when he was a Chriſtian and renewed man; *I account all things loſs for Chriſt*. O this is a noble attainment, but not eaſy come at. Mr Fox uſed to ſay, *He was more afraid of his grace, than of his ſins*, becauſe he found himſelf in ſuch danger by them to be puffed up, and tempted to ſelf-confidence. Let us then be denied to our own attainments in preparation for this ſolemn ordinance, if we would be accepted of God: For that man comes to God moſt worthy, that comes moſt ſenſible of his own unworthineſs. So much for the firſt head of directions, how to prepare for a communion-ſabbath before it come. I proceed now to the ſecond head, to give directions how to ſpend it when it doth.

CHAP. II.

Containing directions for the right ſpending a Communion-Sabbath when it is come.

DIRECT. I. SEE that you riſe ſooner this morning than ordinary, ſeeing you have extraordinary work in hand. And while you are riſing and putting on your clothes, let your minds be filled with meditations and ejaculations.

Think, what a privilege it is, that *your eyes ſee ſuch days of the Son of man, which many prophets and kings deſired to ſee, and might not*. O that I may be thankful and may not abuſe my mercy! This is a great day; O that it may be a good day to my ſoul, even a day in God's courts, and in God's preſence, that will be better and ſweeter to me than a thouſand!

Again think, this may be the laſt communion-day that ever I may ſee on earth: This may be the laſt time that I ſhall *drink of the fruit of the vine at a communion-table*. It may be the laſt offer that I ſhall get of the water of life; O that I may improve it well! Perhaps ſeverals who ſaw the laſt communion where I am going, and alſo drank with me of the ſacramental cup, have now a cup of the red wine of God's vengeance put into their hands, and are eternally ſinking or ſwimming in the brimleſs and bottomleſs ocean of God's wrath: God keep me from unworthy communicating this day, leſt that be my lot before the next ſacrament. But on the other hand, it may be there are ſome who ſat with me at the laſt communion table, that are now ſitting at the higher-table, and are drinking it new with Chriſt in his Father's kingdom: What a ſweet ſong are they preſently ſinging! *Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.* O that I may this day get a foretaſte of that celeſtial feaſt and heavenly joy, and ſuch a ſeal of Chriſt's love as may fill my ſoul with hope to be a communicant at the upper table, if God ſhall call me hence before the next communion! *Lord, let me have one good day in all my lifetime: Shew me a token for good before I die.*

DIRECT. II. RETIRE *preſently, O communicant, for prayer and meditation, in order to excite and quicken grace in thy ſoul; and, in a ſpecial manner, ſee to get faith inlivened, and love inflamed.* And, for this end, 1. Take a view of Chriſt's ſufferings, and his unparalleled love manifeſted therein: *Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the ſins of the world.* If you have a clear diſcovery of his love and ſufferings at the table, be taking frequent views of him beforehand.

Conſider how free and undeſerved Chriſt's love was. Behold the Son of God intreated by no man, but hated by all men; yet in his love and pity intreats for man, yea, ſuffers and dies for him, even then when he was a ſinner and an enemy to him. Behold him ſuffering for ſin, that never ſinned: Yea, behold him made *ſin for thee, who had no ſin: that thou, who hadſt no righteouſneſs, might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* View his love with wonder that made him take on the heavy burden of your iniquities, and bear it, till he ſwate, bled, groaned, and cried under the weight. Behold him ſtruggling, praying, and falling to the ground, till he is all covered with his own blood: Fix the eye of faith upon him, till thine eye affect thine heart. Take a view of his tears and bloody ſweat, his pierced hands and wounded feet, his ſcourged back and open ſide, his ſtreaming heart and yearning bowels to poor ſinners: This is he, O ſinner! that would rather die than thou ſhouldſt die, who choſe thy life before his own, and now pleads his blood before his Father.

Behold and wonder at his love, that made him tread the wine-preſs alone for us, and drink the cup of the red-wine of the wrath of God; a cup whereunto all the vile and deadly ſins were grated, a cup that no angel durſt taſte; yea, the taſting it made Chriſt's heart to melt like wax in the midſt of his bowels, Pſal. xxii. 14. which was a greater matter than if the whole world had melted to nothing: Yet he drank it off, with the bittereſt dregs of it, and left not ſo much as one drop of it for us. Behold him taking his moſt precious heart's blood, to quench hell's flames that were ready to break out on us! Was there ever love like this?

This love is unſearchably great: You may ſooner find out the height of heaven, the breadth of the earth or the depth of the ſea, than meaſure Chriſt's love; for it paſſeth knowledge, Eph. iii. It is an unfathomable ocean, that hath neither bank nor bottom. O whither did his love carry him? Even from heaven to earth, from the throne to the manger, from the manger to the croſs, from the croſs to the grave; yea, from the glory of heaven to the torments of hell, and all for poor creatures, that were deſpicable as worms, defiled as lepers, deformed as monſters, black as Ethiopians, yea as black and ugly as hell could make us. Worſe are we than devils, if we are not affected with this love, that made the glorious Son of God leave the heaven of his Father's preſence, and wade through hell for dregs of the creation. Did Chriſt ſee any thing in us to make him love us? No he ſaw much to lothe us, but nothing to love us: Yet the time when we were moſt lothſome was Chriſt's time of love, Ezek. xvi. We were lying polluted in our blood, and all ſpread over with running ulcers and putrifying ſores, when Chriſt loved us. Our ſouls were as unlovely as Lazarus's body, whoſe ſores the dogs lick'd; or Job's body, when he was full of boils, and ſat in the aſhes, and ſcraped himſelf with a potſherd: Yet all this could not cool his affection to us.

The inſtances of Chriſt's love are inexpreſſible, both in their nature and number. Wonder at his condeſcendency, in becoming not only a creature, but ſuch a mean creature as man, for us; yea, not only a man, but in taking on him the form of a ſervant for us; and being willing not only to lie in a manger, but in a cold grave for us. Wonder that the glorious Redeemer of Iſrael ſhould be content to be born as a beggar, live as a ſervant, and die as a ſlave for us. Wonder that he, who is infinitely pure, ſhould be willing, not only to be numbered among ſinners, and to bear our ſins, but alſo to be made ſin, and likewiſe a curſe for us. Was it not for you and your advantage he did all this? and, will you not admire and love him? He was content to endure the poverty of the world, that you might enjoy the riches of heaven: He lived in the form of a ſervant, that you might have the adoption of ſons: He humbled himſelf to live with men, that he might exalt you to live with God: He bowed his ſoul to death, that he might raiſe you to eternal life: He was ſhut up forty days with the devil, that you might not be ſhut up with him for ever: He was hungry, that you might be fed: He was numbered among tranſgreſſors, that you might have a room among the bleſſed. O believer, he wept, that you might rejoice: Sorrow oppreſſed his heart, that everlaſting joy might be on your head: He was ſcourged and wounded, that you by his ſtripes might be healed of ſin's wounds: He was crowned with thorns, that you might be crowned with glory: He was ſlandered and condemned before men, that you might be juſtified and acquitted before God: He bore the curſe, that you might inherit the bleſſing: He drank the bitter and poiſonous cup of God's wrath, that you might drink the pure river of life: He was deſerted of God, that you might not be forſaken by him eternally: He bore the burden of ſin and wrath, that you might be freed from that burden: He hung upon our croſs, to advance us to ſit upon his throne: He cried out in ſorrow upon a croſs, that we might ſhout joyfully in ſinging God's praiſe for ever: He thirſted on the croſs, that we might not thirſt eternally, with Dives, for a drop of cold water to cool our tongue: He ſtruggled in a bloody agony, that we might not ſtruggle among devils in hell's furnace for ever: Oh what ſhall we ſay of this love! "Lord Jeſus, thy pity was infinite, thy love hath overflown all banks, and thy compaſſion knew no bounds: Thou ſtoodſt before the mouth of hell that I deſerved, and ſtoppedſt the flaming furnace of divine vengeance, that was breaking out againſt me: When I was like Iſaac bound to the altar, ready to be ſcrificed to juſtice, thou offeredſt thyſelf, like the ram caught in the thicket, to be ſacrificed in my room: When my ſins had raiſed a terrible tempeſt, which threatned to drown me eternally, thou waſt content to be thrown overboard, like Jonah, to appeaſe the ſtorm: When the ſword of juſtice was furbiſhed, and ready to be ſheathed into my bowels, thou interpoſedſt betwixt me and it, and receivedſt the blow into thy heart: When I was ſhipwreck'd and periſhing, thou caſtedſt thyſelf in as a plank of mercy to ſave my life. Can I think on this, and my heart not burn? Can I ſpeak of it, and not ſeek, with Joſeph, a ſecret place to weep in?"

View the ſurpaſſing nature of Chriſt's love. No love like to it; yea, Chriſt's love to us tranſcends his love to all other things: He loved us more than angels, for he would not put on their nature: He loved us more than heaven; for he left that to come and ſave us: He loved us more than riches and honour; for he chuſed poverty, and became of no reputation, to redeem us: He loved us more than the comforts of life; for he parted with theſe, and became a man of ſorrows for our ſake: He loved us more than his blood; for he willingly parted with that for us: He loved us more than his ſoul or body; for he gave both theſe to be an offering for our ſins: He was more concerned for us than for himſelf; he rejoiced more in our welfare than in his own; he wept and prayed more for us than for himſelf; and in the time of his greateſt ſtrait, when heaven, earth and hell were all at once ruſhing upon him, we have his prayer, John xvii. Yet it is all ſpent for us, except one verſe or two for himſelf. Again, Chriſt loved us more than his life; and *all that a man hath will he give for his life;* yet Chriſt willingly parted with that for our ſake: but, is there nothing that is better than life? Yes, David tells us of one thing that is better, Pſal. lxiii. 3. *Thy loving kindneſs is better than life.* The ſaints and martyrs, that parted with all other things, would by no means part with that, they would rather part with a thouſand lives than quit that; yet Chriſt, who had infinitely more of it than any ſaint attained to, for our ſakes parted with it, and had the light of God's countenance totally eclipſed from him on the croſs, ſo that he cried out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

II. If you would have the ſacramental graces quickned, particularly faith, take a view of Chriſt in all his ſweet offices and relations: *Look unto me and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth,* Iſa. xlv. 22. O communicant, endeavour upon the morning of a communion-ſabbath to give a believing look to Chriſt, in all his bleſſed offices and relations; and this will ſtrengthen and quicken faith, and help thee to act it the more diſtinctly at a communion-table.

1. Look to Chriſt, as a bankrupt debtor to his ſurety, and ſay, "Lord, I owe many thouſands more than I can pay, but thou haſt a ſufficient ranſom to pay all my debt: I fly to thee as my ſurety: Lord, undertake for me, and ſatisfy thy Father's juſtice, that I be not ſeized on and dragged to hell's priſon for ever."

2. Look to him as an able phyſician to cure thy wounds: "Say, Lord, here lies a Job full of boils, a Lazarus full of ſores at thy gate; here a paralytic hand, here a blind eye, here a hard heart, here a plague, and there a wound, that have ſcorned all other phyſicians, and deſpiſed other remedies; let me this day get the balm of Gilead, even the ſovereign plaiſter of thy blood, to my various maladies; one touch of the hem of thy garment, and I ſhall be whole."

3. Look to him as a ranſomer of captives, and ſay, "Lord, it was thy errand to proclaim liberty to the captives: I look to thee this day to knock off my fetters, looſe all my bonds, and bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may praiſe thy name."

4. Look to him as a mediator and peace-maker, to remove all enmity and quarrels betwixt God and thy ſoul, and ſay, "Lord ſtand betwixt me and thy flaming ſword, let thy atoning blood this day quench the fire of thy Father's anger, and bring the news of peace to my ſoul."

5. Look to him as an advocate to plead for thy guilty ſoul: Say, "Lord, my crimes are great, and my cauſe is bad: But never any cauſe miſcarried that thou took in hand: Be thou mine advocate, and let every one of thy wounds this day be as ſo many open mouths to plead for me; let thy blood ſpeak, that *ſpeaketh better things than the blood of Abel.*"

6. Look to him as thy refuge city and hiding-place, and ſay, "Lord, I flee to thee for my life: for the avenger of blood, the law and juſtice of God, are at my heels purſuing me; and, if they find me afar off from thee, I am ſlain without mercy: The clefts of the rock are my only hiding-place; Lord, be a ſafeguard to me. A heathen could ſay, when a bird ſcar'd by a hawk flew into his boſom, *I will not give thee up to thine enemy, ſeeing thou cameſt to me for ſanctuary:* And ſurely thou wilt not deliver my ſoul, when I flee to thee for ſhelter."

7. Look to Chriſt as the ark, that can only ſave thee from being drowned by the flood of God's wrath: Say, "Lord, there is no ark to ſave me but thou alone; I am ſhipwreck'd in Adam, and there is no plank but Chriſt to bring me to ſhore: I claſp to thee by the hand of faith. Lord ſave me, elſe I periſh."

8. Look to him as a reliever of burdened ſouls: Say, "Lord, here is a heavy-laden ſinner coming to thee this day for reſt; O ſin is heavier than a milſtone, it is weighed down with the law's curſes; and, O how many of theſe milſtones are on my back! Lord, I come this day to roll them upon thee, who art the *ſure foundation that God has laid in Zion,* able to bear me and all I can lay upon it: Angels cannot free me of my burden, for the burden of one ſin has ſunk many thouſands of them to the bottomleſs pit; the ſaints cannot do it, they have burden enough of their own; nay, the whole creation cannot bear my burden, for it is already groaning under the weight of me and it: But, Lord, thou art the mighty one on whom ſinners help is laid, and haſt promiſed reſt to ſuch as come to thee. Lord, let all my burdens fall off this day, that I may be at freedom to run the ways of thy commandments."

9. Look to him as a rich and bountiful helper of the needy: Say, "Lord, pity a needy beggar this day, that is going to the feaſt-houſe to wait for a crumb; thou haſt ſupplied many, and I have heard a good report of thy bounty: Never came there a poorer wretch to thy door than I: is there not a penny of grace left to help me, not a crumb to keep in my life? Lord, let me not go from thy treaſure-houſe without an alms, *there is bread enough in thy houſe and to ſpare,* let me not go without a crumb."

10. Look to him as a prophet and teacher, that can open thine eyes, and give thee gracious diſcoveries of his truths and ways: Say, "Lord I have heard much of thee by the hearing of the ear, but little have mine eyes ſeen of thee; I have been long in Chriſt's ſchool, but little proficiency have I made; Lord, come this day and teach me to profit; let my eyes be opened, that in this ordinance I may ſee the heinous nature of ſin, the ſeverity of divine juſtice, the greatneſs of divine love, the beauty of Chriſt, the preciouſneſs of ſouls, the excellency of the remedy provided for ſinners, &c."

11. Look to him as thy head and huſband, with whom you are this day to ſeal a marriage-covenant: Say, "Lord, tho' I be a moſt deformed, black and unworthy bride, and have nothing but poverty, debt and danger to recommend me to thee; yet ſince thou who art the chief among ten thouſands art content to match with me; O give me a heart to conſent willingly to the bargain, and ſay, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* Lord, help me cheerfully to ſay, Amen to the covenant, and all the articles of it, that I was reviewing and renewing yeſternight: O let the marriage-knot this day be caſt, that ſin or ſatan, death or hell, may never be able to looſe again: Let him this day *kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth:* O for ſweet communion and fellowſhip with him at his own table: Lord, *ſhew me a token for good, ſet me as a ſeal upon thine arm; maniſeſt thyſelf to me, as thou doſt not to the world.*"

DIRECT. III. Labour, O communicant, to get thy ſoul put in a right and ſuitable frame for approaching God's holy table, and entertaining thy Saviour there: Now the cry is making, *The Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him;* prepare the palace of your hearts for him; cleanſe, ſweep and waſh them; get them adorned and perfumed with the graces of the Spirit. Is Chriſt gone to prepare a place for you, and will you not prepare a place for him? Set up a throne for Chriſt, go forth to meet him with acclamation and praiſe, receive him gladly, ſet the crown on his head, and ſwear allegiance to him, and ſay, as the men of Iſrael ſaid to Gideon Judges vii. 22. *Rule thou over us, for thou haſt delivered us out of the hand of Midian.* O but Chriſt hath delivered us out of the hand of Satan, a far worſe oppreſſor than Midian. Let us welcome him, and *compaſs him about with ſongs of deliverance.* O communicants, deal not with Chriſt as his country-men the Jews did, John i. 11. *He came unto his own, but his own received him not:* When he came into the world, there was no room allowed for him any where but in the manger, and thither was he thruſt. O deal not ſo with your Saviour; think not a foul ſtall good enough for Chriſt, but make clean your hearts, and give him the beſt room, yea, the upper room there: O ſend the key of your hearts this morning to Chriſt, ſaying, " Lord, take thy choice where to ly: Alas, I may ſay with the Centurion, *I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof;* My ſoul is a ruinous, ſmoky and defiled cottage, thou haſt not a fit place with me to lay thy head: But, O thou that didſt not diſdain to ly in a manger among beaſts, and to be entertained in the houſe of Simon the leper, come into my ſoul, repair the houſe, and prepare an upper room for thyſelf, that I may eat the paſſover with thee. Lord, ſpeak the word, and thy ſervant's heart ſhall be healed, cleanſed, and made holy, ſoft and pliable, fit for thy uſe and ſervice. Lord none can mend my heart but thou that madeſt it: I put it into thy hands; Lord, make it as thou wouldſt have it."

Queſt. *What is that frame and diſpoſition of ſoul that we ſhould come with to the communion table?*

Anſ. Take theſe directions concerning it.

I. *Come to it with a holy awe and reverence of God.* Were you going to a prince's table, you would go to it with ſome awe and concern; and, will you have none when you go to the table of the great Jehovah, who is your judge, ſearches the heart, and obſerves all your actions? He is a God that is very jealous of his honour and will not be mocked; you ought to come to this table with a holy dread and reverence, adoring the holineſs and juſtice of God manifeſted in the ſufferings of Chriſt. How vehemently did he hate ſin, that he would not pity or ſpare his dear Son, when he cried to him; but ſeeing he had undertaken to pay our debt, and drink our cup, the leaſt farthing or drop he would not abate him? Tho' the ſinner be ſpared, yet ſin muſt be puniſhed to the uttermoſt; our cautioner paid dearly for it. We ought to adore his juſtice, ſaying with the men of Bethſhemeſh, 1 Sam. vi. 20. *Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord God?* There is no ſtanding but at Chriſt's back, our bleſſed cautioner, *in whom God is well pleaſed.*

II. *Come with holy fear and jealouſy over yourſelves,* leſt you be found unwelcome gueſts, and draw down the guilt of unworthy communicating upon yourſelves: cry, " Lord, keep me from wounding Chriſt and my own ſoul this day; let me not betray the Son of God, with a kiſs;" *deliver me from blood guiltineſs, and from drinking damnation.* O what if I want the wedding-garment, *when the king comes in to view the gueſts!*

III. *Come with brokeneſs of heart for ſin, the cauſe of Chriſt's ſufferings.* Look on your pride, paſſion, hypocriſy, covetouſneſs, malice, lying, ſwearing, &c. as Chriſt's only tormentors: Behold how they preſſed him down in the garden, till he ſwate blood; ſee them binding the croſs on Chriſt's back; ſee them nailing his hands, piercing his temples, and grieving his heart; ſee them buffeting and ſpitting on him; ſee them making him grone, weep and rore out his complaint, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* It was on us this tragedy ſhould have been acted, on us theſe vials of wrath ſhould have been poured: *For he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities,* Iſa. liii. 5. O ſhall we ſee Chriſt's heart ſtreaming blood, and our eyes not drop tears? Shall we ſee him ſtretched out and nailed for us, and our hearts not bleed? Oh! it was my ſins that made the nails, they drove them in, they thruſt in the ſpear, yea, they killed the Lord of life; and, ſhall I not mourn? Did you ſee a malefactor, that had committed twenty murders, uſed like Chriſt, your hearts would be concerned: And, will you not be affected to behold the innocent Lamb of God ſo abuſed by your ſins? *Look on him ye have pierced, and mourn.* This paſſover muſt be eaten with bitter herbs. Sow in tears, if you would reap in joy. A weeping communicant is a very pleaſing ſight to both God and man: A broken-hearted weeping ſinner will ſuit well with a bruiſed and bleeding Saviour.

IV. *Come with burning love and affection to Chriſt.* This is a feaſt only for the friends and lovers of Chriſt, Cant. v. 1. Without love ye have nothing to do here. O believer, is thy heart cold when Chriſt's love is warm? Will you not recompenſe love with love? Can you behold Chriſt on a croſs, dying with love in his heart, and ſmiles in his looks; can you ſee his bleeding arms open to embrace you, the ſpear reaching his heart, and his affections ſtreaming out to you in blood, and that when you were enemies to him, and haters of him, and not be raviſhed with his love? Can you behold his wounds, or put your finger into the print of the nails, and not be ſick of love, and cry out with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God?* Can you view him that is the chief among ten thouſand, yea, among an hundred thouſand, and among all the thouſands in heaven and earth, and your hearts not love him? Turn over all things both in heaven and earth, you can find none like him, ſo excellent in himſelf, and ſo well adapted to your conditions and circumſtances. Paul was a learned man, and knew many things; a travelled man, and had ſeen and heard many things: Yet when he caſts up his counts of all he had ever ſeen, heard or known, he ſays, *I count all but dung and loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt,* Phil. iii. 8. 9.

V. Come with much hunger and thirſt to this full feaſt. See that your appetites be not glutted with the world, for the *full ſoul lothes the honey-comb*: It is only the thirſty that are welcome, Rev. xxii. 17. Chriſt *fills the hungry with good things.* When the deſire opens the heart wideſt, then he opens his hand largeſt to fill it, Pſal. lxxxi. 10. O then, cry, *Give me Chriſt, and deny me what thou wilt; a crumb of mercy from thy table, or elſe I am gone for ever.* Endeavour to ſay, as Iſa. xxvi. *The deſire of my ſoul is unto thee, and to the remembrance of thy name. O that I knew where to find him! When wilt thou come unto me?* O for further tokens of his love, and clear evidences of my intereſt in him! O for the ſmiles of his face, and the voice of joy and gladneſs! There are many heavenly dainties here; here are all the fruits of the tree of life, the comforts of the Spirit, the influences of his grace, the bread and waters of life; therefore come with enlarged appetites. The ſpouſe cries, Cant. ii. 4. *Stay me with flagons*; as if ſhe had ſaid, " My thirſt is ſo great, it is not a drop or a little cup that will quench it, I would have whole flagons." Fear not to wrong your neighbours: For there is a river to every one of you. Obſerve how earneſt Chriſt was to feaſt with us, Luke xxii. 15. " With deſire (ſays he) have I deſired to eat this ſupper with you," tho' he had no need either of you or it: And will not you, whoſe needs are ſo great, ſay, " with deſire have I deſired to eat this ſupper with Chriſt before I die; it may be my laſt communion, O let me have ſomething to carry my expence through the wilderneſs; let me have ſomething to ſtand me in ſtead, when I go through the valley and ſhadow of death?"

VI. Come with humility and ſelf-denial, content to be nothing, that Chriſt may be all; and willing to ſubmit to any thing, for a blink of his countenance. Be ſenſible of your ill-deſervings, and acknowledge a crumb will be a great mercy. Be content, with the prodigal and woman of Canaan, to be taken into Chriſt's family, tho' it were the meaneſt ſtation and employment: Let me be the meaneſt of Chriſt's ſervants, tho' I be never ſo ill uſed, or ill reſpected, I will be thankful, if I be within Chriſt's doors, have a relation to his family, and can call him Maſter. Again, come ſelf-deniedly, renouncing all confidence in yourſelf, your preparations, humiliations, or performances: Theſe may be good graces, and good duties; but they will be ill Chriſts, and ill Saviours. Freely own that it is not your own righteouſneſs that ſaves you, nor your own ſtrength that quickens you; but only Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and Chriſt's ſtrength. Say, "Bleſſed Jeſus, I fly to thee alone; I have no hope in myſelf, nor in any thing beſide thee; all my confidence is in the freeneſs of thy love, the mercy of thy bowels, the merit of thy death, the worth of thy blood, the ſufficiency of thy righteouſneſs, and power of thy interceſſion."

VII. Come with charity and love to all men, even to your very enemies. Baniſh all malice and envy, pray for your enemies, forgive them, wiſh well and do good both to their ſouls and bodies, according to Chriſt's example on the croſs: But eſpecially, bring with you love and affection to God's people, delight in their fellowſhip above all others, for they are the excellent ones of the earth.

VIII. Come with honeſt deſigns to ſeal a marriage-covenant with Chriſt. Conſent frankly to Chriſt to be your Prince and Saviour; do not think of halving it with Chriſt, but be willing to take him intirely upon his own terms. Be content not only to be ſaved by him, but to ſerve him, live for him, fight for him, and cleave to him all the days of your life; reſolving that all the pleaſures of ſin, temptations of ſatan, and allurements of the world, nay, the hopes of enjoying ten thouſand worlds, ſhall never prevail with you to part with Chriſt. Come reſigning yourſelves, your hearts, and all you have to Chriſt: Say, "Lord, tho' I had ten thouſand hearts, and every one of them ten thouſand times better than they are, they ſhould be all thine." Come with ſtrong vows and purpoſes againſt ſin, that murdered your Saviour; reſolve never to harbour it, or make peace with it; but that you will fight againſt it to your laſt breath, and revenge the death of Chriſt on it.

IX. Come with thankfulneſs and praiſe to God for redeeming love, and providing ſuch a Saviour for you. Let the high praiſes of God be in your mouths; ſend up whole vollies of praiſe to your Redeemer, for undertaking your deliverance. Invite the angels and all the creation to aſſiſt you in this work. Stir up your ſouls and all that is within you to bleſs his holy name: your ſouls (like Mary) *ſhould magnify the Lord, and your ſpirits rejoice in God your Saviour*; your hearts ſhould aſcend, like Manoah's angel, in the ſmoke of thankſgiving and praiſe. Say, "Lord, what ſhall I render to thee for all thou haſt done and ſuffered for me? Lord, what am I, that thou ſhouldſt part with thy glory, yea, with thy blood, and with thy life for ſuch a wretch as me? I am aſhamed that I can love and praiſe thee no more: Oh! my heart is cold, my tongue is ſlow: Let heaven and earth, angels and men, join and extol his free grace and wondrous love: Let all the world ring with his praiſe.

X. Come with hope and expectation, depending on God's promiſes and Chriſt's merits. You ought greedily to look to Chriſt, expecting ſomething from him, as the poor cripple did from Peter and John, Acts iii. 4. 5. *Peter ſaid look on us: And he gave heed to them, expecting to receive ſomething from them.* We ordinarily receive little, becauſe we expect little; *God's mercy is upon us according as we hope in him,* Pſal. xxxiii. ult. O raiſe your deſires and expectations; for you come to a merciful and liberal God, that will not let the expectation of his poor creatures periſh, Pſal. ix. 8. *The needy ſhall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever.*

Obj. *Alas! I am a poor, weak, heartleſs creature: I have little ground to hope.*

Anſ. You have God's call and promiſe to encourage you. Groan under your deadneſs, and uſe the means; aim honeſtly at your duty, and look to God for accompliſhing his promiſe. Do as the Iſraelites did in the wilderneſs, Num. 16. 17. 18. God called them to the place where he promiſed them water, which was very much valued in that dry deſert: Well, did they ſit ſtill idly, waiting till the water ſhould ſpring? No, the nobles put to their ſtaves, and digged in expectation of God's fulfilling his promiſe, and ſung, *Spring up, O well,* &c. Make an honeſt mint, look up with hope, and cry for the ſpringing of the well. Come, bring all your empty veſſels to the fountain, in expectation of a fill: Do as the poor widow, 2 Kings iv. *bring not a few*: for I am ſure the veſſels did fail before the oil fail'd. Plead with God for the accompliſhing of his word: Say, Lord, tho' we cannot ſay, pour water on us, for we are thirſty, yet we could plead, pour floods on us for we are dry ground: "Lord, make us as hungry as we are empty, and thirſty as we are dry. Lord, if thou deal with us according to our ſenſe of need, we will get little; but, Lord, we plead, thou wilt deal with us according to our need, and thy royal bounty, and then we will be right enough.

O poor ſoul! Art thou longing for the ſpringing of the well, ſaying, "O that I knew in what part of this valley of Baca the well would ſpring, what ordinance, what duty would be the mean: There I would wait and lie, there I would dig and cry: One guſh of theſe living ſtreams would ſatisfy my longing ſoul?" *Poor ſoul, thou ſhalt not die for want; you have the word of a king for it,* Iſa. xli. 17. 18. "When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them. I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midſt of the vallies; I will make the wilderneſs a pool of water, and the dry-land ſprings of water."

Direct. IV. After you have this morning meditated, dealt with your hearts, wreſtled with God, read his word, and performed family-worſhip, with faith and fervency ſuitable to this ſolemn occaſion: You ought timeouſly to repair to the church againſt the ſolemn worſhip begin. And let your hearts be breathing forth many heavenly ejaculations by the way; ſuch as that, Pſalm xliii. 3 4. "Send forth thy light and thy truth: Let them lead me, and bring to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." O it were a pleaſant frame this morning, to be going with joy to draw water out of the wells of ſalvation! Let us be very thankful, that the waters of life do flow ſo pleaſantly and plentifully to us, betwixt the banks of goſpel ordinances; bleſs God that has not made the barren wilderneſs our dwelling: But let us think, as we go, that as God rained down manna from heaven on his people, ſo he rained down fire and brimſtone on Sodom and Gomorrah. This ſerves to teach us to rejoice ſo in the mercies which God rains down upon us in the ſacrament, as to fear his judgments in caſe they be abuſed.

Again, think, "I am now upon my way to mount Calvary; Lord, forbide that Chriſt's traitors be any attendants: Let all my luſts and idols be for ever baniſhed from me: May they never find lodging in my ſoul any more.—Lord, help me to go this day, with ſuch a melted heart and weeping eyes, as the holy Virgin, Mary Magdalene, and the other tender-hearted women of Jeruſalem had, when they went to mount Calvary, to behold Chriſt crucified. Am not I going to behold the ſame curcifixion repreſented before my eyes?"

As it was a part of your ſecret work this morning, to plead earneſtly with God to direct his meſſengers to ſpeak ſuitably to your caſe; ſo you ought by the way to be ſending up ejaculations for this end, and frequently to be crying, *Awake O north-wind, and come thou ſouth, blow*, &c. (The miniſter's words will be but as wind, and a beating of the air, unleſs the wind of the Spirit blow) "O Spirit of God, come influence my heart this day; I dare not go to the table without thy preſence: *Lord, ſtand not this day behind the wall;* for there cannot be a ſadder ſight in the world, than a poor hard-hearted communicant, with God's back turned on him. *If thy preſence go not with me, carry me not up hence.* O Lord, it is time for thee to work; I never ſtood more in need of thy preſence than at this time: It is my errand to meet with thee at thy table; Lord, ſend me not away with a ſore heart: A communion-day, without communion with Chriſt will never ſatisfy my ſoul."

Plead with God, O young communicant, that this may be a day of your acquaintance with Chriſt, even the day of your eſpouſals, and a day to be had in everlaſting remembrance. And indeed, if you enter this day into the bond of the covenant it will be a very memorable day: God will bleſs the memory of this day, for he will gain a Son; Jeſus Chriſt will write this day in his kalender, for he will gain a brother; The holy Ghoſt will rejoice, for he will gain a temple; angels and ſaints will be glad, for they will gain a fellow-ſervant; and you eſpecially may rejoice with exceeding great joy, for you will gain an eternal inheritance.

Directions concerning our carriage when the time of receiving the ſacrament doth approach.

1. WHen the time is come, or near, that you are to go to this holy table; conſider that this is the moſt ſolemn and auguſt ordinance under heaven, and requires the moſt profound awe and reverence from you. The place is holy, the table is holy, the bread and cup are holy; and *God is terrible from his holy places.* Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord God? Your danger is great, if you make a raſh approach, and ſeek him not after the due order: The leaſt wrong look, or wrong touch at this time is criminal, and may coſt you your eternal ſalvation: It may provoke the Lord to make a fearful and viſible breach among you, as he did upon Uzzah and the men of Bethſhemeſh; for, the nearer to God's altar you come, the fire of his jealouſy burns the more vehemently. Labour then to go to his table with holy fear and trembling; for, as communion-love is the ſweeteſt, ſo communion-wrath is the ſoreſt: Heavy judgments, both ſpiritual, temporal and eternal, hang over the unworthy communicant's head. If you would prevent theſe, adventure to this table with holy fear and dread: For, if the woman with the bloody iſſue feared ſo much to touch the hem of Chriſt's garment, Mark v. how much more ought you to fear to touch the ſymbols of his body and blood, to put your hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails? If ſuch ~~a holy~~ man as John the Baptiſt thought himſelf unworthy ~~to bear~~ Chriſt's ſhoes, how much more are vile ſinners, ~~like you, unworthy~~ to touch and feed upon his broken body and ſhed blood? Let your ſouls then be humble as the duſt when you approach in a deep ſenſe of your great unworthineſs, former guilt, and breach of former vows made at his table: For, to ſuch humble ſouls God has promiſed to look in mercy, Iſa. xvi. 2.

II. When you are going to the table, labour to ſtir up your ſouls, and all your faculties and affections; excite all your graces and deſires to attend Chriſt; O ſee that your ſouls be lively, and your hearts fix'd, when you are about to draw near and ſeal a marriage covenant with Chriſt. You have great need to look to your hearts and frames at this time: A dead heart, or an ill frame now, is very unſuitable: it is like the dead flie in the box of ointment, it will be fair to ſpoil your communicating: For God's ſake, look to it.

Obj. I. *Oh!* (ſays one) *my heart is in a lifeleſs and ſtupid frame, even at a dead ſtand, and thinks neither of good nor ill: What ſhall I do with it?*

Anſ. 1. Diſpatch preſently a ſwift meſſenger to heaven, an earneſt ejaculation and prayer, to call for the help of God's Spirit, as Cant. iv. 16. Intreat him to breathe upon your dry bones with a freſh gale and take a coal from his own altar to inflame your affections.

2. Call on your hearts to awake to a lively frame. It is a miſtake of Chriſtians to think they are only to call upon God, you muſt alſo call upon yourſelves, and rouſe up yourſelves, as Pſal. lvii. 8. *Awake up my glory*, &c. Stir up yourſelves and all that is within you, according to Pſal. ciii. 1. Speak to your hearts, and expoſtulate with them: Say, *Oh my drowſy blockiſh heart, art thou not aſhamed to think ſo coldly of thy bleeding Saviour?* Is his heart ſo warm, and thine ſo cold? Doth a dead head become the ſervice of a living God?

Obj. II. *Oh!* (ſaith another) *my heart is a roving wandring heart, I cannot get it ſtayed a moment upon one ſubject; it preſently gets away, and hunts vanities: O what ſhall I do with the levity and excurſions of my heart?*

Anſ. 1. Labour now to over-awe your heart with the deep apprehenſion of God's preſence and all-ſeeing eye: God noticeth you more now than ever.

2. Chide and check your heart for its vain excurſions: Say, "Did I come here to think of any thing but of Chriſt and heaven? Is this a place for thinking on worldly toys? Is this the way to ſhew forth my Saviour's death which is my buſineſs here? What? cannot I watch with Chriſt one hour now? How then will I behold and contemplate him for ever?"

Obj. III. *Tho' I am come this length in obedience to a dying Saviour's command, I fear to go foreward, for I doubt my right: I cannot ſay I am in covenant with God, or that I have faith, and an intereſt in Chriſt, or that his body was broken for me.*

Anſ. O diſcouraged ſoul, though you have not the faith of aſſurance, yet ſee if you can get the faith of adherence. Tho' you cannot ſay that ever you took hold of Chriſt or the covenant before, yet try if you can get a grip of Chriſt now; you are much nearer to him now than at other times. Make an endeavour, ſtir up your ſouls, and go to Chriſt with all the faith you can win at, ſaying with that poor man, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* If you cannot apply Chriſt to yourſelves, will you apply yourſelves to Chriſt: If you cannot ſay Chriſt is your Saviour and hiding-place, will you run like a malefactor to him for refuge, and try if he will now ſhelter you in his wounds, when they are ſo wide opened in the ſacrament. He noticeth any poor ſinner that is engaging his heart to approach unto God.

Again, tho' you cannot ſay that Chriſt is yours, and you are in covenant with him; yet, are you not willing to be his, and give up yourſelf to him? The covenant indeed is mutual, Cant. ii. 16. *My beloved is mine and I am his*: But, if you cannot lay claim to one part of it, try if you can grip to another. Is it your language, Tho' I cannot ſay he is mine, yet I am reſolved to be his, and to give up myſelf to him? That is well ſaid, poor ſoul: for you muſt firſt conſent to be his, before ye know that he is yours: You muſt be reſolute in your covenanting with Chriſt; when you are driven from one horn of the altar, hold faſt by another. Flee now to Chriſt, ſaying, *Lord, tho' I cannot ſay, Thou art mine;* yet I can ſay, *Lord, I am content and reſolved to be thine, wholly thine, only thine, and everlaſtingly thine.* David could not always ſay, God is mine; but, when he cannot ſay that, he cries, *I am thine, Lord, ſave thou me,* Pſal. cxix. 94. Here one that belongs to thee, and has ſurrendered himſelf to thee: *Lord, ſuffer not one of thine to periſh.*

Obj. IV. *Alas! I cannot ſay to God, I am thine: I fear he will not accept of me, or own me for his.*

Anſ. Though you cannot ſay, *I am thine by God's acceptance*; yet, can you not ſay, "Lord, I am thine by my own reſignation, I do devote and give up myſelf wholly unto thee, I will not be the devil's, the world's, or luſt's; I will not be my own, but I will be thine:" I am thine, ſave thou me. Go to him with that plea the Campani came to the Romans with, after they had refuſed to help them as neighbours and allies againſt the Grecians, who were diſtreſſing them ſore, and that becauſe the Romans and the Grecians were in friendſhip together at the time: The Campani went and gave up their whole country in vaſſalage to the Romans, ſaying, *If you will not help us as our allies, help us as your vaſſals and ſubjects, as we are content to be: we are ſure you will not let your tributaries periſh.* And indeed this argument prevailed with them, and ſo will it with God, if you go to him with an importunate faith, and faſten yourſelf upon him. Plead, "Lord, if thou wilt not love me as a friend, yet pity me as thy poor ſubject: I reſolve to be thine, and, if I periſh, one muſt periſh that deſires to be thine. Lord, whether thou accept of me or not, I give up myſelf to thy uſe and ſervice." Art thou come this length, poor ſoul? Fear not, thou ſhalt not periſh, Chriſt is as willing to be thine as thou art to be his: Come foreward, and take the ſeal of the covenant, and make a new ſurrender of yourſelf to Chriſt, and it may be he will be made *known to you in the breaking of bread.*

III. When this holy feaſt comes to be celebrated, ſee that your ſouls be rightly employed, and your graces ſuitably exerciſed: Study to have your meditations and ejaculations ſuitable to what you ſee or hear.

When you are coming to this holy table, and perhaps may be put to ſtand a little by it, by reaſon of the throng before you get acceſs: Think on what Moſes ſaid to the Iſraelites while ſtanding at the Red-ſea, Exod. xiv. 13. *Stand ſtill* (ſaith he) *and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, which we will ſhew to you to day.* In like manner you are ſtanding by the Red-ſea of the blood of Chriſt: ſtand ſtill and wonder at the glorious ſalvation he is ſhewing to you this day.

Or you may think with yourſelf, that you hear Chriſt the captain of your ſalvation now crying as did Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 32. *Who is on my ſide? Who?* Well, if you will now appear or declare for Chriſt, then you muſt throw your luſts, like Jezebel, out of the window to be daſhed in pieces.

When you ſee the communicants ſet about Chriſt's table, you may think on that word, Pſal. cxxviii. 3. where God promiſeth to the righteous man, *That his wife ſhould be as a fruitful vine by the ſides of a houſe, and his children as olive plants round about his table.* Behold his promiſe made out to Chriſt, God's righteous ſervant; the church, Chriſt's ſpouſe, is a fruitful vine, and hath born him many children: Would to God theſe may be Chriſt's children by adoption, as well as they are the church's by profeſſion! May it be ſaid of them, that this and that man was born of her! O how pleaſant a ſight is it to ſee Chriſt's children ſet as olive plants round about his table, and to ſee Chriſt himſelf ſetting them there! Surely, if he ſet them, he will ſerve them alſo, they ſhall not have ground to go away with any complaint of him: For Chriſt is no niggard to his children, he is neither hard-hearted nor hard-handed; if his children ſeek bread, he will not give them a ſtone.

And, in the mean while, take care to entertain very high and exalted thoughts of Chriſt, and very low and humble thoughts of yourſelf. Say, or think, "Lord I am not worthy to approach ſo near thee, far leſs that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof. I am not worthy to eat the crumbs that fall from my own, much leſs theſe that fall from thy table. Oh, I am unworthy to be allowed to creep as a dog under the table, far leſs to ſit as one of Chriſt's invited gueſts at the table. I deſerve not room to ſtand amongſt thy ſervants, far leſs to ſit down with thy children. I deſerve not to have daily bread conferred on me, and ſhall I be allowed to eat of the bread of life? I am unworthy to lift up my eyes to heaven, and ſhall I get manna from heaven? I am not worthy to eat the bread of men, and ſhall I be admitted to eat the bread of angels? Shall I entertain him whom they adore: nay, ſit down with him at whoſe feet they fall? Shall I, who am unworthy to tread thy ground, be allowed to tread thy courts? Shall I, that am unworthy to breathe in thy air, have thy Spirit to breathe into my heart, or have leave to breathe out my deſires unto thee?"

O how great is the condeſcending goodneſs of our heavenly Father to his prodigal children! Theſe are wonders of mercy, miracles of compaſſion!

Some Directions for Communicants when at the Lord's table.

I Would have you at this time to mind that word of Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 1. *When thou ſitteſt to eat with a ruler, conſider diligently what is before thee.* O communicant, conſider diligently the ſacramental elements, and what is repreſented and exhibited by them. Conſider the ſacramental promiſes, and what bleſſings are contained in them. Conſider the ſacramental actions, and the gracious acts which the ſoul ſhould put forth with them. It ſhould be a buſy time, and well improven; for tho' it be ſhort, yet you have many things to do in it, which may generally be comprehended under theſe two heads;

1. Remember the ſuitable ſubjects which are to be conſidered and meditated at the table.

2. Obſerve and exert the ſpecial graces which are to be employed and exerciſed there.

As to the firſt of theſe heads, I ſhall mention ſome ſuitable ſubjects of your meditation and contemplation at this time; as, 1. Chriſt's death and paſſion. 2. The bitterneſs and variety of his ſufferings. 3. Chriſt's willingneſs to undergo theſe ſufferings for us. 4. The bleſſed effects and benefits of his ſufferings. 5. Chriſt's free love, as the impulſive cauſe of all he did and ſuffered. 6. The evil of ſin, which brought on his ſufferings. 7. God's holineſs and juſtice manifeſted in them. 8. The communion feaſt above, repreſented by this lower table.

I. Remember and meditate upon the death and paſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. David hath a Pſalm which he calls a Pſalm of remembrance. Pſalm xxxviii. Here the Son of David hath a ſacrament, which may well be called a ſacrament of remembrance; for the great end of it is to be a memorial of Chriſt its author and founder: For he ſaid, when he inſtituted it, *This do in remembrance of me;* and we find theſe words uſed twice over, both at the delivering of the bread and of the wine, 1 Cor. xi. 24. 25. As if he had ſaid, Whatever you mind, ſee that you forget not your ſuffering Redeemer. Some of Chriſt's works are narrated only by one evangeliſt, as his turning the water into wine, and ſome others; ſome of his works are recorded by two evangeliſts, as the hiſtory of Chriſt's birth by Matthew and Luke; ſome things are recorded by three of them, as the inſtitution of the ſacrament of the ſupper: But as for Chriſt's death and paſſion, it is recorded by them all four. And this is done no doubt to teach us, that tho' all Chriſt's works and actions are ſeriouſly to be remembred and thought upon, yet none ſo eſpecially as his death and ſufferings. And, when ſhould this be thought upon, if not at the ſacrament, whoſe inſtitution was purpoſely for the remembrance thereof? O communicant, will ye not think of this ſubject when you have Chriſt crucified evidently ſet forth before your eyes in the bread broken and the wine poured out? Oh was his bleſſed body broken with torments, and his precious blood ſhed for the remiſſion of my ſin: And will I not think upon him? Dear Saviour, thou biddeſt me remember thee; Oh how ſhould I ever forget thee at any time, and far leſs now when I ſit at thy table! If I forget thee, O Redeemer, let my right hand forget its cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. O that I could even go out of myſelf to remember thee, and never think on thee without an extaſy of wonder!

II. Think upon the bitterneſs of Chriſt's paſſion, and the variety of his ſufferings, and revolve in thy thoughts, the ſeveral ſteps and degrees thereof. And particularly take a view of your Redeemer's agony in the garden of Gethſemane; walk into that garden, and behold him falling to the ground under the weight of your ſins, wreſtling as in an agony, and ſweating great drops of blood, and theſe burſting through all his garments. O ſee how he lay, and how he bedewed and ſtained the flowers of the garden round about him with his blood. Never any in the world was known to ſweet in ſuch a manner before, and never any ſince that time. In a natural way of ſpeaking, the coldneſs of the night, his lying on the cold ground, and the exceeding greatneſs of Chriſt's fear at that time, ſhould have drawn all his blood inward from the outward parts of his body. O but this ſweat was preternatural! He ſweats without fire, and bleeds without a wound. There was no heat, no fire without him that made him ſweat at that time; no, the fire was within him, even the fire of God's wrath kindled in his ſoul; this made the blood about his heart to boil and burſt through his veins, fleſh, ſkin, clothes, and all together. There was no wound outward as yet given him, no ſword, no ſpear, no weapon as yet had touched him, and yet he bleeds: Oh, the wound was inward in his ſoul; deep and fearful was the gaſh which the ſword of juſtice made at this time in his ſoul: The breach was wide as the ſea, and accordingly a whole ſea of wrath brake in with violence upon his ſoul. He falls firſt upon his knees, and then upon the ground; he lies under the preſſure till he is overwhelmed with his Father's wrath and his own blood. Deep called unto deep, till all theſe dreadful waves and billows paſſed over him. He cried to his Father, he complained to his diſciples, he ſought their ſympathy and prayers; but no relief had he from that airth; he muſt tread the wine preſs alone.

Next, O communicants, follow your Redeemer after he was apprehended, by your meditations, and trace his ſteps through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem: Think what he underwent when he was hurried from one tribunal to another. Go into the high prieſt's palace, and to Pilate's judgment-hall, and obſerve what unparalleled affronts and indignities he ſuffered there, and none to take his part; he was reproached, deſpiſed and abandoned by all men, as if he had been the worſt of men, and unworthy to breathe in the world. He was put in competition with a vile murderer for his life, and yet the murderer is preferred before him. Yea, his own choſen diſciples, who had been eyes-witneſſes of his miracles, and ear-witneſſes of his oracles, they turn their backs on him with the reſt; one of them betrays him, another denies him, and all the reſt forſake him. Behold how unworthy men buffet him, blindfold him, and ſpit on that beautiful face which angels behold with wonder. Behold how he was ſcourged, dragged up and down, affronted and mocked a whole night on your account, as if he had been the deriſion of wicked men and devils. Now the devil thought, if Chriſt was to be the elect's ſurety, and was to pluck them out of his claws, he ſhould pay well for them ere he got them; and therefore many a wound and buffet got he: But content is our Redeemer to take all, to get his elect free and ſafe.

In the next place, behold how the heavy tree of the croſs was laid and faſtned on the ſore and bleeding ſhoulders of our Saviour, and he oblidged to carry it to the place of execution. Follow him in your thoughts, and ſee him wreſtling under the weight, when going up mount Calvary: He carries it, till he can carry it no further, he is ſpent and founders under the load, yet deſires no relief. Aſcend mount Calvary, and there ſee the croſs laid down upon the ground, and Chriſt our bleſſed victim laid down upon the croſs, which was a rack as well as a death; ſee how he is racked and nailed to it by the bloody executioners. And then behold the curſed tree lifted up with the Lord of glory faſtned to it, and fixed on the top of mount Calvary, as a ſacrifice to juſtice for an elect world. Behold him ranked among malefactors, and hanging betwixt two thieves. Behold his hands and feet pierced and rent with nails, his glorious head covered with a crown of thorns, and his tender ſide run through with a ſpear. See how the thorns pierce his holy head; ſee how his precious blood trickles down from his many wounds; ſee how his royal viſage turns pale; ſee how his head bows, and lies a-dying on his bleeding breaſt. Is not this an affecting ſight?

Again, Conſider the prodigious outward darkneſs that was on Chriſt during his paſſion on the croſs for ſeveral hours together, to ſhew the horrible inward darkneſs that was on his ſoul while the wrath of God acted againſt him as being the ſacrifice for the world's ſins. We read, that while Abraham was offering his ſacrifice, Gen. xv. 12. the ſun was going down, and an horror of great darkneſs fell upon him. So fared it with Chriſt, while he offered himſelf a ſacrifice for us. Now the Lord revealed his wrath from heaven againſt the unrighteouſneſs of the world, which was at this time laid on Chriſt. Our Redeemer lay under this darkneſs, to ſhew that we ſhould have ſuffered the horror of darkneſs for ever, even that blackneſs of darkneſs, which the apoſtle Jude ſpeaks of. But, glory to God, the blackneſs of darkneſs cauſed by God's wrath for ſin was now laid on our Surety. Strange! God cauſeth his ſun to ſhine upon the juſt and unjuſt, but on our Redeemer now it muſt not ſhine, as if of all unjuſt ones in the world he were the moſt unjuſt, having the whole injuſtice of the elect laid to his charge. Oh, ſpotleſs Lamb of God! Innocent Redeemer of mankind! Moſt pure and juſt one, that never offended againſt the law! And, muſt thou be dealt with as the moſt unjuſt perſon that ever breathed in the world, becauſe of the injuſtice of others? Now all the powers of earth and hell were let looſe againſt our Redeemer: all theſe lions, bulls, dogs and unicorns were ſet upon him to tear him. And, was it not enough that earth and hell were againſt him but muſt heaven ſet itſelf againſt him too, and declare its indignation by that viſible ſign of the horrible continued darkneſs. Oh, that was heavier and ſharper to our Redeemer than all the reſt of his ſufferings: Under the reſt he was ſilent, but now he cannot hold his peace; and therefore ſends forth that formidable loud cry, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* During the continuance of theſe three dark hours was Chriſt drinking the bitter cup: and now he comes to the bottom and bittereſt dregs of it. Now were the invenomed arrows of the Almighty piercing him in the moſt ſenſible part; and therefore he muſt cry. O how juſtly then might he have cried out with Job, and with better ground too than he, Job xix. 21. "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me!" How truly might the huſband now have taken up the ſpouſe's lamentation, Lam. i. 12. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? Behold and ſee, if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger!" Do but imagine what exceſſive pain and exquiſite torment he underwent both in ſoul and body, when he made this fearful outcry: And canſt thou, O communicant, ſee ſuch a tragedy acted on the bleeding Jeſus with dry eyes? This ſacrament is, as it were, a viſible ſermon on our Saviour's paſſion; in it we behold the whole tragedy that was acted on the croſs: Here we view the whole circumſtances of the Jews and Romans their barbarous malice againſt the innocent Son of God. And we ſhould endeavour to be as much affected therewith, as if we had ſeen the ſame acted with our bodily eyes.

Moreover, Think now upon Chriſt's cry upon the croſs, when he ſaid, *I thirſt, I thirſt.* No wonder he cried ſo, when there was a furnace of wrath kindled in his ſoul, a fire that dried up his ſtrength and moiſture like a potſherd, and made his tongue cleave to his jaws. A ſtrange complaint! *I thirſt*: The creator is thirſting, and there is no creature to give refreſhment. Strange! Might not one have cried, "O where were all the wells in Jeruſalem at this time? Where all the fountains, rivers and lakes in the world? Where all the vines of that fruitful land, when my Lord and Saviour could not get a drink? Fy upon you all, that would let glorious King Jeſus be burnt up with thirſt." O, but they might have anſwered, "We dare not own nor relieve him at this time; God hath laid an arreſt on us, and we dare not break it to ſerve our maſter." How ſtrange to hear the fountains and vines ſay, We will give Pilate and Herod, and all the enemies of Chriſt drink; but we will give Chriſt himſelf none, tho' he die for thirſt! Oh, is there no liquor for precious Chriſt in all the earth, but bitter gall and vinegar to increaſe his thirſt and torment: Not a cup of cold water for the Lord of glory, not a drop to cool his ſcorched tongue; but he muſt die crying out, *I thirſt.* But O if my Saviour had not thirſted on the croſs, I had thirſted with Dives in hell; nay, all the elect had lien there in that lake of fire, and cried for ever, *I thirſt, I thirſt.*

And further, Conſider the extent and univerſality of his ſufferings. He ſuffered in both natures. His Godhead indeed could not ſuffer grief, but it ſuffered an eclipſe, and lay under a vail for thirty three years, except one hour it broke out and ſhone on mount Tabor. He ſuffered in all his offices; for they mocked and ridiculed him as a prophet, deſpiſed and ſlighted him as a prieſt, abuſed and ſlighted him as a king, putting a mock ſceptre in his hand, and arraying him with an old purple robe, mock habiliments of majeſty. He ſuffered in all the powers and faculties of his ſoul, and in all the ſenſes and members of his body: His head, heart, hands, back, ſides and feet were all mangled and pierced, and no part of him free but his tongue to pray for his enemies. He ſuffered in his outward goods; for what he had of this kind were his garments, and theſe were taken from him. Moreover, he was wounded in his name and reputation; for he ſuffered as a blaſphemer againſt God, as a traitor againſt the Roman emperor, and as an enemy to Moſes's law, tho' he was entirely innocent as to all the three. He ſuffered from all hands; from heaven, from earth, from hell; from Herod, from Pilate, from the high Prieſt; from the Romans, from the Jews, from the ſoldiers; from the clergy, from the lawyers; from rulers, from commons; from friends, from foes; from diſciples, from ſtrangers; all were againſt him: But, which was worſt of all, God was againſt him too: For, he being ſubſtitute in the room of ſinners, God acted as an inexorable judge toward him; he ſmote him with the ſword of juſtice, frowned on him in a terrible manner, and withdrew from him all the ſenſible feelings of his loving-kindneſs, and reſtrain'd the influence of theſe beams which might any way refreſh his troubled ſoul in the hour of his greateſt need. So that there was never any ſorrow like our Redeemer's ſorrow.

Hence it was, that he *offered up his ſupplications with ſuch ſtrong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. Hearken, O communicant, how Chriſt wept and ſobbed in the garden, and how loud he cried on the croſs, *Father, Father: Mercy, mercy: My God, my God.* But, what a fray think you was there in heaven at this time? Why? The Son of God weeping! The Creator of the earth crying and ſobbing on the earth! Never was there ſuch a commotion in heaven or earth, either before, or ever ſhall be after. What a ſtir was there among the angels when their Lord was weeping, crying and ſobbing? How amazed were they, and intent upon the iſſue! Strange! might they ſay, he *that takes up the iſles as a little thing*, crying ſo hideouſly at this time! He that can bear up heaven and earth with a finger, weeping! What can be the matter? Surely there was more than the tree on Chriſt's back, more than the thorns in his temples, or the nails in his hands and feet. Oh, there were the curſes of God's law on the tree that Chriſt bore, which were heavier than ten thouſand mountains of iron! The poiſon of God's wrath went in with the thorns and the iron nails, and entered into his very ſoul.

Chriſt's martyrs and ſufferers have rejoiced in their ſufferings, and ſung praiſes under their tortures; and yet Chriſt who is the author of their ſtrength and comfort, doth himſelf complain and weep! Oh but all the martyrs ſufferings were nothing but flea-bitings to Chriſt's! They had God's preſence with them in their trials; but Chriſt had God angry and withdrawn from him: Nay, the Lord did run upon him as a giant, and made him the butt of his envenomed arrows. Hence it was, that our Lord, at the ſight of his wrath, began to fear and be ſore amazed, Mark xiv. 33. The word in the original language is *ekthambeiſthai*, i. e. *to be aſtoniſhed with terror.* To ſee millions of men deſpairing is not ſo much as to ſee Chriſt beginning to fear. And O it was not a ſmall fear that was on our Redeemer; no, it was a great fear and amazement. Never was any man ſo afraid of the torments of hell, as Chriſt (ſtanding in our room) was of his Father's wrath; becauſe never man knew the power of that wrath ſo well as he. O what anguiſh was there at Chriſt's heart, that made it to bleed without any outward violence, and that blood to burſt through both fleſh, ſkin and garments at once! The perfect knowledge which Chriſt had of things aggravated his ſufferings: He did not ſhut his eyes when he drank the cup; no, he perfectly ſaw how dreggiſh and bitter it was, and yet he ventured on it. Many men fear not hell, becauſe they do foreſee it not; if they did ſee that pit open for them before they came at it, it might perhaps cauſe them tremble at their ſins, and many wicked men might run mad at the horror of it: But Chriſt clearly foreſaw all he met with, which was far greater and worſe than the torments of any damned ſoul; and this made him to be amazed with fear.

Finally, conſider how our Redeemer at laſt bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt! Strange ſight! to ſee the *Lord of life* death's ta'en priſoner! To ſee the Princely head of Jeſus falling down upon his breaſt! To ſee the Lord of life wanting life, to ſee theſe eyes, that were oft lift up to heaven in prayer, now waxed dim and fixed that they cannot move! To ſee that mouth that ſpake as never man ſpake, now ſilent and not able to ſpeak a word! An affecting ſight! The world never ſaw the like! To ſee the fair corpſe of glorious Jeſus rolled in linnen, and laid in a ſilent grave! To ſee him lying there dead, that raiſed Lazarus from the grave, to ſee him wanting life, that gave life to men and angels; and all for thy ſake, O believing communicant!

And then, how moving were the circumſtances of his paſſion! Remember how ſhamefully the Lord of glory was put to death, how he was ſtript and hung naked before all Iſrael, and before the ſun. And, where was it? Even at Jeruſalem, which he had honoured with his preſence, taught with his preachings, aſtoniſhed with his miracles, and bewailed with his tears. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem* (ſaid he) *how oft would I have gathered you, but you would not! O if thou hadſt known in this thy day!* &c.——What place in Jeruſalem was it? Without the gates of Calvary, among the ſtinking bones of vile malefactors. When was it? At the paſſover, a time of great concourſe of all the Jews and proſelytes; A time when they ſhould receive the figure, they reject the ſubſtance; when they ſhould kill and eat the ſacramental lamb in faith and thankfulneſs, they kill the immaculate *Lamb of God* our true paſſover in cruelty and contempt. ——With whom? Even in midſt of two thieves, as if he had been the captain of thieves. How great was the diſgrace and contempt that was poured on the glorious Redeemer of Iſrael! Behold, he that thought it no robbery to be equal with God, is himſelf made equal with robbers and malefactors! Jeremy laments it in Iſrael's caſe, as a piece of the moſt reproachful treatment, that princes were hung up by their hands, Lam. v. 12. Oh, thus was the prince of the kings of the earth treated for our ſakes; and, ſhall we not be deeply affected with it?

III. Another ſuitable ſubject of meditation at the Lord's table is the willingneſs of our Redeemer to undergo all theſe ſufferings for us. He was no-wiſe importuned or compelled, but moſt freely undertook to pay the elect's debt, Pſal. xl. 7. 8. *Then ſaid I, Lo, I come,* *I delight to do thy will.* As if he had ſaid, "Father, I ſee no other is able to pay the debt of theſe poor bankrupts. The Levitical prieſts, for all the beaſts they have killed, and all the ſacrifices they have offered theſe many hundreds of years, they have not been able to pay ſo much as one farthing of the elect's debt to this day; it is all entirely owing ſtill. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not;* I ſee theſe will not do; but I know what will: Then ſaid he, *Lo, I come;* I'll be ſurety, and I will do the work effectually; but I muſt leave the glory of heaven for a time. Then farewel, Father, for thirty-three years; farewel, all my angels, and all my ſaints, till I come back again; I muſt go and relieve theſe periſhing ſouls, and I will do it to purpoſe." The Lord ſaith to us by that wiſe man, Solomon, *Be not ſurety for any man:* But ſaith Chriſt, Tho' I give that advice to others, yet I will not take it to myſelf; I will be ſurety for many men, yea, for ſtrangers, tho' my very garments ſhould be taken away for it: My heart bleeds for them; I cannot ſee them thrown into an eternal priſon, when I am able to pay their debt; I will go and pay it for them. Well, when the time came to pay the debt, did he begin to rue the bargain, when he found the debt great, and the payment heavy? Did he ſhun his creditor, as many men do? No; he is as willing to pay the elect's debt, as God to exact it. *With deſire* (ſays he) *have I deſired to eat this paſſover;* becauſe now the term of payment which I long looked for is come. One might have thought, for as frank as he is in undertaking, yet ſtay till he once taſte the bitter cup he is to drink, he'll perhaps change his mind, and begin to ſhrink from it. No, no, the taſte he had got of the cup's brim made him thirſt the more earneſtly for the very dregs of it, that he might get his poor elect put altogether beyond the danger of it, Luke xii. 50. *I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed?* It is a terrible black cloud that hangs over my peoples heads; I long for its breaking upon me their ſurety, that I may get them ſafe, and out of all hazard. And when Peter drew a ſword to defend his maſter and prevent his ſuffering; "Hold thy hand (ſaith he to Peter) no ſwords; the cup that my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it? It is a bitter cup indeed. I find it from the large draught I have taken of it juſt now in the garden; but tho' it be bitter, yet it is juſt: I have undertaken it as the elect's ſurety; and, Peter, will you hinder a man to pay his debt? What then would become of all my elect's ſouls, and of your ſoul among the reſt? If this cup be death to me, it would be eternal damnation to you. I have legions of angels ready to reſcue me, if I needed them; they are all looking on, and waiting my orders: But keep your poſts, ye angels; come none of you to my aſſiſtance: Let no man draw a ſword, and let none of my diſciples offer to interpoſe; for I am reſolved to pay their debt, I will lay down my life for my ſheep. Let Jonah then be caſt into the ſea, and ye ſhall be all ſafe." Oh, what a willing ſacrifice was our Redeemer! He is content to ſwim in a ſea of wrath for us the ſpace of thirty-three years; and never deſired deliverance till the ſea is perfectly calm, and his elect out of hazard of being ſwallowed up.

Conſider how he quickned the traitor Judas, and bade him make diſpatch, when he was going about his bloody work. He ſung a hymn when he was going to the garden to be apprehended. He caſt himſelf in the perſecutors way: goes forth to meet them, and boldly preſents himſelf to them; and, as if they were too ſlow in apprehending him, he quickens them to it, by telling them twice over, He was the man they ſought. And then remember how willing he was to let malefactors bands be laid on his innocent hands; hands that never did evil, hands that never ſtole any thing, that never ſhed blood; nay, hands that healed diſeaſes, cured the lame, fed the hungry, and looſed our fetters. But, what need was there for binding ſo willing a priſoner. He was to make no ſtruggle, no reſiſtance, but was like a lamb led to the ſlaughter without opening his mouth. O but he is willing to be bound for our ſakes! Father, ſays he, bind me and looſe them; let me be the ram caught in the thicket, ſlay me and ſave them. All their ills, all their debts, all their deſerts be upon me; as Paul ſaid to Philemon concerning Oneſimus, Phil. 18. *If they have wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put that on my account;* charge it on me, take payment and ſatisfaction from me.

Again, when he was before the high-prieſt accuſed, and witneſſes againſt him, he would not ſay a word in his own defence; tho' they could prove nothing, yet he deſired not to be releaſed. Tho' he was intirely innocent of crime or fault before the world, yet he knew he was guilty by imputation and voluntary ſubſtitution, and therefore he holds his peace. Seeing he was liable before God as a Surety, he would not hinder the payment, but willingly ſubmits to the hardeſt conditions of our relief. Though wicked Pilate was convinced of his innocence, and ſought to ſave his life, yet he ſought it not himſelf: Hence we read how Pilate ſcourged Chriſt very ſore with ſharp platted cords, and then brought him forth to the people, to ſee if their hearts would relent when they ſaw him all bleeding, ſaying, *Behold the man:* Surely (thinks Pilate) when they ſee his furrowed back and bloody ſhoulders, they will be ready to ſay, *Poor man, thou art ill enough handled already for any ill thou haſt done.* But Oh, he knew no better: Juſtice was not ſatisfied, and theſe hell-hounds were not ſatisfied, they muſt have his life, his heart's blood or nothing. And your loving Saviour, O believer, ſays *Amen* to it, you ſhall have it, I will die, I will be a ſacrifice for ſin, I will ſatisfy my Father's juſtice to the uttermoſt, I will have my beloved bride out of danger; I will not leave one farthing of the debt for my people to pay.

Next, obſerve how willingly he took the heavy croſs upon his bleeding ſhoulders to carry it to the place of execution, tho' his ſtrength was very much ſpent already with watching, wreſtling, buffeting, ſcourging and loſs of blood. O what a ſight do you think was our Lord Jeſus going forth out of the gates of Jeruſalem with his heavy croſs and your ſins on his back, and like to fall under the burden as he went! How weak was he in body, and weary in ſoul, ere he wan to the top of mount Calvary? And what ſaw he before him as he was climbing that mount? Nothing but a curſed death, and a black cloud of God's wrath. Yea, he had a load of wrath already on his back, that was far heavier than the croſs he was bearing: Oh, it was no wonder he ſtaggered, foundered, or fell under his burden; ſo that Simon the Cyrenian was compelled by his enemies to carry the light end of the tree behind him, leſt he had died before he came to the top of the mount. But our loving Jeſus, tho' he was ſpent and weary in his body, yet forward and willing was he in his mind to go and be made a ſacrifice for us: And therefore up the mount will he go, tho' he ſees juſtice, devils and wicked men at the top of it, waiting to faſten on him when he comes; but, ſeeing there was no other way to deliver his loſt ſheep, he will go and meet them. Well, O communicant, obſerve and take notice of your Saviour's ſteps as he went up the mount, with the burden you laid upon his back, follow him all the way with the eye of faith: Tho' it was curſedly heavy, yet, how patiently doth he bear it. He complains not, he opens not his mouth: He will not bid you or any of the elect lend him a lift: for he knows you are not able to bear the leaſt grain-weight of his burden; it would break your backs, and cruſh you to hell for ever: He will bear it all alone; only he will have you to notice him with the eye of faith, and to remember him with love and gratitude.

IV. Let the bleſſed effects and benefits of Chriſt's ſufferings be the ſubject of your thoughts at this time. Hereby juſtice is ſatisfied, and believers are redeemed: The fire of divine anger is quenched, the mouth of hell ſtopt, the ocean of wrath dried up, the raging ſea quell'd, the roaring lion vanquiſhed; the old ſerpent is unſting'd, and his venomous head bruiſed; the law is diſarmed of thunders and curſes, and its loud clamours againſt us ſilenced; our debts are paid, and diſcharge obtained; an angry God becomes a reconciled Father, and both grace and glory are purchaſed. Hereby our putrifying ſores are cleanſed, our deadly plagues cured, God's beautiful image reſtored, ſlaves of ſatan become ſons of God, heirs of hell become heirs of heaven, rebels againſt heaven become favourites of God, and traitors get acceſs to his throne. Hereby the gates of Paradiſe are opened, the flaming ſword removed, glorious manſions prepared, and the crown of life purchaſed for believers. It was not for nought that our Redeemer groan'd and wept, ſwate and ſtruggled, bled and died. Theſe great deliverances and mercies were deadly hard to bring forth. They put our Redeemer to cry out, to the amazement of angels, and horror of men, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* But, now it is finiſhed, his agony is over, the deliverance is wrought, and redemption purchaſed; juſtice now ſaith, *It is enough, I am fully ſatisfied with the Surety's payment, I demand no more*; the ſacrifice is of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour to me, and it perfumes all the elect's perſons and performances. Nay, ſo efficacious and acceptable were theſe ſufferings, that the virtue of them reaches back to the beginning of the world, and extends foreward to the end of it. God was ſo well pleaſed with them, that he accepted of them as a ranſom for elect ſouls four thouſand years before he endured them. The Surety's payment was ſo acceptable that he took many thouſands to heaven before the debt was paid, upon Chriſt's parole that he ſhall pay; for all the ſaints under the Old Teſtament went to heaven this way. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed;* this God declared from heaven again and again, *q. d.* "Many a time have the elect grieved me; many a provocation have their ſins given me; yea, have their duties given me: But I am well pleaſed with my Son, their Surety hath ſatisfied me for them all."

V. You ought to meditate on the impulſive cauſe of Chriſt's ſufferings on his part. His free love was the only motive; it was this that cauſed him to take upon him the heavy burden of our ſins, that would have ſunk us into the bottomleſs pit. As often as we come to the Lord's table to partake of theſe elements, we ſhould do it in remembrance of Chriſt's unſpeakable and incomprehenſible love to us: We ſhould never perform this holy duty without admiration and aſtoniſhment at the thoughts of our Saviour's infinite love and undeſerved compaſſion toward us, in that he laid down his life to ſave ours who had rebelled againſt him. Our Redeemer well knoweth the evil nature and diſpoſition of man, that he is apt to forget his beſt friends, and to turn unthankful for the greateſt benefits ever he received; and therefore he conſults our eternal good, by injoining us to ſolemnize this ordinance in remembrance of that immenſe love he expreſſed towards us in his death and ſufferings. Beſide what I have formerly ſaid of your meditating on and admiring the love of Chriſt before your coming to his table; I do exhort you, now you are at the table, to fall a wondering at it a freſh, for this is moſt proper work for you at ſuch a time.

"*O the love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledge!* Where ſhall I begin my thoughts on this ſubject? and, when begun how ſhall I make an end? Thy love, Lord, is ancient; thou lovedſt us firſt, and that when there was no eye to pity: Thou took'ſt not on thee the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham; they are bound with chains of darkneſs, whilſt thou art drawing us with cords of love. Yea, thou lovedſt us when enemies. To have ſpared our lives had been unexpected, undeſerved mercy; for, *who finds his enemy, and lets him go well away?* But Lord, thou haſt found me in my enmity, and haſt pitied me; yea, when my hand was lifted up againſt thee, thine arms have been open to embrace me. Nay, thou haſt opened thy very heart to lodge thy profeſſed enemies who have trode thee under foot. Thy bowels yearned towards them who raked in them with their bloody hands. Thy heart burned with affection towards them that cruelly pierced it. *Herein Chriſt hath commended his love to us, that while we were ſinners, Chriſt died for us.* O aſtoniſhing love! that the general ſhould die for the ſoldier, the phyſician for the patient, the maſter for the ſervant, the ſhepherd for the ſheep, the innocent for the guilty, the juſt for the unjuſt, the prince for the rebel, the Lord of glory for the children of diſobedience! He that was without all ſin, for him that was without all righteouſneſs, yea, the Creator for the creature, God for man, the righteous Judge for the condemned malefactor! O love without a parallel! For the judge to put himſelf in the malefactor's cloathes and room, and ſuffer death for him! For the bleſſed Son of God to interpoſe his own innocent breaſt to receive theſe mortal wounds due to us! Behold God all ſufficient expoſed to hunger and thirſt, grief and wearineſs, reproach and indignities of all ſorts! Behold the world's Saviour wounded, mangled and killed by ungrateful man whom he came to ſave! Glorious Saviour, what love was this, that thou ſhouldſt become *a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief;* that from the womb to the tomb, from the cradle to the croſs, thy whole life ſhould be a continued martyrdom! That thou ſhouldſt be content to be born among beaſts, live among murderers, and die among thieves; and all to obtain a place among the bleſſed for us! O the unfathomable love of Jeſus! His name is love, his nature is love, his words were love, and his actions were love. He preached love, he practiſed love, he lived in love, he was ſick of love, nay, he died for love." The apoſtle might well call it, a known unknown love, Eph. iii. 19. we may feel it, but O we cannot fathom it. Jacob ſhewed great love to Rachel, in his enduring the heat by day and the froſts by night for her: But our lovely Bridegroom ſhewed far greater love to his ſpouſe in undergoing the curſed, painful and ſhameful death of the croſs for her. It is reported of the Pelican, that when her young ones are ſtung with ſome poiſonous ſerpent, ſhe beats her breaſt with her beak, till the warm blood guſheth out, which they ſuck and recover: We are all ſtung mortally by the old ſerpent the devil; but behold the love of our heavenly Pelican, he lets out his heart's blood to recover us.

O communicant, remember his love, ſeeing he requires it at this time, *Do this in remembrance of me.* O remember Chriſt, for he did not forget you. He minded you at his laſt ſupper, he made his teſtament, and put you in it, and left every believer a good legacy. At his death he minded you more than he minded himſelf. In his laſt prayer he put up many a petition for you, but few for himſelf. In the garden, on the croſs, and in the grave, his poor loſt ſheep were ſtill in his mind: He minded you both day and night; many a night's ſleep took Chriſt's ſheep from him, thinking on them, and pleading for them. O that was a remarkable night's ſleep that Chriſt wanted, when he ſwate blood in the garden for you; that was a night never to be forgotten; think on it now. When wanted you a night's ſleep for Chriſt thinking on his love, wondring at his ſufferings, and pleading for an intereſt therein? O ſeek to make it up now, and now ſay, *O the breadth and length, O the height and depth of the love of Chriſt! Lord, what is man. that thou art mindful of him? What is he, that thou ſhouldſt magnify him, and ſet thy heart upon him?* Strange! that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine heart upon wretches, ſo as to give the glorious Son of thy love to ſuffer all the curſes of the law, and vials of thy wrath, to make us, who are children of wrath, yea, heirs of the curſe, and firebrands of hell, to become children of God, heirs of the bleſſing, and of eternal life! Surely, while you are thus muſing on the love of God, your hearts, like David's, ſhould wax hot within you, and the fire ſhould burn; nay, the flame of love to God ſhould break out in the moſt lively and active manner: Now your *ſpikenard ſhould ſend forth the ſmell thereof;* now the ſweet odour of your graces ſhould fill all the houſe.

VI. The evil of ſin, which was the procuring cauſe of Chriſt's ſuffering, ſhould alſo be the ſubject of your thoughts at the Lord's table. He had no ſin of his own, but our ſins were laid upon him; and divine juſtice finding them there, took vengeance on our ſurety to the uttermoſt. Oh Lord, our ſins were the principal actors of that woful tragedy: They were the traitors which by the hands of Judas delivered him up to be crucified; Pilate, the Jews, the Romans were but the executioners of our ſins. Our ſins, with clamours more importunate than all the Jewiſh rabble, cried out *Crucify him, Crucify him.* What fooliſh inconſiſtent creatures are we, that bewail the event, but redreſs not the cauſe! Alas! we naturally have as great enmity againſt his image, as they had againſt his perſon: They grieved him in his body, we in his Spirit: They opened his wounds, we make them bleed a freſh. Neither had they got the leaſt power to touch him, if it had not been for our ſins that made him obnoxious to wrath——Oh, who was it that armed the Jews and Romans againſt him? Who put the ſword in juſtice's hands? Who forced theſe groans and bloody ſweats from my Redeemer? Ah, who but I? My ſins, my pride, my unbelief, my atheiſm, my covetouſneſs, my malice, my lying, cheating, ſwearing ſabbath-breaking, &c. Theſe raiſed the ſtorm of wrath againſt my Surety. Blame not Judas, Herod or Pilate, the Jews or Romans, ſo much as my ſins: Nay, I am the Judas that betrayed him, the Herod that mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, the executioner that drove in the nails, the ſoldier that pierced him.

O my ſoul, behold thy Saviour now hanging on the croſs for thy ſins, and yet ſaying, *Weep not for me* that endure this torture, *but weep for yourſelf* that cauſeth it; behold the cruelty of thy ſins. Look through the gaping wounds into my heart, pierced firſt by love, next by ſorrows, and then by a ſpear for you. Be perſwaded what an evil and bitter thing ſin is to me; ſee how it rakes unto my ſide, and tears my very heart: Canſt thou love or harbour that which uſed me thus? You ſay you are my friends: and, will you not take my part againſt this deadly enemy? Have not all theſe mouths enough to perſwade you to fall out with ſin? Oh will you hug my enemy, tear open my wounds, and crucify me a freſh? O communicant, let your hearts anſwer, "No, Lord, I will never requite thy kindneſs ſo, I'll never account that light, which made my Saviour's ſoul heavy unto death; that ſhall not be ſweet to me, that was ſo bitter to him; that ſhall never be my joy, that made Chriſt a man of ſorrows: O ſhall not theſe ſins be forſaken of me, that made him be forſaken of God? Shall ever they be ſuffered to live in me, that would not ſuffer Chriſt to live in the world?"

O what ſtupid creatures are we, if we do not now ſtand aſtoniſhed at the heinouſneſs and hideouſneſs of our ſins, for which no atonement could be made but by the bitter paſſion and agonies of the Son of God! Shall we not ſay, ſurely there muſt be more in ſin than men commonly reckon? It could be no ſmall matter for which the beloved Son of God endured ſuch horrible and dreadful torments. O heavy dead weight of my ſins, that preſſed down my ſtrong Redeemer to the ground; yea, preſſed him down, that upheld the whole fabrick of the creation by the word of his power, Heb. i. 3. and without the leaſt pain could have born millions of worlds more! O bitter and curſed ſin, thou ſhalt be crucified this day, that crucified my innocent Saviour; Couldſt thou ever been guilty of a more horrid deed than murdering of the Lord of glory? I will not reſt this day, till I have revenged myſelf of the daughter of Babylon, that enemy and perſecutor of Chriſt myſtical, Pſal. cxxxvii. 8. 9. *O daughter of* Babylon, *who art to be deſtroyed, happy ſhall he be that rewardeth thee as thou haſt ſerved Chriſt: Happy ſhall he be that taketh and daſheth thy little ones againſt the ſtones.*

VII. Think on the holineſs and juſtice of God manifeſted againſt ſin, and adore the ſame at this time. You have other mirrors and bright looking glaſſes in ſcripture for repreſenting the ſame to you, ſuch as the caſting down the angels from heaven, the drowning the old world, the burning of Sodom, the rejection of the Jews: But none of them ſo clearly ſhew forth ſin's evil, and God's ſpotleſs holineſs, and inexorable juſtice againſt ſin, as do the death and ſufferings of our Redeemer. Come near, and hearken to the raging billows of God's indignation daſhing againſt the rock of our ſalvation, and behold God's implacable hatred againſt ſin. Many a ſore ſtorm and hurricane of wrath did he endure, to keep the ſea of divine wrath from overflowing you. Our rock groaned, trembled, and ſwate blood; he cried, prayed and intreated: Yet divine juſtice would not hear, nor abate him one ſtripe: *Awake O ſword of the Lord*, cut him off; let him die, ſaith juſtice, ſeeing he ſtands ſurety for man's ſins. O here is a greater evidence of the inexorableneſs of juſtice, and God's implacable wrath againſt ſin, than if he had hurled all the rocks of the creation into the midſt of the ſea, or the whole world full of men and angels into hell. O you that make light of ſin, go to the rock in Horeb, go to Gethſemane, go to mount Calvary, go to a communion-table, and ſee what Chriſt endured for our ſins, hear his heavy groans, and behold the blood ſtanding above his garments. O communicant, tremble at ſin, and come under the ſhadow of this rock, run into the clefts of it; and tho' you hear the roarings and daſhings of this terrible ſea upon your rock, yet you are ſafe here, a drop ſhall not reach you.

Finally, you ought at this time to have ſome thoughts of the *marriage-ſupper of the Lamb* above, whereof this table is an emblem and repreſentation. Here in the wilderneſs we get a foretaſte of the good things of the promiſed land, and to ſharpen our appetites after the Canaan above, where theſe firſt fruits do grow and are fully ripe. O what a glorious and well-furniſhed table will that be, where the church of the firſt-born will be all gathered in one general aſſembly, and ſet down together with Chriſt! Oh where are the looks and longings we ſhould have after that heavenly feaſt! Awake, my ſoul, from this dark, deceitful and vexing world; Oh be not in love with thy diſeaſe, thy fetters and calamities: Join not with theſe that take up their reſt on this ſide Jordan, on this ſide heaven, and who ſay, It is good to be here; but with theſe heavenly pilgrims, who ſay, *Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt, for it is polluted.* Lament your diſtance from God; Woe's me that I ſojourn in Meſech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar; that I remain in this ſinful polluting place among a ſtrange people, and am ſo long kept from my Father's houſe above. "O that I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away, and be at reſt: Lo, then I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderneſs," that I might be free from ſin's ſnares and temptations, and might have free acceſs to enjoy God. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death, which ſo often troubles, diſturbs, intangles and hinders me from my duty?"

So much for the ſubjects we ought to meditate on at the Lord's table, I come, in the next place,

Secondly, To ſpeak of theſe graces which are to be employed and exerciſed at the Lord's table; ſuch as faith, repentance, love, ſpiritual appetite, and thankfulneſs. Now is the time, O communicant, that all your graces ſhould be ſtirred up to the greateſt livelineſs: and therefore do all you can to excite them to it: Chide with them when languiſhing or dull, and ſay, *What can ye not watch with my deareſt Saviour one hour?*

I. In the firſt place; The grace of faith ſhould be moſt active, for it is moſt neceſſary at this time. Faith may ſay to thee, O communicant, at the table, as Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, *Without me ye can do nothing.* Faith is the eye that ſees Chriſt, the hand that receives him, the mouth that feeds upon him. Let faith's eyes be now opened to ſee the great ſight of Chriſt crucified on the croſs. Do now as Moſes when he ſaw the buſh burning, Exod. iii. 3. *I'll turn aſide and ſee this great ſight:* Surely you cannot ſee a greater. Behold the rock of our ſalvation ſmitten, to let the water of life come forth to us: Come and ſee him ſmitten by the rod of Moſes, i. e. by the rod of the law, whoſe miniſter Moſes was; with all the curſes and maledictions of the law denounced againſt us, Gal. iii. 13. Yea, come ſee him ſmitten by many hands, by the rod of Moſes, by the rod of juſtice, by the rod of devils, by the rod of the Jews, by the rod of the Romans, by the rod of your ſins: Come ſee him ſmitten in his head with thorns, in his hands with nails, in his ſide with a ſpear, in his heart with ſorrows, yea, in his whole ſoul with the wrath of an angry God. O deep, deep was our rock ſmitten, before the water of life could come forth to heal us; according to Iſa. liii. 5. 8. "He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, bruiſed for our iniquities:—For the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken, and by his ſtripes we are healed."

Now let faith look ſharply out for Chriſt at the table. Reſt not in the bread and wine, but look beyond theſe; go a little further, and ſee if you can eſpy Chriſt himſelf. Let the language of your heart at this time be, *Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?* Say now to the Lord, as the Greeks to Philip, *Sir, we would ſee Jeſus;* Lord I would now deſire to ſee Jeſus Chriſt; Neither the word nor prayers, miniſters nor elements will content me without a ſight of Chriſt himſelf. Mind what Iſaac told his father on mount Moriah; "Father, behold here is the wood and the fire; but, where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" So do thou look up at the table to thy heavenly Father, and ſay, "Father, behold, here is the miniſter, here is the word, here is the bread and wine; but, where is the body and blood of my Saviour? Where is the lamb for a ſacrifice? Father, where is the lamb of God, that takes away the ſins of the world?" Alas, all is nothing to me if he be away. Let faith look up and ſay to Chriſt, *Make haſte, my beloved, be thou like a roe, or a young hart on the mountains of ſpices. Make no tarrying, O my God; O when wilt thou come to me?*

When Mary came to the ſepulchre, look'd in and ſaw the linen but not the Lord, ſhe preſently falls a weeping; Oh, ſaid ſhe, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him:" My Lord is taken away and I know not where to find him. When our tender hearted Saviour heard ſuch a moving and mournful complaint, he haſtned to her, and gave her a gracious meeting. So, when thou ſeeſt the linen and the elements, but not the Lord Jeſus, then be not ſatisfied, but dart up thy complaints to heaven. "Lord, I came not to ſee the linen, I came not for the bread and wine, but I came to ſee Jeſus; Oh Lord, what ſhall I do? They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where to find him. Ah, what is the word to me without Chriſt, but as a conduit without water? What are the elements to me, but as a cup without wine? Oh Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Chriſtleſs ? O if there were ſuch ſights, ſuch breathings coming from thy heart, thou mightſt be confident Chriſt would hear them, and make haſte to meet with thee and bleſs thee.

Awake faith, O communicant, at this time; behold Chriſt, apply his benefits. Here a believer may find enough in the wounds and blood of Chriſt, by which he may reſolve all his doubts, ſcatter his fears, ſupply all his ſpiritual wants, and find a remedy againſt all his ſoul-diſtempers, by a believing application thereof to himſelf. When thou putteſt forth the hand of thy body, ſee that thou alſo put forth the hand of thy faith to receive the body and blood of Chriſt. Do like Joſeph of Arimathea; come to Chriſt crucified, take him down from the croſs, and lay him in the new tomb of thy heart. Now give a hearty, full and unfeigned conſent to Chriſt on the goſpel-terms; receive him as thy Saviour, ſubmit to him as thy prince, and ſwear allegiance to him as thy undoubted ſovereign. And remember, faith, if true, muſt have two hands, one to receive Chriſt, and another to give the ſoul to Chriſt; ſee that both hands be now employed, both to take and give.

And eſpecially, make uſe of faith's mouth to ſuck honey from the rock, derive ſupplies from Chriſt to thy ſoul's neceſſities. Obſerve what God directed Moſes, Exod. xvii. 6. *Behold I will ſtand before thee upon the rock in Horeb, and thou ſhalt ſmite the rock, and there ſhall come water out of it, that the people may drink.* Would you have drink and ſupplies from Chriſt for your ſpiritual refreſhment, then ſmite the rock, act faith on Chriſt. At the table, it ſhould be a man's wiſdom, which was Moſes his error, to ſmite this rock oftner than once, Numb. xx. 11. *With his rod he ſmote the rock twice, and the waters came out abundantly.* So do you ſmite the rock twice, again and again; put forth many acts of faith at this time.

II. The grace of repentance and godly ſorrow for ſin ſhould be exerciſed at this time. O communicant, canſt thou now look on him whom thou haſt pierced by thy ſins, and not mourn and be in bitterneſs for them? Canſt thou ſee the Son of God hanging naked and bleeding on a tree, upon the top of mount Calvary as a ſacrifice for thy ſins, and not be grieved for the cauſe? O take a fixed look of him now, and let your eye affect your heart. Behold theſe hands that ſwayed the ſceptre of heaven, now nailed to the tree of reproach: Behold theſe feet that trampled on all the powers of hell, and made enemies his footſtool, now nailed to the footſtool of the croſs. O did the earth tremble and ſhake, the rocks rend, the graves open, and heavens turn dark at this ſight; and, will not our rocky hearts rend, and our dead ſouls be affected with this ſight? Surely the hardeſt heart among us may now melt, and the dryeſt eyes now drop a tear. O ſhall the Son of God ſo ſweat and bleed for us, and we not weep for ourſelves? Shall we ſee our ſins pierce his head with thorns, his hands with nails, and his ſide with a ſpear, and yet look on this with unpierced hearts? Oh, our ſins did envenom theſe thorns, theſe nails, and that ſpear. We, and none but we, were the evil beaſt that devoured this Joſeph; we the bloody executioners that tormented the glorious Redeemer; and, ſhall not our hearts bleed therefor?

O communicant, ſo behold Chriſt in the ſacrament, as the Virgin Mary his mother beheld him on the croſs: Woman, ſays Chriſt, *behold thy Son.* And how did ſhe behold him; Simeon tells her, Luke ii. 35. *That a ſword ſhall pierce through her ſoul.* Now was the time that the ſword did pierce through her ſoul, when ſhe beheld him pierced on the croſs: That ſight was like a ſword through her heart: So, when you ſee Chriſt pierced in the ſacrament, it ſhould be like a ſword or dagger in your hearts. Obſerve what David ſaid, when he ſaw the people ſlaughtered by the angel's ſword, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. *Lo, I have ſinned, and I have done wickedly; but as for theſe ſheep, what have they done?* So ſay you at this time, *Lord, I have ſinned, I have done wickedly; but as for this innocent ſpotleſs Lamb, what hath he done?* It is I that have ſinned, but it is thou, O Lord Jeſus, that haſt ſuffered. It was my curſed luſts, my unbelief, my pride, my malice, my covetouſneſs, *&c.* Theſe were the Judaſes that betrayed thee, theſe the Jews that put thee to death; I have eaten the ſour grapes, but thy teeth were ſet on edge. O what a ſweet temper were it to behold Chriſt with a weeping eye and melting heart! Oh, ſhall we not ſo much as ſhed tears for theſe ſins, for which we ſee Chriſt ſhedding his blood?

It was laid to the charge of theſe unkind huſbands, Mal. ii. 13. that by their unkindneſſes they cauſed their wives, when they ſhould have been cheerful in God's ſervice, to "cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with crying out; inſomuch that he regarded not the offering any more, nor received it with good-will at their hands." But, how happy were it for us, if we could be ſo affected with our unkindneſs to Chriſt our huſband, that we could cover the Lord's table with our tears, with weeping and crying out? Then ſurely, in this caſe, the Lord would regard our ſervice the more, and receive our communicating with good-will at our hands. Ah, rocky hearts! harder than the nether-milſtone, that cannot diſſolve into tears at the ſight of ſo ſad a ſpectacle as the ſight of Chriſt hanging crucified on the croſs for our ſins. Oh, ſhall we ſee Chriſt's precious blood ſpilt on the earth, running on the ground, and the ground drinking it up, and our hearts not rend therefore? O let us call for tears, for mourning hearts, and ſay, "O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep for a ſlain Lord!" Smite, Lord; thou canſt bring water out of the rocks and turn the flint into a ſtanding pool. O that my flinty heart may be touched by the Spirit of God, that the waters may guſh out abundantly! Oh, when will my heart melt, if not now? Surely now, *Deep calleth unto deep, deep ſufferings* in Chriſt for *deep ſorrow* in me. David's kindneſs made even a Saul lift up his voice and weep; and, will not Chriſt's kindneſs, which is infinitely greater make me drop ſome ſilent tears? Was my Saviour's body broken to let his blood out; and, ſhall not my heart be broken to let it in? May I now receive a bleeding Saviour with a broken heart!

III. Love is a grace moſt neceſſary at this feaſt, Chriſt's infinite love ſhould now have a return of love from you; ſurely now, when you are muſing on Chriſt's love, your heart, like David's, ſhould burn. O believer, Chriſt died of love to you; and, will you not be ſo much as ſick of love to him? It would be a ſweet and comfortable ſickneſs to you to be ſick of love to him, who died of love to you. You are now come to the fountain of love, you are now to be at Chriſt's pierced ſide, O look in and ſee his bleeding heart; ſee how it beats and pants with love, and ſee how love flows out in ſtreams of blood, to cleanſe you from your ſins. And, will not this lovely ſight melt your affections, and warm your cold heart to love him? O behold princely Jeſus, the world's Saviour, our lovely Bridegroom, mounted on a bloody croſs upon the top of mount Calvary, for all nations to ſee him and flock to him: O what an engaging ſight is this! Since that mount was firſt created, it never produced ſuch a tree, or ſuch precious fruit as the Lord of glory hanging on the tree of the croſs planted there. This tree of life made mount Calvary a lovely paradiſe that day, notwithſtanding of all the malefactors bones which lay ſcattered upon it.

Now, communicants, can you look upon ſuch a ſight, and not have your hearts inflamed with love? Surely a crucified Jeſus lift upon the croſs, with his arms ſtretched out to embrace loſt ſinners, is the moſt drawing and attractive ſight in the world; for he ſaith himſelf, John xii. 32. *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me, i. e.* all ſorts of men, both Jew and Gentile. A crucified Jeſus is a loadſtone of ſtrange virtue, and hath drawn ſome thouſands of iron hearts to him at one ſermon. Now he is lift on high, upon the pole of the croſs, and of the ſacrament, that you may look to him. Yea, his face and eyes are towards you; O look communicants; and his voice is, *Behold me, behold me: Look unto me and be ye ſaved all ye ends of the earth.* Poor ſinners of Scotland, of Britain, one of the far off iſlands and outmoſt end of the earth; I have turned my back on the Jews, for they will not be drawn to me; and my face towards you, that you may ſee me and may flock to me.

O will not your hearts be moved and drawn by this lovely ſight of a crucified Redeemer, dying with love in his heart, and ſmiles in his looks towards you? He was moſt lovely when he was on the croſs; and now he is moſt lovely when he is on the throne. O behold King Jeſus with the crown of thorns, wherewith his enemies crowned him, in the day he was a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief for you: Doth not that ſight affect your hearts with grief, and make you ſad? Then come behold king Solomon with the crown of glory, wherewith his Father crowned him, when he finiſhed his work, and ſat down on the right hand of his Majeſty on high. Now he is clothed with light and ſhines brighter than the ſun: Oh will not your hearts love him, whom all the angels and ſaints in heaven do adore, and are raviſhed with his beauty! His high honour and exaltation above doth not in the leaſt alter his affections, or make him forget his people; no, he loves all believers as dearly as ever. How oft doth he call them in the ſong, *My ſiſter, my ſpouſe!* The neareſt affinity in the world is ſpouſe, and the neareſt conſanguinity is ſiſter, to ſhew that Chriſt's affection is like that of the neareſt relations; and, ſhall not Chriſt's great love be anſwered with love again? O never give Chriſt cauſe to complain of you, as Paul of the Corinthians, *The more I love you, the leſs I am beloved,* 2 Cor. xii. 15.

O then awake and excite your love now to Chriſt, and ſay, "Lord thou art infinitely lovely, tho' my heart loves thee not as it ought to do: Lovely and amiable art thou in all the ſteps of thy humiliation: Lovely in thy birth, lovely in thy life, lovely in thy death: lovely with the crown of thorns on thy head and lovely with the croſs on thy back; lovely in the garden, and lovely on mount Calvary; lovely with the nails in thy hands, and lovely when the ſpear was thruſt in thy ſide. And lovely art thou now with the crown of glory on thy head; nay, thou art altogether lovely." O for more love to my lovely Saviour! The apoſtle when raviſhed with the love of Chriſt, cries out, *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.* O what a cold unnatural heart muſt that be, that hath no love to this only One! O communicant, love him now, when you have ſeen ſuch an engaging ſight of his love: Love him dearly, love him intirely, love him above all, love him more than all. And if you love him, then keep his commandments, delight to pleaſe him, love his ordinances, love his Spirit, love his commands, love his people, and love his very croſs for his ſake.

IV. At this time you ought to awake and excite your ſpiritual appetite after Chriſt and the benefits of his death. You are come to a full feaſt, an inexhauſtible treaſure, and the Maſter of it allows you to partake thereof to the full? There is nothing wanting then but a lively feeling of wants, and ſpiritual hunger; had you this, all would be well; for Chriſt fills the hungry with good things. If there be any poor drooping communicants at the table, who are diſcouraged under a ſenſe of their poverty and emptineſs, I may ſay to them as Jacob to his drooping ſons in a time of great ſcarcity of food, Gen. xlii. 12. *Why do ye look upon one another?* Ye are poor melancholly creatures, all involved in the ſame calamity and diſtreſs; ye may well look to one another, but one of you cannot help another. Well, I have good news to tell you, as Jacob told his ſons; "Behold I have heard there is corn in Egypt," there is bread enough in your Father's houſe, ſufficiency of grace in Chriſt Jeſus for all your wants. O drooping communicant, take heart, and haſten to your brother Joſeph; your elder brother Chriſt is Lord of the country, and hath the command of all the ſtore-houſes in the land; he will fill your ſacks as much as one can carry. Are thy wants many? He has infinite wealth. Haſt thou no money to buy, no worth to purchaſe? Good news! He ſells *without money and without price: Whoſoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely.* Poor ſoul, cameſt thou hither for bread? Thy gracious Saviour will not give thee a ſtone. He took notice of thy ſerious preparation for the feaſt; and, do you think he will fruſtrate thine expectation at it? Can you give any inſtances, that ever he ſent any hungry ſoul empty away? No; this would be contrary to his faithful promiſe. I may ſay to thee, as the diſciples ſaid to the blind man, *Be of good cheer, he calleth for thee;* and, if he call for thee, he will not ſend thee empty away. Come away then, hungry ſoul, to a full Redeemer, and get all your wants ſupplied, your deſires ſatisfied. What would you have? *What is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt?* Would you have riches, honours, profits, pleaſures? You have them all here. Would you have all your five ſenſes ſatisfied at once? Come partake of the feaſt your Redeemer hath provided for you. Would you have your ſenſe of ſeeing ſatisfied? Then ſays he, look unto me, behold me, your dying yet ever-living Saviour. Would you have your ſenſe of hearing ſatisfied? Then ſaith he, *Incline your ear and hearken to me;* hear the ſweet charming voice of your Saviour on the croſs, ſaying, *It is finiſhed.* Would you have your ſenſe of taſting ſatisfied ? Then ſaith he, *O taſte and ſee that God is good.* Would you have the ſenſe of touching ſatisfied ? O then ſays he, *Reach hither thy finger, and feel the print of the nails ; reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide.* Would you have the ſenſe of ſmelling ſatisfied ? Then come to him, *Whoſe garments ſmell of myrrh, aloes and caſſia ;* and whoſe *Name is like ointment poured forth.* O what a matchleſs perſon is this, that can ſo richly ſupply all your needs ? I tell you again, if you go away without ſupply, it will be for want of a lively ſenſe of your needs, and of panting deſires after Chriſt and his fulneſs.

Awake holy deſires and thirſtings of ſoul, and ſay, Lord, *Let not the needy be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor periſh for ever.* Let not a thirſty ſoul periſh at the wells of ſalvation. O happy were I, if at this time I could get a ſealing pardon of my ſins ! *O bleſſed is he whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered !* Lord, whatever thou deny me in the world, do not deny me this choice bleſſing. O for a token for good at this time of Chriſt's own hand ! May I receive a plentiful effuſion of the graces of his Spirit into my heart. O that my luſts and corruptions may be mortified and ſubdued ! May I be enabled to do all my duties better than I have done. May I be more watchful over my heart, my tongue, and all my ways, than ever I have been ; O that my ſoul may depart much better, much revived, comforted and ſtrengthned from this holy ordinance !

V. Awake your thankfulneſs to God at this time for redeeming love ; join with the Pſalmiſt, and ſay, " Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name. Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable gift ; What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his gifts and benefits unto me ? Let me ſpeak of the glorious honour of his Majeſty, and declare his wondrous works." You ſhould now be in Mary's frame to ſing and ſay, as in Luke i. 46. *My ſoul doth magnify the Lord, and my ſpirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour* : And in Zechariah's frame, to ſay with him, Luke i. 68. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed his people.* The Ancients called the Lord's ſupper ſtill the Euchariſt, *i. e.* the thankſgiving, becauſe the great deſign of it is to keep up the thankful remembrance of God's redeeming love ; and believers in partaking of it ſhould, with their whole ſouls, give thanks, and ſing glory to God in the higheſt. And for our example herein, our Redeemer both began this inſtitution with the giving of thanks, and ſinging hymns of praiſe. The Jews at their paſſover did ſing the cxiii. Pſalm, with the five following pſalms, which they called the great hallelujah. A Chriſtian ſhould in every thing and at all times give thanks ; but at the ſacrament the great hallelujah muſt be ſung. If ever the heart be tuned for the work of praiſe, it ſhould be now ; for greater matter for it you cannot have on this ſide of heaven than at this occaſion. The great exhortation the Ancients gave at the communion table was, *Surſum corda,* up with your hearts, communicants ; elevate them to God in thankfulneſs and praiſe. Invite the angels and the whole creation to help you to bleſs God for Jeſus Chriſt the mercy of mercies.

Some further Meditations on the Sacramental Elements, Actions and Words.

BEſides what I have ſaid, the ſacramental elements, actions and words may afford ſuitable ſubject of meditation to communicants while they ſit at the Lord's table, and may be improven for the quickning and upſtirring of the ſacramental graces above mentioned. And here I ſhall give ſome few inſtances for the aſſiſtance and direction of weaker Chriſtians.

When you ſee the elements of bread and wine ſet upon the table, think on Chriſt's goodneſs and condeſcenſion in appointing theſe outward ſigns to confirm your faith and excite your affections : They are not coſtly things, Chriſt would not be burdenſome to his people with any of his ordinances. Think how fitly they repreſent the body and blood of our Redeemer. Bread, ere it be fit to nouriſh us, muſt be firſt ſown and die in the earth ; then it muſt be threſhen, grinded in the mill, baken in the oven, broken and eaten : So Chriſt, that he might be a fit Saviour to us, was content to die, and be bruiſed for our ſins, ſcorched in the oven of his Father's wrath. Bread is the moſt neceſſary thing in the world, it ſtrengthens man's heart, it is the ſtaff that upholds his life : So Chriſt is the mercy of mercies, the moſt uſeful and neceſſary bleſſing to our ſtarving ſouls. Wine, ere it be fit for our uſe, muſt be ſqueezed out of the grape, and this muſt be troden and bruiſed in the wine-preſs : So Chriſt was cruſhed in the wine preſs of his Father's wrath, till the bleſt juice of his body, his precious blood, did guſh out in abundance for the redemption of our ſouls. No liquour ſo fit as wine for cheering the fainting ſpirits, Pſal. civ. 15. ſo there is nothing can refreſh the drooping ſoul ſo much as the blood of Chriſt.

Tho' bread and wine be common things of themſelves, yet they are highly valuable in reſpect of their ſignificancy and ends. A little wax, tho' in itſelf of ſmall value, yet, when affixed to a charter, it ſerves to confirm our right and title to a great inheritance ; So theſe elements, when conſecrated and given to us by Chriſt's ambaſſadors, are to us a ſeal of God's covenant, and confirm our title to all Chriſt's purchaſe.

When we ſee the miniſter take the bread, think how God did chuſe and take Chriſt from among men to be our Mediator, and a ſacrifice for our ſins.

When the miniſter ſets apart, bleſſes and conſecrates the bread, think how God ſet apart and ſent his Son, ſanctified and furniſhed with all gifts and graces needful to his mediatory office.

When you ſee the conſecrated bread and wine expoſed to open view, think how God in his infinite mercy *hath ſet forth Jeſus Chriſt as a propitiation thro' faith in his blood,* Rom. iii. 25. Behold how *evidently Chriſt crucified is ſet forth before your eyes.* Behold the lamb opening the ſeals, the ſeal of God's covenant, the ſeal of God's treaſures, the ſeal of the fountain of life, and the ſeal of heaven's gates ; all which were ſhut before, till Chriſt came to open them. Suppoſe now you hear that voice, Rev. vi. *Come and ſee.* Open the eyes of faith, and ſee a great ſight. What is to be ſeen here ? You may, O communicant, ſee here the heinous nature of ſin, the ſeverity of divine juſtice, the miſery of the damned, the deſervings of believers : You may ſee the devil conquered, juſtice ſatisfied, a flame of love kindled in Chriſt's heart that many waters could not quench: You may ſee the clefts of the rock opened, and a ſanctuary found out : You may ſee the preciouſneſs of ſouls, the price of pardon, and the worth of heaven. Chriſt's body and blood, which were given for them, do ſhew that they are things of no ſmall value.

When you ſee the elements, you have cauſe to bleſs God, and rejoice at the ſight of this precious ſign and ſeal of God's covenant of grace and ſalvation. We ſhould rejoice to ſee the rainbow in the clouds, a ſign of God's covenant, and promiſe to ſecure the world againſt a deſtroying deluge: Much more ſhould we joy to ſee the ſign of God's confirming his covenant with believers, ſecuring them againſt the overflowing of God's wrath. If it ſtill rained, and never a rainbow appeared, we might have reaſon to fear: So, if we never ſaw this ordinance and ſeal of God's covenant, we might ſuſpect danger; But, O believer, you ſee God is faithful and willing to keep covenant, there is the rainbow appearing; a pleaſant ſight to a guilty ſinner!

When you ſee the miniſter lay his hand on the bread, lift up your ſoul and pray, "That God may lay his hand on your diſeaſed ſoul, that all your diſtempers may depart from you: Lord, lay hold on my ſoul, as the angel did upon Lot; ſave me from the flames of wrath, cauſe me to eſcape out of Sodom into the mount of God, and clefts of the rock, that I periſh not."

When you ſee the bread broken, think on the breaking and tormenting of Chriſt's body, and the bruiſing of his ſoul for our ſins. He ſuffered a double death, one in his ſoul, and another in his body; he ſuffered from men and devils: But all that was nothing to what he ſuffered from his Father; for, when men were wounding his body the Father's hand bruiſed his ſoul, made a thouſand wounds therein, and poured in a whole ocean of wrath upon him: he brake him with breach upon breach, and overwhelmed him with one wave upon the back of another till all his billows went over him. This was a ſad time to our Saviour; yet all theſe floods could not drown his love to us, nor make him quit the grip he had taken of us, but, come of him what will, his poor people muſt not periſh; his love to them flamed higheſt when his ſufferings were greateſt.

You ſhould, at this time, deſire to be in the ſame frame, as if you had been at Golgotha ſtanding at the foot of the croſs, and had ſeen the blood trickling down, and heard all the dying grones of the Lamb of God. O ſhall we ſee the bleſſed Son of God, the brightneſs of his Father's glory, with his eyes dim, his cheeks wan, his face pale, his head bowing, his heart fainting, his ſide bleeding, his wounds open to ſhelter us, and his love ſtreaming forth with his blood to us; I ſay, ſhall we ſee all this, and our affections not raiſed, our love not kindled, and our hearts not concerned! O what a monſtrous thing will it be, to ſee our affections and graces at the loweſt ebb, when there is a high ſtream tide of the love and blood of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt flowing towards us!

Take a view of Jeſus on the croſs breathing forth love to us, when he was breathing forth his laſt: Let us look ſtreightly and ſtedfaſtly to him, as he did to us. Many write, that he was crucified with his face toward the weſt: The Jews did it out of deſpite, as reckoning him unworthy to look on the temple and holy city that ſtood on the eaſt ſide of mount Calvary; but he had a gracious meaning and deſign to us thereby, and now was that word remarkably fulfilled, Pſal. lxvi. 7. *His eyes behold the nations*: For now his eyes looked to us Gentiles, when he was upon the croſs; and O it was an eye of love and pity he caſt then upon us: And ſhall not this encourage us to lift up an eye of faith to him upon the croſs for healing and ſalvation? Eſpecially ſeeing he calls us to do it, Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth.* And it is to be obſerved, that Chriſt in this call hath a ſpecial eye to us in Scotland, who were then Gentiles, and are likewiſe among the ends of the earth. O ſhall we in this land and corner of the world have ſuch a loving invitation to look to a crucified Saviour for mercy, and will we neglect it? Behold his arms ſtretched out to embrace you, and will you not deſire to flee into them? Behold him bowing his head on the croſs, to take a view of your wounds, and whiſper comfort into your ears: Behold him opening a window in his ſide to take you into his heart, and pouring out blood thence to redeem you, and water to cleanſe you, a fountain both for your juſtification and ſanctification.

Again, when you ſee the bread broken, look to Chriſt's wounds as an open city of refuge for thy ſoul that is purſued by juſtice to take ſanctuary in: His wounds are laid open, that you may ſee into his bleeding heart, and ſee his yearning bowels of mercy, and hear them ſounding towards you, an object of pity and ſpectacle of miſery. Poor ſhelterleſs ſoul, quit all other ſhelters, and flee to the clefts of the rock here opened, ſaying, *This is my reſt, and here I will ſtay.*

Pray at this time, *Lord may my hard heart be broken and melted that I may in ſome meaſure be conformed to my broken Saviour.* Or, *Lord, break the united forces of my ſins, and ſcatter them by thy mighty arm.*

When you ſee the miniſter offering the bread to the communicants, and hear him ſaying, *Take ye, eat ye,* &c. think how freely God offers his Son, and he offers himſelf to be ours: Think how you ſee him at the head of the table, making offer of himſelf to you, ſaying, *Take me and the whole purchaſe of my blood; take my ſealed teſtament, and all the legacies in it; take a ſealed pardon of all your ſins, and a ſealed right to eternal life.*

When you receive the bread into your hand, ſee that you ſtretch forth the hand of faith to receive and embrace Chriſt crucified, as your bleeding high-prieſt to make atonement for you; ſay with your heart, *Content Lord, even ſo I take thee, and ſeal a covenant with thee, I claſp about thee as mine;* I believe, Lord help my unbelief. If Chriſt be not received by faith in this ordinance, there is nothing done but what is ill. O will you come to this table and receive the bread of the Lord, and not receive the bread, the Lord? O it will be ſad, it will be bitter at death or judgment; when you come to die, you will cry, *Lord, receive my ſoul:* Well, may not Chriſt anſwer you, "I will juſt receive your ſoul as you received my body in the ſacrament, when you was intreated, and that was not at all?" O then conſider what Chriſt has done for you, and the abſolute neceſſity you ſtand in of him, and receive him into your ſouls. O will ye not accept of a bruiſed Lord, a bruiſed friend, when he is knocking with the croſs on his back, the nails in his hands, and ſpear in his ſide! Can you find in your hearts to hold him at the door, in this poſture? Will you not open your hearts to him, who opened his ſide to you?

When you are making uſe of this bread, praiſe and magnify God for providing this heavenly manna, to keep your ſoul from periſhing: Bleſs him for this feaſt, and feed on it that you may live; Apply Chriſt and his benefits for the nouriſhing your ſouls, and ſtrengthening your graces: Bleſs him for this noble contrivance and undertaking. Rejoice in Chriſt, that hath found out a way by his death to reconcile an angry God to you, and procure you acceſs to his table, that you may feaſt with him. With what joy and thankfulneſs did the Iſraelites go forth to gather manna; that bread which God ſent them from heaven; But O here is better manna come from heaven: Will ye not be thankful for it, and run with deſire to get it? The Iſraelites manna could not give life to the dead; but here is manna that can reſtore and preſerve life both, yea, give everlaſting life to both ſoul and body. The Iſraelites manna fell not on the ſabbath, and they might not go to gather it that day: But, bleſſed be God, this manna falls every day, and double on the ſabbath, and welcome are ye to gather it this day; for Chriſt now rains it in greater plenty, and calls you to be more diligent in gathering it than on other days. His table is well furniſhed with manna this day; O feed and refreſh your ſouls well before you leave it, and ſtrive to preſerve the reliſh of it when you are gone. Cry now with theſe, John vi. 34. *Lord evermore give us this bread.* This bread both ſatisfies the ſoul, and creates an appetite; O for a perpetual hunger for it! It is the ſame bread the glorified ſaints do feed on for evermore: In heaven they never lothe this manna, nor weary of it, as the Iſraelites did of theirs. It is but a ſmall crumb, O communicants, you get of it here, to that eternal feaſt provided above.

Again, bread in ſcripture is called, the ſtaff of bread. O this is the true ſtaff of bread; here bread, if eaten, by faith, that will prove a ſtaff to ſupport you, a ſtaff to defend you, a ſtaff to beat your enemies, and put all your luſts to flight: This is a ſtaff that will enable you to run in God's ways, *and fight the armies of the aliens.*— That is a ſtrange dream that one of the Midianitiſh hoſt had, when Gidion was coming upon them, Judg. vii. 13. *Behold, a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the hoſt of Midian, and ſmote a tent,* &c. Strange! a piece of bread overturned a tent. Lo, that dream is interprete in this ſacrament: Here a piece of bread, O communicant, if eaten by faith, that will tumble into the hoſt of Satan and thy luſts theſe Midianites which have long vexed you with their wiles, ſtrike down their tents, and put them all to flight. Surely a view here, by faith of Chriſt's body pierced and nailed by ſin, will turn a believer's heart againſt ſin, as the moſt hateful thing in the world: Let ſin flatter as it will, he will never forget what it hath done to his dear Saviour. This is both quickning and killing bread; for, as it is life to your ſouls, ſo it is poiſon to your luſts.

When you ſee the wine poured out, think how freely and willingly Chriſt ſuffered for you. He poured out his blood as freely as the wine is poured out to you; yea, it is ſaid, Iſa. liii. 12. *He poured out his ſoul unto death,* as freely as we pour water out of a veſſel. He had freely emptied his veins in the garden and on the croſs; every pore became an eye to weep blood for your ſakes: He is wounded over all, that his blood may run the more plentifully and freely; and, when he hath no more blood to pour out, he next pours out his ſoul for you: And, would you have any more from your loving Saviour? O did he pour out his ſoul unto death, and will you not pour out your ſouls into his boſom!

Again, when you ſee it, by faith behold the wells of ſalvation now opened, the ſtone rolled away, and the fountain of the water of life running freely, and following poor ſinners. O run not away from it, but turn to it; drink, and live for evermore. O ſhall the fountain of life be opened, and the mouths of your ſouls faſt ſhut! Can you ſee Chriſt's blood running, and not deſire to be bathed with it? Haſt thou blind eyes or weak feet, weak hands or feeble knees, a cold or hard heart, a fear'd or doubting ſoul? Here a cure for all thy diſeaſes. Thou art now at the ſide of the pool juſt at the healing waters one ſtep will bring you to them: Look to Chriſt for ſtrength, ſtir up your ſouls, ſtep in, drink, bathe, and be made whole for ever.

When you drink the cup, remember the precious blood of Chriſt; eye it by faith, plead it with God, and apply it to your ſouls: Thirſtily drink it by the mouth of faith: Say, "I am an unrighteous creature, but here is juſtifying blood; my heart is polluted, but here is ſanctifying blood; my ſoul is wounded, but here is healing blood: My luſts are ſtrong and lively, but here is mortifying blood; my heart is very dead, but here is quickning blood; It is very hard, but here is ſoftning blood: O ſhall not a drop of this blood light on my hard heart? O let me not miſs a cure, when the balm of Gilead is among my hands! This blood healed thouſands, and ſhall my plagues continue? Lord, may that innocent blood, that dropt from thy hand and ſide, waſh away all the ſpots and ſtains of my guilty ſoul."

As you find the wine warm on your cold ſtomach, ſo let the love and blood of Chriſt warm your cold heart and affections with vehement love and deſire to him. Shall Chriſt's heart be hot as fire to you, and will yours be cold as ice to him? Can you feel his warm and bleeding heart, and not cry out with Thomas, *My Lord and my God?* How ſhall I expreſs my love to my loving and lovely Jeſus who loved me and gave himſelf for me? How dearly, Lord, haſt thou puchaſed my love, unworthy as it is? What hath the world or ſin to do with that which Chriſt hath bought ſo dear? O for a heart ready to burſt with love to him that is only worthy to be the object of it! O for a live coal from God's altar to kindle the flame, that many waters might not quench! Worſe am I than a beaſt if I be not raviſhed with Chriſt's matchleſs love.

When you ſee the elements divided and diſtributed among the communicants, believe it, that Chriſt is really, though inviſible, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and ſufferings to the worthy receivers.

When you ſee both the bread and the wine given, think that God is offering and giving Chriſt, and all Chriſt's unto us; and we muſt be willing to take Chriſt and all that is in him, all his benefits, all his offices, all his laws, and all his croſs he thinks fit to lay on us.

When the bread and wine are offered to you, and you hear Chriſt ſaying, *Take, eat, drink;* O then caſt open all the doors and gates of your ſoul, that *the King of glory may enter in*: Say, "Come in thou bleſſed of " the Lord; wherefore ſtandeſt thou without? As I " receive the bread of the Lord into my mouth, let me " receive the bread, the Lord into my ſoul. Lord, it " was my errand to receive thee into my heart, let me " not go without thee." Stir up faith mightily, to receive Chriſt and all his benefits. Stretch out faith's arms as far and as wide as you may, to welcome, embrace and claſp about your Saviour, and ſay, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*: Now may the marriage be ſealed and ratified, and the knot caſt which ſhall never be looſed again: And happy, happy for ever is my choice, rich is my portion, my ſoul is made up to all eternity.

When you are eating and drinking the bread and wine, let your ſoul be buſy making cloſe and particular application by faith of Chriſt and all his benefits, according to your various neceſſities. And conſider, that as by eating and drinking your food incorporates with your bodies, and turns one with you; ſo Chriſt by faith is myſtically united to you, and you are made one with Chriſt: As the broken bread enters into your body, and becomes yours by feeding upon it; ſo you are to believe, that as truly Chriſt's broken body, and the purchaſe of his blood, are applied to you for curing and ſaving your ſoul, and that all his merits and graces are yours by faith; *This is my body that was broken for you.* Again, as eating and drinking of proper food is very pleaſant to our bodies, ſo we ought to take great ſatisfaction and complacency in partaking of Chriſt and his benefits. Let us ſatiate ourſelves, in taſting of his goodneſs, and feaſting on his heavenly dainties. And as by our earthly food our bodies are ſtrengthned for labour, ſo by this ſpiritual food our ſouls and our graces are nouriſhed and ſtrengthned for the duties of religion.

Again, you are to look upon theſe ſacramental actions, as a mutual giving and taking ſaſine and infeftment betwixt Chriſt and your ſouls. Hereby you get infeftment of a crucified Chriſt, his great purchaſe and glorious inheritance; and hereby Chriſt takes infeftment of your ſoul and body, to be his children, his heirs, his ſervants and ſoldiers, to obey him and fight for him while you live. You are hereby conſecrate to be temples for his ſervice and reſidence; beware of defiling the temple of the Lord, ſuffer not a herd of ſwiniſh luſts to enter therein, leſt God abhor you and caſt you off for ever.

When you here theſe words of the inſtitution, *This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood: This do in remembrance of me*: Conſider why it is called a Teſtament; it is becauſe in his ordinance we have Chriſt's teſtament and latter will ſealed, wherein he leaves many a rich legacy to his poor friends: And here he gives a ſealed copy of his teſtament into every one of their hands.

Queſt. *What are the legacies he leaves?*

Anſ. Pardon, peace, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, redemption, grace and glory.

Queſt. *But, how ſhall I know if I have any intereſt herein?*

Anſ. Are you one of Chriſt's poor relations? Can you claim any ſibneſs to him by faith and regeneration? Then your name is in Chriſt's Teſtament.

Queſt. *But, how ſhall I be ſure that the Teſtament is in force, and will be execute?*

Anſ. It is become of force by the death of the Teſtator, who died, and left his Teſtament in the hands of the bleſſed Spirit to be executor of it, and to apply it to thoſe the Teſtator appointed: Yea, (bleſſed be God) the Teſtator is riſen again, and lives to ſee the execution of it himſelf likewiſe.

Queſt. *But, will I get all Chriſt's purchaſe and legacies juſt now?*

Anſ. You ſhall be infeft, and have your right ſecured to all this great eſtate left by Chriſt's will to you; and out of it you ſhall have a preſent maintenance, till the time appointed come, when you ſhall enter into the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance. You are but minors yet, and not fit to be intruſted with it; but it is ſecured in good hands for you, till you come to full age. In the mean time, you hear the dying Teſtator leaves a charge upon you to *do this in remembrance of him*; Think on him and his love to you; think what he has contrived what he has promiſed, what he has done, what he is ſtill doing, and what he is about to do for you: Remember him who remembered you in your loweſt eſtate, and is ſtill remembring you: Remember him that is coming again quickly in the clouds, to meet you, and take you home to his palace, and put you in poſſeſſion of all. He commands you to ſhew his death till he come again.

When you hear of his coming again, conſider what a glorious coming and glad meeting that will be. O believer, you now ſee Chriſt only through theſe elements by an eye of faith, but then you ſhall ſee him by an eye of immediate viſion, you ſhall ſee him even as he is; and O how mightily ſurprized will you be at the ſight! You will ſay as the Queen of Sheba ſaid of Solomon, The half was not told me when I was in my own country; but, *Behold a greater than Solomon is here.*

Before you riſe from the table you may think on Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and cruſe of water in the ſtrength of which meat he went forty days and forty nights till he came to Horeb, the mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 6. 8. Think how much more ſubſtantial, durable and nouriſhing the food is that thou haſt been partaking of, and bleſs God for it. Elijah is twice there wakned to take a double meal; and ſo ought you to rouſe up and provoke your ſpiritual appetite to take another morſel ere you go; you ſhould feed plentifully at Chriſt's table. It is a virtue to be a holy glutton at this feaſt: You know not if ever you get another feaſt like this, till you come to the mount of God above; this may be your laſt communion here, and the laſt time you ſhall drink of the fruit of the vine in this manner; take a large fill to ſtrengthen your ſoul for your journey, you know not what blaſts and ſtorms may blow by the way: You have a ſiege to hold out, take in proviſions here; you have a voyage to go, ſee that you victual your ſhip: Death will try and put all your graces to it. The wiſeſt virgins have no grace to ſpare at the coming of the Bridegroom: What ſtorms of temptations and difficulties do many poor ſaints meet with on a death-bed? It is with much ado they put ſafe into the harbour at laſt: O then gather manna while it is falling, for your gathering time may be loſt.

Conſider, that, while you are at the table, you are near Chriſt your Phyſician; therefore be ſenſible of your maladies and look up to him with your finger on your ſore, and cry with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xli. 4. *Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee.* Now the balm of Gilead is among my hands, and it will be ſad if I ſhould miſs a cure. The blood of Chriſt, that hath healed thouſands, is now at hand; Oh let not my plagues continue with me. O let a drop of that precious blood light on my cold heart, that ſome heat, life and ſoftneſs may be forgot and preſerved therein.

You are come to Chriſt on a good day, when he is on a throne of grace with a ſceptre of mercy in his hand; ſee that you make all your wants known to him. A feaſting time is a time of granting requeſts; *What is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt,* Queen *Eſther?* ſaid king Ahaſuerus at the banquet of wine. So ſaid King Jeſus to the worthy communicant at his royal feaſt, *What is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt? What will ye that I ſhall do unto you?* as Chriſt aſked the blind men, Mat. xx. 32. Let your requeſts be theſe of the Pſalmiſt, "Conſider, and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes, leſt I ſleep the ſleep of death, Pſal. xliii. 3. Let my ſoul live, and it ſhall praiſe thee, Pſal. cxix. 175. Purge me with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean; waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter then ſnow, Pſal. li. 7. Reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation, and uphold me with thy free ſpirit." Pſal. li. 12. Or you may put ſome of the Spouſe's petitions at this time, *Draw me, we will run after thee,* Cant. i. 4. "Awake, O north-wind, come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits, Cant. iv. 16. Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or young hart upon the mountains of ſpices." Cant. viii. 14,

O communicant, thou art near to a crucified Chriſt when at the table, as the penitent thief near to him when on the croſs; he got mercy from Chriſt when he ſought it and ſo may you if you ſeek it with the ſame frame of heart. Cry, Lord, look on a poor ſinner at thy table, as thou didſt on him, that hang on the croſs. *Lord, Remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom.* Thy wounds are open now; Lord, ſhelter me in them. Thy blood is running freſh: O bathe my diſeaſed ſoul in this fountain, that I may be whole for ever. So much for the ſecond head of directions. I now proceed to the third head.

CHAP. III.

Concerning a communicant's behaviour after partaking, and when the Communion ſabbath is over.

IN diſcourſing this head, I propoſe to do theſe following things: 1. To give ſome directions concerning your deportment when riſing and going from the Lord's table. 2. Concerning your carriage when you go home to your cloſets and retiring places. 3. Concerning your behaviour and converſation in the world when all the work is over.

SECT. I. *Containing directions concerning your deportment when riſing and going from the Lord's Table.*

BElievers are ſometimes ready to ſay, *It is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles,* and dwell ſtill. But this table, tho' it be ſatisfying, it is not laſting; tho' the meal be ſweet, it is ſhort. All things here below are tranſitory, and communions are paſſing things with the reſt. You muſt riſe and go down from the mount, and return to the world, and travel in the wilderneſs again. Oh, may the believer ſay, "And muſt I riſe, and go back to that unſatisfying and ſoul ſtarving world again? What ſhall I do there, if my Redeemer go not alongſt with me? Lord, take me by the hand, lead me, uphold me, and be thou ſtill with me; and at laſt bring me to that endleſs feaſt thou haſt prepared for thy people above, where I may ever ly in thy boſom, under the uninterrupted beams of thy ſmiling and cheering countenance, and for ever feed my hungry ſoul on thy bleſſed ſelf, without the help of ſymbols or ſacraments, and where the gueſts will be never called to riſe from that glorious table any more."

Queſt. *What is that frame and diſpoſition of ſoul that we ſhould have in riſing and going from the Lord's table?*

Anſ. With reſpect to that obſerve the following directions.

You ought to riſe and go from the table,

I. In a wondring and admiring frame. Continue to wonder at the love of God in giving his beloved Son to die a curſed death for us. Tho' he loved him moſt dearly, yet he wounded him moſt deeply, that his precious blood might ſtream forth and ſave us. Hence it is ſaid, Iſa. liii 10. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him. Junius* reads it, *Valde delectus eſt,* i.e. He was exceedingly delighted in it. Strange! other parents, whoſe love to their children is nothing in compariſon of the Father's love to Chriſt, do follow their children to their graves with many tears, eſpecially when they die violent deaths: But the infinite God delighteth in the painful and bloody death of his only Son, becauſe it tended to the ſalvation of believers; He willingly gave his own dear Son, to die a ſhamful curſed death, that you might live a glorious bleſſed life for ever. O what manner of love is this! And what art thou, O believer, that thou ſhouldſt be the object of this love more than others? By nature thou art mean as the worm, vile as the mire, black as hell, and a child of wrath even as others: And thou hadſt now been wallowing in ſin with the worſt of the world, if free grace had not renewed thee; nay, thou hadſt been roring in hell at this hour if free grace had not reprived thee. Look about thee, and ſee others refuſed when thou art choſen, others polluted when thou art ſanctified, others put off with common gifts when thou haſt ſpecial grace. Tho' you and they perhaps ſat together in the ſame deſk hearing the word, or at the ſame table receiving the ſacrament; yet free grace came and made the difference, *One is taken, and the other left.* Here is matter for your admiration.

The conſideration of this free love and diſtinguiſhing mercy of God ſhould make thee ſay with David, "Lord, what am I, and what is my houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto? What is man, that thou art mindful of him: and, what am I, the worſt of men, that thou ſhouldſt be thus mindful of me?" O how did Mephiboſheth admire David's kindneſs, when he ſpake familiarly with him, and ſaid, *Thou ſhalt eat bread at my table continually?* 2 Sam. ix. 7. Obſerve his anſwer, ver. 8. *What is thy ſervant that thou ſhouldſt look upon ſuch a dead dog as I am?* But ſurely, O believer, thou haſt much more reaſon to ſay ſo, and wonder that ſuch a mean creature ſhould be ſet at the table of the great God, and honoured to feaſt with himſelf. Lord, what am I that thou ſhouldſt have noticed the like of me? Better deſerved I to have been howling among the dogs without the door than to be let in and feaſted among thy friends; I better deſerved to have been roaring in hell with devils, than to be ſet at thy table to rejoice with thy children. Lord, when thou waſt pleaſed to look on me with an eye of pity, and embrace me in the arms of thy tender mercy; thou mightſt juſtly have ſpurned my guilty ſoul into hell, ſaying, *Depart from me, I know you not.* What a wonder of mercy is it, that I who have forfeited all mercies, and deſerved ſuch a ſentence as that in Jer. ix. 15. to be fed with wormwood, and to have water of gall to drink, ſhould nevertheleſs have the fleſh of the Son of God given me to be my meat, and his blood to be my drink? The Lord Jeſus might juſtly have ſaid unto me, as in Zech. xi. 9. "I will not feed you: That which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off." But, O how tender are his bowels, how compaſſionate his heart! Rather than my ſoul ſhould ſtarve, he is content to be ſlain that his fleſh might become my food.

II. Riſe and go from the table in a thankful and praiſing frame. Thankfulneſs well becomes this euchariſtical feaſt, which is mainly deſigned as a thankſgiving to God for redeeming love. On this occaſion you ought to "bleſs God in the congregation, even the Lord from the fountain of Iſrael." Pſal. lxviii. 26. Now you ſhould ſtir up your ſouls and all that is within you to bleſs his holy name, with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. ciii. 1. 2. 3. *Now you ſhould with the angels ſing,* Glory to God in the higheſt, that there is on earth peace, and goodwill towards men, Luke ii. 14. *Now you ſhould with John ſing praiſe to him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood,* Rev. i. 15.

Oh, may the worthy communicant ſay, How ſhall I mention the loving kindneſs and praiſes of the Lord, according to the multitude of his loving-kindneſſes, and according to all he hath beſtowed on me, and his great goodneſs to the houſe of Iſrael? O that I could proclaim thy love to all the world, and make the whole earth ring with thy praiſes! O that I could ſing praiſes to him that loved me: To him that made the world, and furniſhed it ſo richly for me to dwell in: To him that made my body ſo wonderfully, and gave me a ſoul ſo capable to ſerve and enjoy him: To him that remembered me in my low eſtate, and laid aſide his glory, took on my nature, and paid my debt on the croſs: To him that ſent his Spirit to quicken me when dead in my ſins, that opened mine eyes, bowed my will, and turned me from darkneſs to light: To him who forgives my iniquities, heals my diſeaſes, redeems my life from deſtruction, and crowns me with loving-kindneſs: To him that hath endured from me many ſlights, put up with many affronts, and waited on me with infinite patience; even "to him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and made us kings and prieſts to God his Father, a note the angels themſelves cannot ſing; and to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy, be glory, majeſty, and dominion, now and for evermore! O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can ſhew forth all his praiſe? Now bleſſed be his glorious name for ever: Let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

And, O believer, remember that you only begin this duty of ſinging praiſe in this world, for eternity itſelf will not end it: Endleſs eternity will be ſhort enough for this glorious work of praiſe. You ought to be acquainting yourſelf much with this work while here, that you be not a ſtranger to it hereafter, Reſolve with David not only to begin it but to perſiſt and hold on in it alſo. Pſal. cxlv. 2. *Every day will I bleſs thee, and I will praiſe thy name for ever and ever;* as if he had ſaid, I'll begin it now, and do it every day while here, in hopes that I will ſpend a whole eternity in it hereafter. Again, he ſays, Pſal. cxlvi. 2. *While I live, I will praiſe the Lord; I will ſing praiſes unto my God, while I have any being.* And when I have no longer being on earth, I hope to have a being in heaven, where I ſhall praiſe him to better purpoſe; and wherein, Lord, I am deficient in thy due praiſe, I will pay it hereafter in everlaſting hallelujahs. O communicant, haſt thou not great ground to praiſe this day, that thou liveſt not among the dark Pagans, that never heard tell of Jeſus Chriſt? That thou art not among the fallen angels, for whom a ſacrifice was never provided? That thou art not among the damned in hell, who are without the reach of mercy, and of hearing the joyful ſound? You have been ſet at a full table, when others ſuffer an everlaſting famine. And, what will you render to the Lord for this diſtinguiſhing love and undeſerved goodneſs? I have good ground to caution you againſt unthankfulneſs, as Moſes did the Iſraelites upon the view of their entry into Canaan, Deut. viii. 10. 11. *When you have eaten and are full, forget not to bleſs God for the good land that he hath given you,* that you have a Goſhen on earth, and the proſpect of a Canaan above: Bleſs God for a ſacrament day, for it is one of the days of heaven: it is a day, you ought highly to prize, and to praiſe God for. They that know the worth of this day could wiſh, with Joſhua, that the ſun ſtood ſtill upon it, that it might be lengthned out, for their enjoying communion with God: But in a ſpecial manner they would wiſh that the *Sun of righteouſneſs* ſtood ſtill this day and ſhined, that with Joſhua, they might get a more full revenge on their enemies, *viz.* their luſts, theſe curſed Canaanites, that remain ſtill in the land.

III. You ought to go from this table in the Eunuch's frame, who after his ſealing a covenant with God, went on his way rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. God's people are frequently in ſcripture called to *rejoice and be glad in the Lord;* and, to be ſure, there is not a more fit ſeaſon for it than now, when he hath been making ſuch a glorious diſcovery of that great love wherewith he loveth them. A man that is condemned for a crime and ready to be execute, O what joy hath he, when he receives his pardon! And ſhould not believers rejoice in God, who here *receive the atonement,* and are, as it were brought again from the gibbet, by the mercy of God in Chriſt?

There are two things you ought to rejoice in; 1. In God. 2. In his ways.

As to the firſt, It is the duty of a covenanted people to rejoice in their covenanted God. With what joy doth Zaccheus entertain Chriſt, when he cloſed a bargain with him? Luke xix. 6. and likewiſe the jaylor, Acts xvi. 34. And to be ſure, whenever the babe of the new man is formed in the ſoul, it will leap for joy. It is moſt reaſonable that Chriſt ſhould have a joyful welcome into the ſoul. God not only commands and preſſes this joy, as in Pſal. v. 11. Joel ii. 23. Phil. iii. 1. and iv. 4. but he affords the greateſt grounds for it. God the Father gives himſelf to us a portion; his Son to be our Saviour; his well ordered covenant as a never-failing ſpring of conſolation; his holy Spirit to be our comforter;

his influences, to blow up this holy flame of joy ; his graces of faith, hope and love to breed and feed it ; his ordinances to maintain and increaſe it ; and particularly the Lord's ſupper is a ſpiritual feaſt inſtituted for cheering the ſoul : For after it, we ſee that Chriſt and his diſciples ſung a hymn.

What ground of joy have believers in their covenanted Redeemer, in his love, in his victories, and in his perſon and natures ? In God incarnate, they may ſee heaven and earth conjoined, God and human nature eternally married together, and themſelves very nearly related to God. O believer, he is *bone of your bone, and fleſh of your fleſh, and has a fellow-feeling of your infirmities* ; and is not this matter of joy ?

What ground of joy have you in the attributes of God, which are all engaged for you, and become yours by covenant ? The thoughts of God may be ſweet to you as the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. civ. 34. The thoughts of God are a terror to the wicked, but every one of his attributes may be a cordial to you, yea, even the moſt terrible of them : His juſtice, that before ſtood with a flaming ſword to keep you out of paradiſe, doth now turn an advocate to plead for your happineſs, 1 John i. 9. Juſtice is come over to your ſide, and pleads for your pardon and diſcharge, ſince Chriſt your ſurety hath paid the debt, and for the crown of glory to you, ſince he hath laid down the price.

His goodneſs and mercy afford you great matter of joy : Why ? for, as he is good, ſo he doth good, and will let his people want nothing that is good for them : He will hear their cry, pity them in danger, and be a ſtrong hold to them in the day of trouble. And, when you meet with mercies and comforts, that you may receive them as tokens of his ſpecial love : They come to you wrapt up in the bowels of Chriſt, and dipt in his blood, and ſo are doubly ſweet. When you get a deliverance from any diſtreſs, you may ſay as Hezekiah, Iſa. xxxviii. 17. *Thou haſt in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of corruption.* O believer, all thy mercies are covenanted to thee, which may make them ſweet to thy taſte : That word in Eccl. ix. 7. belongs to thee, *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart ; for God now accepteth thy works.* Every morſel of bread thou eateſt comes from thy Father's hand, ſweetned in the blood of Chriſt, and is an earneſt of greater and better things laid up for thee.

God's wiſdom and faithfulneſs may rejoice thy heart. He is a ſkilful phyſician, he ponders our caſe, weighs our neceſſity, and knows how to preſcribe ſometimes bitter potions, and ſometimes cheering cordials : He knows how to time our bleſſings and our croſſes alſo. O covenanted ſoul it may be ſweet to thee to think that all thy afflictions as well as mercies, are the fruits of infinite wiſdom and faithfulneſs : Yea thy being within the covenant, alters the nature and property of thy croſſes, and makes them become good and medicinal to thee ; thou art now to look on them as mercies covenanted and promiſed to thee. " When the children tranſgreſs, he will viſit them with the rod.—In faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me, ſaith the Pſalmiſt." O what comfort may this bring thee, when thou conſidereſt that all thy afflictions are an article of the covenant, the effect of God's love, and a fruit of Chriſt's purchaſe ; ſo that you may ſay of every rod you meet with, The Lord ſees I want this, otherwiſe I ſhould not be exerciſed with it : My covenanted God and Father knows that this, and no leſs than this, is needful for me : What am I, that he ſhould be ſo mindful of me ?"

You may rejoice in the almightineſs of God. He hath an arm that is full of power, that can eaſily level your ſpiritual Goliahs, pull down ſatan's ſtrong holds, and make good all his promiſes.

You may rejoice in his immutability. He is unchangeable in his love and in his covenant. Mutable creatures change their reſpects, and break their leagues and covenants : But God's covenant is indiſſolvable ; for he is engaged for our part, as well as his own, Jer. xxxii. 40. O believer, God hath promiſed both for himſelf and thee : As you may further ſee in Heb. xiii. 5. compared with Jer. xxx. 9. and 2 Tim. i. 12. If once in the covenant, thou art always in it ; you may ſing that ſweet ſong, Pſal. xlviii. 14. *For this God is our God for ever and ever : He will be our guide even unto death* ; yea, likewiſe in death, and over death. That which diſſolves the marriage covenant among men, will not diſſolve this : Adultery will not do it ; for God ſaith, " Tho' ye have play'd the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me. —Turn ye backſliding children, for I am married unto you." Death cannot diſſolve it : yea, it brings you nearer to your covenanted God, where you ſhall ever rejoice in his preſence. Tho' death robs worldly men of their poor happineſs, and hungry heaven, yet it doth no harm to you : Nay, when you find death begin to aſſault your tabernacle of clay, you may *lift up your head with joy ; for, behold, the day of your redemption draweth nigh.* You may ſing with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 26. *My fleſh and my heart faileth ; but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* What tho' my eye and my heart-ſtrings be ready to break, and the lamp of my life be like a candle burnt to the ſocket, and near the going out ; yet ſtill God is my God and portion for ever.

Thus Olevian a dying ſaint comforted himſelf ; " My hearing is gone, my ſmelling is gone, and my ſight is going : My ſpeech and feeling are almoſt gone ; but the loving-kindneſs of God ſhall never depart from me. When the worldling's portion is gone, yours remains ſure to you : Loſe what you will, you cannot loſe that. Good cauſe had Habakkuk to ſay,, Hab. iii. 17. 18. *Altho' the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines,* &c. *Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my ſalvation* O believer, the more you view your portion you will find the more ground for your rejoicing therein : For in God you have all things you need; all things you can deſire ; yea, more than *eye hath ſeen, ear heard, or heart can conceive.*

But, *Secondly*, As you ought to go from this ordinance rejoicing in God, ſo likewiſe in the ways of God ; and, like Jehoſhaphat, you ought to have your hearts lift up in the ways of the Lord. Put on holy reſolutions, to proceed with zeal, delight and alacrity in the ways of God's commandments : Your hearts ſhould now be enlarged to run and ſing in his ways, and go about every duty with pleaſure. Stedfaſtly reſiſt every ſin, and eſpecially the ſin that hath moſt eaſily beſet you, your predominant ſin, your beloved idol : Abhor both inward and outward ſins ; flee drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, ſwearing, lying, cheating, ſabbath-breaking, &c. Make religion your main work, and make conſcience of heart-holineſs : ſtudy to live near Chriſt, make uſe of him, and conſtantly depend on him for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. Study to perform the duties both of the firſt and ſecond table: Carefully obſerve family-duties, and ſecret prayer. In a word, go on cheerfully in the ways of piety and devotion, and eſpecially in theſe duties wherein communion and correſpondence with God is to be obtained and kept up. Go on joyfully in the ways of juſtice and honeſty, meekneſs and peace, temperance and ſobriety, charity and beneficence, humility and ſelf-denial; and truſt in your covenanted God, for covenant-ſtrength and furniture for every good word and work.

IV. In going from the Lord's table, you ought to mix your joy and praiſes with a holy fear and trembling: And you have great cauſe for this, when you conſider, 1. Your manifold ſhort comings in this ſolemn approach to God. Surely your ſouls were not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctuary, your preparation was defective in the ſight of God. Have you not cauſe to be aſhamed, that your hearts were not more deeply affected with the great ſights preſented to your view, and the glorious things put in your offer? Have you not ground to be humbled for the coldneſs of your hearts, the waverings of your minds, the deadneſs of your ſpirits, and carnality of your affections when you was about this heavenly and ſpiritual work? Alas for the weakneſs of our graces, the inconſtancy of our frames, and the manifold infirmities which cleave to our beſt performances! Had we no more ſin to anſwer for, but the iniquities of our holy things, they would be too heavy for us to bear. Let us be humbled under the ſenſe of them, and look to our great high-prieſt to make atonement for them.

2. You have cauſe to be humbled and fear, conſidering the manifold dangers you are expoſed to, and enemies you are environed with, who are never more buſy than after a ſacrament and our being admitted to nearneſs with God. Chriſt immediately after his baptiſm, and the ſolemn manifeſtation he had from heaven, was led away to be tempted of the devil, Matth. iv. 1. And it was after the Lord's ſupper that Chriſt told his diſciples, that *ſatan deſired to have them, that he might ſift them as wheat*, Luke xxii. 31. It was after Paul was rapt up to the third heaven, that he was in hazard of being exalted above meaſure, or puft up with pride, and therefore had a meſſenger of ſatan ſent to buffet him. 2 Cor. xii. Have you got any thing of the riches of Chriſt and treaſures of heaven at this ordinance? Then look well to yourſelves that you loſe it not, for the devil is going about ſeeking to rob you thereof: Therefore be not lifted up or ſecure, but be humble and watchful, and walk circumſpectly.

SECT. II. *Containing directions how to behave when you go home to your cloſets and retiring places.*

THink not your work over on a communion ſabbath, when you are come home from the church: But as ſoon as poſſible retire.

I. For *prayer*. You ſhould be more bent upon prayer now than ever. The Pſalmiſt, when God had dealt kindly with him, reſolves therefore that he will call upon God as long as he lived, Pſal. cxvi. 2. This is a ſtrange return he would give God for former favours: He would go and beg new favours from him, and lie the more cloſely about his hand; I will love God and love prayer the better all my days. This is not the manner of men, but God is delighted with ſuch a return.

Q. *But, what ſhall we pray for now? Can God give more than what he hath given us in the ſacrament?*

Anſ. Tho' God hath here given you the ſeal of the covenant and a right to all its privileges and promiſes; yet he will be enquired of by you for the particular application and accompliſhment of them: You muſt put God to his word, and pray with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 49. *Remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope. Be it to thy ſervant according to thy word.* Again, you ſhould pray that God may continue and preſerve any good frame or tenderneſs of heart, ſpiritual motions and reſolutions, or any warmneſs of affections and deſires that have been wrought in you by this ordinance; for our hearts are ready to cool, and our goodneſs to evaniſh *like the morning clouds and the early dew*: You have need therefore to pray with David, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. *Lord, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of my heart*: And, Pſal. lxviii. 28. *Strengthen, O God, that which thou haſt wrought for us.* Your hearts are naturally deceitful, and your feet bent to backſliding; pray as in Pſal. xvii. 5. *Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footſteps ſlip not.* You have no ſtrength in yourſelves to keep the promiſes, and perform the vows to the Lord which you have made: Therefore beg from your covenanted God, that he may furniſh you for every good word and work; for it is *he that worketh in you both to will and to do.*

II. Self-examination is a duty moſt neceſſary on the back of this ſolemn ordinance, as well as before it. Review your carriage at it, ſo that you may be humbled for defects, or thankful for attainments; caſt up your accounts, and ſee what you have gained at this goſpel-market. Will you not be as wiſe for your ſouls, as you are for your bodies? Were you at a market trading for the things of this world, you would take this courſe after you had come from it: But, O *what will it profit you, tho' you ſhould gain the whole world, if you ſhould loſe your ſouls?*

There are two things you ſhould carefully ſearch into, when you come home from the Lord's table: 1. If you had ſincerity in covenanting with God. 2. If you had his gracious preſence with you in this ordinance.

Queſt. 1. *How ſhall I know if I have ſincerely tranſacted with God at his table, and if he hath taken me into the bond of his covenant?*

Anſ. 1. It is of great conſequence for you to know this; for it is not every one that externally receiveth the ſeal of God's covenant, that is really taken into the bond of it: Many thouſands deceive themſelves in this matter. You may diſcover your ſincerity in covenanting, by reviewing the frame and condition your ſouls were in when you were about it, and by conſidering the frame and diſpoſition they are in now.

I. *What was the frame of your ſouls when you were tranſacting with God?*

1. Were you low and vile in your own eyes, and deeply humbled under a ſenſe of your own unworthineſs and ill deſerving; ſo that you were made to ſay with the Centurion from the bottom of your heart, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof. I have lived all my days in rebellion againſt thee, the bot-*

tomleſs pit is my due? Then this is a good ſign of thy being brought within the covenant, according to Ezek. xvi. 62, 63.

2. Were you weary of the burden of ſin? Did you grone under it as a *heavy load?* Were you ſenſible that it was *too heavy for you to bear?* as the Pſalmiſt was, Pſal. xxxviii. 3. Then it is a good ſign; for it is to ſuch that Chriſt affords reſt in his covenant.

3. Did your ſouls long and pant for Chriſt, as the hunted *hart* for the *water brooks*, the *ſcorched ground* for a *refreſhing ſhower*, or a *condemned man* for a *remiſſion?* Was it your cry, *None but Chriſt, give me Chriſt, or elſe I die*: Lord Jeſus, here a poor beggar for thy bounty, a diſeaſed Lazarus for thy cure, an empty belly for thee to fill, a naked back for thee to cover: *Never was there a ſoul that ſtood more in need of thee than I.* Then this is a good token: For, wherever there is true faith, it empties the ſoul, diſcovers want and miſery in ourſelves, and great fulneſs in Chriſt: Faith comes with an *empty veſſel* to Chriſt's *open fountain*, it comes with an *open mouth* to his *full feaſt*, and with an *empty hand* to his *rich treaſure*.

4. Were you in a *reſigning frame* when you took the *ſeal* of the *covenant* into your hand? For *faith*, as it embraces and lays hold on Chriſt, ſo it delivers up the ſoul to Chriſt; and, as it takes Chriſt wholly, ſo it gives up the ſoul wholly to him. Did you give all you are, and all you have, your children, relations, honours, eſtates, intereſts, time, talents, health, ſtrength, and all to Chriſt, to be diſpoſed of, and employed by him, according to his pleaſure? Then this is a a good mark of thy ſincerity.

5. Were you in a renouncing frame, willing to part with every luſt, and put a bill of divorce in the hands of every Delilah or beloved idol? Then it is a good ſign; for every ſincere ſoul will ſay at ſuch a time with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols?*

II. Conſider the frame and diſpoſition of your ſouls ſince you came from the Lord's table; for you may find out your ſincerity hereby.

1. Aſk your ſouls that queſtion, which Chriſt himſelf once aſked the Phariſees, Matth. xxii. 42. *What think ye of Chriſt?* Covenanted ſouls, to be ſure, will have a very high opinion of him; for to all that believe he is precious. Can you ſay then, that you have high and admiring thoughts of Chriſt, and that you wonder at his beauty: Once I was at peace without Chriſt, but now I ſee nothing but fire and wrath out of him: Once I ſaw little beauty in him, and ſaid, as the daughters of Jeruſalem ſaid to his ſpouſe, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* But now I ſee him *altogether lovely:* Yea, I ſee not only a matchleſs beauty in his perſon, but alſo in his way, his word, his ordinances, his people; nay, in his very croſs, and every thing that belongs to him.

2. All covenanted ſouls, will be mightily pleaſed with the contrivance, frame and deſign of the covenant; they will ſay, *It is well ordered in all things:* they will be ſatisfied with all the articles of it, and with all the offices and relations of Chriſt; they will be content to be governed by his laws, as well as to be juſtified by his righteouſneſs. All they who have entered into a marriage covenant with Chriſt will look to his perſon more than to his patrimony, and they will embrace his precepts as well as his promiſes. Try therefore, if it be ſo with you. Are you pleaſed with the deſign of the covenant, *viz.* to exalt free grace? Would you have Chriſt all and yourſelves nothing? Would you be content of heaven, tho' it were for no more than to ſtand an eternal monument of free grace, and that you might with others join in your note to glorify and exalt it? Do you love ſtill to cry, *Not unto us, not unto us, but to Chriſt be the glory?* Then this is a good ſign you are within the bond of this covenant.

3. Have you heart melting thoughts at the remembrance of Chriſt's wounds? Are you ſenſibly touch'd for your ſins that pierced him, reſolved through his grace to pierce him no more, and that you will never give any harbour to theſe traitors that put to death the Son of God? Then it is a ſign you have eyed him by faith at his table, and taken hold of his covenant.

4. If you be his covenanted friends, you will reſolve to obey every commanded duty, John xv. 14. Ye will be a people zealous of good works. And remember this, ye will reſolve to perform covenant duties in a covenant-way, in a goſpel-method, *i. e.* ye will do all out of love and gratitude, to your benefactor and Redeemer; ye will do all to glorify him; ye will go out of yourſelves even to Chriſt for ſtrength, and depend on him for all.

Queſt. 2. *How ſhall I know if I have met with Chriſt at his table, and enjoyed any thing of his gracious preſence there?*

Anſ. Chriſt hath many ways of viſiting his people, and holding communion with them; and, tho' he hath not done it in the way you were expecting, do not conclude that he hath not done it at all.

1. He ſometimes draws near his people in this ordinance, by bringing light to their underſtandings, and making gracious diſcoveries to their ſouls.——Sometimes he diſcoveries to us his greatneſs and purity, ſo as to humble us to the duſt, and make us ſeem nothing in our own eyes, and confeſs we are the vileſt of ſinners, and wonder that we are out of the pit: So was it with theſe holy men, Job xi. 4. Iſa. vi. 3.——Sometimes he diſcovers his goodneſs and mercy, in giving his Son to die for ſuch wretches, and offering pardon to ſuch rebels; and thereby he ſheds abroad his love into our hearts, and melts them in tears, confeſſions, and thankful reſentments of his love, as in Luke vii. 44. 1 Tim. i. 16.——Sometimes he diſcovers Chriſt to be altogether lovely, ſin to be altogether vile, the world to be altogether vain, holineſs to be altogether neceſſary, aud heaven to be altogether glorious.

2. He kindly viſits his people, when he draws out their graces to a lively exerciſe, and particularly ſends his quickning Spirit to melt their hearts into the exerciſe of repentance and mourning for ſin, or to actuate their faith, and enable them to lean on Chriſt for pardon and ſalvation, and ſay with that poor man, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief:*——Or when he kindles love in the heart, and makes it burn while he talks to them, and opens the ſcriptures, as he did to the two diſciples going to Emmaus; or help you to ſay with Peter, *Lord, thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee:*——Or when he draws out the deſires, longings and pantings of the ſoul after himſelf, and makes us thirſt after him, and follow hard after him. Hence we ſee what a miſtake many are in, who think there is no communion with Chriſt but by ſenſible conſolations and manifeſtations of his love: For, where there is a holy

ſhame, grief and ſorrow wrought in the ſoul for ſin it is as real an evidence of his gracious preſence, as when the ſoul is affectionately melted into love, praiſe and joy. Tho' Chriſt come not to you by the higher way, yet be thankful if he come in the lower way.

3. Chriſt holds communion with his people in this ordinance, by ſtrengthning them for duty, and making them delight in his ſervice, and count it their meat and drink to do his will, and reckon *one day in his courts worth a thouſand elſwhere*.

4. When he intimates his ſpecial love and favour to their ſouls, which he doth many ways, by diſſolving their doubts and fears, ſcattering their clouds, ſhining on their graces, and clearing up their evidences; or whiſpering by his Spirit into their conſciences, *Fear not, I am your ſalvation: Be of good chear, all your ſins are forgiven you: The Lord hath put away thy ſins, thou ſhalt not die*. It is this way the Lord ſometimes brings his people into the *banqueting-houſe*, ſatisfies them *as with marrow and fatneſs*, makes them to hear the *voice of joy and gladneſs*, fills them with *peace that paſſes underſtanding*, with *joy* that is *unſpeakable and full of glory*. It is thus that he kiſſes them *with the kiſſes of his mouth*, *i. e.* applies the comforts of his promiſes, which are the ſweet words of his mouth, yea, *ſweeter* to them *than honey or the honey-comb*: It is here he makes them to *drink of the rivers of his pleaſures*, brings them to his *holy mountain*; and makes them *joyful in his houſe of prayer*: It is here he *brings them out of the miry clay, ſets their feet upon a rock, eſtabliſhes their goings and puts a new ſong in their mouth, even praiſe to our God*.

It might be proper in this place to ſpeak to the caſes of ſeveral ſorts of communicants: But, having done this pretty fully in my *Sacramental Catechiſm*, I ſhall here ſpeak only to two ſorts.

I. Theſe who after ſecret ſelf-examination, and reviewing of their communicating, are put to complain that they do not find any comfort or ſpiritual advantage by the ſolemn ordinance of which they have been partaking.

II. Theſe who cannot but acknowledge to the praiſe of free grace, that they have been kindly dealt with, and priviledged with ſpecial manifeſtations of God's love and favour at this holy ordinance.

Firſt, As to the firſt ſort of communicants.

There are ſometimes found not a few of God's people who, on the back of their communicating, are in a diſconſolate condition, " (ſaid one) I have been examining myſelf ſince I came from the Lord's table, and reviewing my communicating: And I fear I have not met with Chriſt there, nor got any comfort or ſpiritual advantage by the ordinance. I think God is angry with me; and what ſhall I do?"

Anſ. 1ſt, Granting it be ſo that thou haſt got no benefit by this ordinance, beware of laying the blame in the leaſt upon the maſter of the feaſt, who is a bountiful Lord, and delights in mercy; but leave your complaint intirely upon yourſelf, and ſearch for the cauſe of your diſappointment in yourſelf. And it is likely upon due ſearch you will find, that either you have been ſlight in your preparations for the duty; your appetite hath not been ſharpned with a ſenſe of ſpiritual wants; you have not been watchful over your heart, either before, in time of, or after your communicating; or perhaps you have gone about this work too much in your own ſtrength without looking to God for ſtrength and quickning in the goſpel-method. Jacob told his wives, Gen. xxxi. *I ſee your father's countenance, it is not toward me as before*. Now, what was the reaſon of it? Jacob (ſay Laban's ſons) *hath taken away all that was our father's*, he hath enhanced his riches. Well, haſt thou dealt thus with thy heavenly Father? haſt thou robbed him of his glory in any meaſure by thy ſelf-confidence? Then it is no wonder that his countenance was not ſo pleaſant toward thee as at other times. Be humbled then for your defects and ſhort comings: And ſay, *Lord thou art righteous, but I am wicked*.

2dly, God may hide his face from his people at the ſacrament either for their trial, or for their ſpiritual improvement and advantage. He may hereby try you how you will behave under ſuch a diſpenſation, if you will love him and cleave to him, even when he hides himſelf, or frowns upon you. Do not deſpond, O believer, though God appear to frown or to ſpeak bitter things againſt you; but cleave ſtill to him by faith, and bleſs his name that he is at all in ſpeaking terms with you, and not wholly ſilent to you, as he is to many, upon whom he will not beſtow a reproof, but gives them up to walk after the counſels of their own hearts. It is a great mercy to have God rebuking us for our good.

But the Lord may be hiding himſelf, to raiſe in you the greater earneſtneſs and fervency in ſeeking after him. Thus he dealt with the ſpouſe, Can. iii. 3. She was too lazy and careleſs in her enquiries for him, therefore he retires; and thereupon ſhe roſe from her ſloth, and went through all the ſtreets of the city in queſt of him, ſaying, *Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth? Tell him that I am ſick of love*. It were happy if your diſappointment had the ſame effect on you, to make you riſe and ſeek him more earneſtly, and go further than you did before. The ſpouſe went a little further, ſhe went further than the watchmen, before ſhe found him whom her ſoul loved; and ſo moſt you. You muſt go further than miniſters, ordinances, or ſacraments; go and look beyond all to Chriſt himſelf. Go alſo further in reſpect of diligence, ſincerity, ſpirituality and heart holineſs. Do as blind Bartimeus did, when he thought Chriſt was like to paſs by him without noticing him, Luke xviii. 39. *He cried ſo much the more*, q. d. Lord, paſs not by me, allow me one word from thy bleſſed mouth, one crumb from thy gracious hand. O believer, do not limit God to the preciſe time of communicating, your feaſt may be yet to come; for the banqueting-houſe is not yet ſhut, though the communion-table be uncovered: Therefore ly ſtill at the door, and cry ſo much the more, "Lord, others are ſerved, and not I: haſt thou not one bleſſing for me, even for me, O my Father? Lord, I cannot depart without it, I muſt even die at thy threſhold." Thus pray in faith, and wait in hope, and God will come in due time. "It is good that thy ſoul ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord."

3dly, God's people do ſometimes get gracious tokens of his bounty and marks of his favour, when they are not well ſenſible of it; ſo that they have cauſe to ſay with Jacob at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 16. *Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not*. There may be real communion, when there is no ſenſible communion. The two diſciples going to Emmaus, their hearts did burn with love to Chriſt, and Chriſt converſed with them, when yet they knew it not. Or they may ſometimes reckon what they have got at the ſacrament to be nothing, becauſe they got not what they were expecting. They were perhaps expecting peace, comfort, or joy, which they have not found; and this makes them overlook any revivings and ſmokings of grace which now are begot in their hearts. Haſt thou, O communicant, got a crumb of grace, do not undervalue it though it be ſmall, but be humble and thankful for it, for ſurely it is more than you deſerve. It is not good manners for a ſtranger when invited to a great man's table, to carve for himſelf; therefore be content with God's carving for you, and bleſs him he hath not ſent you to the table of devils, and given you a portion with the damned.

Many are apt to think nothing is a feaſt, unleſs they get ſmiles from God, joy, peace, and ſenſible manifeſtations of his love: But there may be great bounty ſhown to us without theſe; particularly, if you have got any more ſenſe of ſin's evil, or concern for the hardneſs of your hearts: If you have got any higher eſteem of Chriſt, and of the contrivance of ſalvation through his mediation; if you have any more hunger and thirſt after Chriſt, any more love to holineſs and the ways of Chriſt, any more deſire after his preſence in duties and ordinances, any more ſenſe of your need of the fountain of his blood; Then theſe are gracious tokens of his bounty to your ſouls, for which you have cauſe to bleſs and magnify the Lord. We may enjoy the ſaving influences of the Spirit, when we do not feel his more abundant conſolations. God may graciouſly accept of us, though he do not teſtify it by giving in extraordinary joys. The trueſt communion with God is to enjoy communion with him in his graces, whereby our ſouls are made conformable unto God, and are ſtamped with his image. Well, if you have got any more grace, be thankful to God, though you have got no more comfort. Though you do not ſpring upward in joy, bleſs God if you root yourſelves more downward in humility. Though you do not enjoy much of God in the ordinances here, yet be thankful if you get your deſires more enlarged after the full enjoyment of God above. The kindneſs of God muſt not be overlooked, nor the day of ſmall things deſpiſed; but the leaſt crumb of grace is to be noticed and received with thankfulneſs, and this is the way to get more.

We are not to judge of our profiting in duty, and of our gaining by ordinances, by our preſent feeling and receiving of ſenſible comforts: For the ſouls of God's people may be in a thriving ſtate of grace, even when they are much caſt down and ſharply exerciſed. Let us then ſeriouſly reflect upon our communicating, and ſee if we can ſay that our hearts were ſingle and ſincere in the performance of the duty, and in our covenanting with God, and if we continue ſtedfaſt with God therein; this may adminiſter ground of comfort to us, upon our after-reflection, though our ſouls were not lifted up with joy and comfort in the time of performance. God looks not ſo much to peoples ſudden fits of paſſion, or flaſhes of affection, as he doth to the bent and tendency of a ſincere ſoul.

Let none go from this ordinance with any harſh thoughts of Chriſt, or at all to give credit to theſe evil reports that Satan and our wicked hearts would bring up upon his good ways: But let us ſtill love and praiſe him, and ſpeak to the commendation of his grace and bounty whatever way he take in dealing with us. Though we ſhould get no more from him, ſurely it is great matter of praiſe, if he continue to ſtrive with us by his Spirit, when he lets others fall dead aſleep; if he keep us waking and reſtleſs without him, when he ſuffers others to ly ſtill in careleſs ſecurity; if he keep us ſtill hoping and waiting in the way of duty, when others are ſunk into the gulf of deſpair. Whoever they be that ſincerely *truſt in God's mercy, their hearts ſhall at laſt rejoice in his ſalvation*, Pſal. xiii. 5.

Secondly, As to the ſecond ſort of communicants before mentioned, namely, thoſe of God's people, who cannot but acknowledge to the praiſe of free grace, that they have been kindly dealt with at his table; they have been privileged with ſpecial manifeſtations of God's love and favour at this holy ordinance.

Well then, O believers, hath the Lord diſtinguiſhed you from others at this occaſion? Hath he taken you into his banqueting houſe, and dealt bountifully with your ſouls? Hath he feaſted you with the goodneſs of his houſe, and allowed you his gracious preſence, and the ſpecial intimations of his love? Then, to be ſure, you are under the higheſt obligations of love and gratitude to him: God looks for more at your hands than others, be careful to give him ſuitable returns, and improve what you have got to his glory. And, for that end, I ſhall give you the following advices.

I. Delight and ſolace yourſelves in his preſence; ſay, as in Pſal. cxvi. *Return to thy reſt, O my ſoul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*: Make Chriſt's love and favour the beloved centre of your ſoul. How much did Peter ſolace himſelf in that manifeſtation of Chriſt's love and glory he had on the mount of transfiguration? *It is good for us* (ſaid he) *to be here, let us build three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moſes, and one for Elias.* Not a word of building one for himſelf: He was ſo ſatisfied and delighted with the glory he ſaw in Chriſt, that he was content to ly without doors to behold it: Neither cold nor rain could make him faint or weary.

II. Is Chriſt come into your ſoul? Take care to entertain him ſuitably, and attend him duly; wander not from his preſence, but keep cloſs by him, and follow hard after him, that you may be able to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *I am continually with thee; I will ly down with thoughts of him at night, and when I awake I'll be ſtill with him.* Beware of any thing that may be uneaſy to him; it is a pity that ſuch a bleſſed gueſt ſhould meet with any diſturbance, or be ſmoked out of the houſe by ſin: O then lay a ſtrict charge on all your luſts, corruptions and worldly thoughts to depart, that they *ſtir not up nor awake your beloved till he pleaſe*, according to Cant. ii. 7.

III. Earneſtly intreat him to ſtay with you you: Say, "Lord, be not as a wayfaring man, that turns aſide to lodge for a night, or a ſhort time: But be thou my conſtant gueſt.', And, when he mints to go away, ſtrive to detain and hold him by prayer, as Abraham did Chriſt, Gen. xviii. 3. " My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy ſight, paſs not away from thy ſervant: And with the two diſciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 29. ſay, Lord, abide with us; for it is towards evening, the day is far ſpent: And it is ſaid, they conſtrained him, and he went to tarry with them. In like manner plead with Chriſt, Lord it is towards night, and I know not what a black cloud is coming on me or the church ; I need thy ſtrengthning preſence before hand : Lord, ſtay with me a while ; I know not how far I may go, and what ſtorms I may meet with, ere I get another ſuch meal.

IV. Set conſcience to the watch-tower of thy ſoul, charge it to keep its poſt, and ſtrictly examine all that go out, and all that come in, what thoughts go out from the heart, and what temptations are ſeeking to come in : And when luſts come knocking at the gate, ſeeking entrance into the heart, anſwer them according to that word, Ezek. xliv. 2. 3. *It is for the prince : the Lord God hath entered in by it, therefore it ſhall be ſhut* ; it ſhall be patent to none but Chriſt. O it is ſad when conſcience falls aſleep, ſuffers an enemy to come up to the gates, and enter into the city, without giving warning. Charge conſcience then to watch, and give timeous warning againſt every luſt and temptation, againſt every declining of affections or backſliding of heart, and againſt every wrong or untender ſtep that may blot your evidences or darken your ſky ; for though a believer cannot loſe his ſalvation, yet he may loſe the joy of his ſalvation, Pſal. li. and be left to grope in the dark in a moſt uncomfortable ſtate, without ſun or ſtars appearing to him for many days.

V. Delight to think on Chriſt. " Let your meditation of him be ſweet ; remember him on your bed, and meditate on him in the night betwixt your breaſts, *i. e.* in your heart." Carry him up and down in your thoughts all the day : Mind what a view you got of Chriſt at his own table, think on what he has done and ſuffered ; what a ſea of wrath, what a ſea of blood, a ſea of tears, a ſea of ſufferings and ſorrows he did wade through, to bring redemption and pardon to you. If we rightly conſidered what coſt and pains Chriſt hath been at for us, we might wonder how he ſhould be one whole hour together out of his peoples minds : Oh what a ſhame is it to forget him ! We ſee a worldly man doth not forget to think of his money, lands, buildings and plantings, for a whole day or week to an end : but alas ! we weary to think on precious Chriſt and heaven for an hour or two : O let us lament this plague, and beſeech our bleſt phyſician to cure it.

VI. The more you ſee of Chriſt and his beauty, be ſtill deſirous of further diſcoveries of it : If you have ſhared of this holy feaſt, you will find it both ſatisfies and begets an appetite. No doubt Moſes was raviſhed with divine contemplations through the forty days he converſed with God in the mount ; yet, after he comes down from it, he ſtill longs for more, and cries, Exod. xxxiii. 18. " I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory." In like manner, thirſt and pray for further diſcoveries of the king in his beauty.

VII. Take pleaſure in commending Chriſt to others, and ſhewing what a lovely Saviour and choice maſter he is ; invite them to come taſte and ſee that he is good. Let his name be ſweet and ſavoury to you, delight in mentioning it. How ſweet was his name to Paul ? For in 1 Cor. i. and the firſt thirteen verſes of that chapter he mentions his name no leſs than twelve times : He could never get enough of that ſweet name Jeſus, that rings with ſalvation ; he ſometimes there mentions it twice in one verſe.

VIII. Remember that ſatan envies you, and eyes you as a pirate doth a richly loaden ſhip, and will do what he can either to rob you of your treaſure, or give you a troubleſome voyage : You may expect trials on the back of this feaſt, and it may be from hands that ye would little expect ; but reſolve whatever temptations come, or winds do blow, that you will cleave to your Maſter, and never weary of his work and ſervice : Say to him as the Hebrew ſervant to his maſter, Deut. xv. 16. *I will not go away from thee, becauſe I love thee and thine houſe, and becauſe I am well with thee.* I am ſure, O believer, thou haſt far better reaſon to ſay ſo than any elſe ; there is no drudgery in Chriſt's ſervice, you have the beſt maſter, the beſt work, and the beſt wages : Have you found him kind to you at this time, eaten plentifully of his bread ? *O do not lift up the heel againſt him* ; never betray him, nor give a wound to his intereſt any more.

IX. Be much concerned for his glory, and for the advancement of his kingdom. Pity thoſe who are ſtrangers to him, and pray for them ; ſend portions to them for whom nothing is provided : Pity others who are not win your length, and put in a word for them ; pray for a crumb to them from that full table at which you have been feeding ſo plentifully.

X. Hath Chriſt been dealing more kindly with you than others ? Then he expects you will do more for him than others, Matth. v. 47. He hath done ſingular things for you ; ſee that you do ſingular things for him : carry as becomes his peculiar people. Be not content with common mercies, or ſuch portions as baſtards may have : Be not content with common graces, gifts and attainments, ſuch as hypocrites may have : Be not content with common converſation ; live not as the men of the world, whoſe hearts are ſet on things below, but live above the world, have your feet where other mens heads are : Shew ſo much humility, mortification, patience, heavenlineſs and charity in your walk, that the world may not only take notice that you have been with Jeſus, but that you deſign to lodge and live eternally with Jeſus. Live not according to common examples, but ſet Chriſt and his ſaints before you for patterns : And whatever others do about you, reſolve to ſtand for Chriſt, though it were alone ; ſay with Joſhua, *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve our covenanted God.*

XI. Labour to keep ſtill up a lively and ſpiritual frame of ſoul, and beware of loſing what you have ; be ſenſible that you are not able to maintain it more than to beget it : You have many enemies ſeeking to rob you of it ; walk with a holy ſuſpicion and jealouſy, as a traveller, having much money about him, ſuſpects every one he meets for a thief.—Delight in Chriſtian fellowſhip; one live-coal helps both to kindle others, and to keep them burning, Heb. x. 24. 25. *Let us conſider one another, to provoke to love and good works : Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, but exhorting one another.*—Again, be tender and circumſpect in your walk ; for a tender walk keeps up a tender frame. Beware of the cares of the world, and earthly mindedneſs ; for, if you thruſt a knife into the earth, it blunts its edge. Frequent ſacramental occaſions, and thoſe heart-warming ordinances which God appointed for your ſouls advantage.—Call your hearts frequently to account ; ſay, " O my ſoul, how is it with thee now ? Time was, thou hadſt a good frame, good motions and deſires : What's become of you now ? Such a chamber, ſuch a place in the field, ſuch a kirk or communion-table, can witneſs the meltings of thy heart and flowings of thy affections towards Chriſt and things above: Where are they now?—But, above all, be much in ſecret prayer, and in the exerciſe of faith on Chriſt the fountain of life: Intruſt your hearts and frames to his keeping, who is your great Friend and Surety; ſay believingly with the Pſalmiſt, *Lord be Surety for thy ſervant for good: Into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my ſpirit: for thou haſt redeemed me, O God of truth*: Let thy everlaſting arms be underneath me, and hold up my goings. Plead for the conſtant ſupplies of his Spirit, that he, who is as the dew to Iſrael, may afford oil to your chariot-wheels, and wind to your empty ſails. You have need to watch and pray, for ſatan is ſtill going about; this old crooked ſerpent can wind himſelf in at a very narrow hole: he hath many cold froſt winds to freeze up your affections, many deceitful charms to lull you aſleep; you may ſleep, but he never ſleeps. O communicant, watch; for, if he find you aſleep, he will ſoon ſteal away the living child, and lay a dead one in its room: God ſave you from this dead ſleep.

XII. Have you taſted of God's goodneſs at this occaſion? Sit not down ſatisfied in what you have got; but let it excite in you earneſt longings for heaven, where the full feaſt is. Theſe are but the foretaſtes and firſt-fruits of the promiſed land, ſent to wean your hearts from the world, and ſharpen your deſires after the Canaan that is above, where theſe firſt-fruits do grow and are full ripe. A communion-ſabbath is the likeſt thing we have in the world to that everlaſting ſabbath that is above: But, how ſmall are the comforts of this lower table, if compared with the higher table? What is a ſacrament-feaſt here, to the marriage-ſupper of the lamb? What is drinking of the fruit of the vine here, to the drinking it new with Chriſt in his Father's kingdom, where the glorious heavens will be the room, and the heavenly hoſt the attendants? Here we feed on Chriſt by ſymbols and ſacraments, and have but ſmall appetites; but there they enjoy and ſee him as he is: Here are many traitors and unworthy communicants that thruſt themſelves in among the children; but there no Judas, nor unfurniſhed gueſt can come, nor any thing that can impair the glory of that feaſt. What is the ſinging of Pſalms here, to the muſic of angels there? Had you been with the ſhepherds, Luke ii. and ſeen the angels, and heard the multitude of the heavenly hoſt praiſing God, ſaying, *Glory to God in the higheſt, peace on earth, good-will towards men*, you would never have forgot that glorious ſight and ſound; but O that is little to what you ſhall ſee and hear above.

The greateſt manifeſtations of God here below are but a faint ſhadow of the beatifick viſion above. When Moſes was talking a little with God in the mount, and ſaw his back parts from the clefts of the rock, it made his face ſo glorious, that the people could not behold it without a vail: But, O how will Moſes's face and all about him ſhine now! It was little that he ſaw then, to what he ſees now, and what we (if believers) will ſee ere long.

Peter was ſo tranſported on the mount with a ſight of Chriſt's transfiguration, and Moſes and Elias talking with him, that he was in an extaſy of admiration, and ſaid, "Maſter, it is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles, *q. d.* Let us dwell ſtill here, and not go down to yon vain empty world again; here's better company and purer delights." But, O how much more is Peter raviſhed with wonder now! This was but a ſmall part of that glory, which Peter and the ſaints above ſee there.

O believers, you ought in a communion day to get up to the mount of meditation, as Moſes did to the mount Nebo, and view this promiſed land; and, as ye ſee it, you ought to long for it, and alſo *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*, and ſay, "O ſhall I ere long join with that one hundred and forty-four thouſand that follow the Lamb? Shall I bear a part in that heavenly concert? Shall all tears be wipt from my eyes? Shall my poor dying body be turned into a glorious ſtar? Shall I be for ever with the Lord, and drink of the rivers of pleaſure that run clear as chryſtal alongſt the banks of eternity, and whoſe ſtreams make glad the city of God? And ſhall not my heart leap for joy at the proſpect of it? The night is far ſpent, and the day is at hand, the ſun is at the riſing; and, will not a believer rejoice in hope of it?"

The wiſe men, when they but ſaw the ſtar that pointed out where Chriſt was, yet it is ſaid, *They rejoiced with exceeding great joy*, Matth. ii. 10. But, O believing communicant, thou wilt ſhortly ſee the ſtar of Jacob, namely, Chriſt himſelf, who is the *bright morning ſtar*, ſhining in his glory; and, will not that cauſe far more joy to thee? If the diſciples returned from the ſepulchre with great joy, when they but got the news that Chriſt was riſen from the dead; what joy will it be to thee, to ſee him raiſed and reigning in his glory, and thyſelf raiſed from the grave to reign eternally with him?

Well then, let a communion-day, and the comforts of it, put thee in mind of that happy ſtate, and raiſe ſuitable deſires and affections in thee towards it, and make thee long and ſay, *Lord, theſe joys are too great to enter into me now; O make me fit to enter into them!*

Laſtly, As far as time and ſtrength can allow, the evening of a communion ſabbath ſhould be ſpent in ſecret and family duties. I acknowledge our frail bodies may be much fatigued by our long attendance, intenſeneſs and abſtinence this day: But O if we could ſay this evening (and particularly miniſters and elders, who had greater work this day upon their hands than others) that though we may be weary with our work, yet we are not weary of our work; for it is Chriſt's work, which is both pleaſant and profitable, and carries its own reward in its boſom!

And ſince your bodies muſt be refreſhed this night, and you muſt entertain ſome fellowſhip with others, there ought to be a more divine and heavenly air upon your converſations at this time than ordinary: Let your carriage and diſcourſe be ſuch as becomes thoſe who have been on the mount this day with God, that others may take notice of you, that you have been with Jeſus.

When you ſee the table covered this night, or ſupper ſet upon it, you may think or ſay, "Now I am come from a communion-table to a common-table; from taſting of the upper-ſprings, to ſhare of the nether-ſprings, from feeding on manna, to eat the bread that periſheth: How great is the change of my fare! Lord, let not this table be a ſnare to me, nor any wiſe tend to divert my mind either from the ſweet table I have been at, or that bleſt table above I would be at." We may likewiſe take occaſion to admire the infinite bounty and goodneſs of God to both our ſouls and bodies: O what pains and coſt he is at with us! At our common tables we ſee his beaſts killed to maintain the life of our bodies, and at the communion-table we have ſeen his dear Son ſlain to preſerve the life of our ſouls.

In the laſt place, keep a watchful eye upon all your thoughts and words this night; look well to the frames of your ſouls. Hath God ſhed abroad his love this day in your hearts? keep yourſelves in the love of God. Ly down this night with ſweet thoughts of Chriſt, fervently praying for a rich bleſſing upon the day's work, and for his gracious preſence on the morrow, that the laſt day of the feaſt may be the greateſt and ſweeteſt.

SECT. III. *Containing directions to all communicants in general concerning their after converſation in the world.*

REmember, you have been covenanting with God, and taking ſolemn vows on yourſelves at the Lord's table; ſee that your converſations be ſuitable hereunto. You have been admitted to great honours and ſpecial privileges: ſee then that ye ſhew your thankfulneſs to God the author of your mercies, by the love of your hearts, the praiſes of your lips and exemplarineſs of your lives. But more particulary, obſerve theſe following directions.

DIRECT. I. *Study to be true and faithful ſoldiers to your general, whoſe colours you have ſolemnly ſworn to.*

YOU have come under a ſacramental oath to God; ſee that you keep it ſacred and inviolable. The Pſalmiſt gives it as a mark of a man that will go to heaven, Pſal. xv. that he keeps his oaths and promiſes, even tho' it ſhould be to his hurt and prejudice. How much more then ſhould a man be careful to keep his oaths and engagements he comes under to God in the ſacrament, when it is greatly for his good and advantage ſo to do? O communicant, be faithful to the Captain of your ſalvation, abide by his ſtandard, deſert him not in the day of battle, go not over to his enemies camp. Remember what he hath done and ſuffered for you, and let the love of Chriſt conſtrain you to abide with him. Plutarch tells us of the ſoldiers of Pompey, that when he could not keep them in the camp by any perſuaſion, yet when Pompey threw himſelf on the ground, ſaying, if ye will go, ye ſhall trample on your general; it is ſaid, they were overcome and peaſwaded to ſtay. So your general, Chriſt, when in the garden, threw himſelf on the ground, wreſtling in an agony, to ſave you from ſin, and ſtop your career to hell: O then do not trample on your general, but ſtop your ſelf-deſtroying courſe, and abide with your Saviour. We read, 2 Sam. xx. 12. that David's ſoldiers while marching very faſt, when they ſaw the dead body of Amaſa in the way (*viz.* the general wallowing in blood) they ſtopt their march and ſtood ſtill. O communicant, tho' formerly thou haſt been marching furiouſly in the ways of ſin, yet when thou ſeeſt the mangled, wounded, pierced and crucified body of thy Saviour before thee, thou ſhouldſt ſtop thy courſe, and proceed no further. Oh, do not trample on thy wounded general, do not deſpiſe his bleeding wounds, nor forget his dying love. Keep ſtedfaſtly your ſacramental oath, and never act contrary to it. Beware of plotting againſt him, or correſponding with traitors. Let it never be heard that any of Chriſt's ſworn ſoldiers ſhall either deſert or betray their renowned general. If you would be faithful ſoldiers to Chriſt your general, then carefully obey his orders, couragiouſly adhere to his intereſt, valiantly fight for his cauſe, and manfully reſiſt his enemies, and abide by his ſtandard to the very laſt. *Be thou faithful to the death, and thou ſhalt get the crown of life*, Rev. ii. 10.

DIRECT. II. *Study to be active and diligent in a courſe of new obedience, after the Sacrament.*

YOU ſhould now walk circumſpectly, be more humble and pious towards God, more juſt and righteous towards man, and more ſober and temperate towards yourſelves. Have a ſincere reſpect to every commanded duty: Keep the ſabbath more exactly, hear more attentively, pray more fervently, meditate more frequently, and ſee to watch over your hearts, your words, and your ways more diligently, that ſo you may pleaſe God, walk worthy of Chriſt, walk worthy of the covenant, of the ſacrament, of the kingdom, of the goſpel and grace of God. Let your preſent deportment be anſwerable to your future preferment; and ſee that there be ſome proportion betwixt your privileges and your duties.

It ſhould be with a man after his communion with God in the ſacrament, as it was with Jacob after his communion with God in Bethel, Gen. xxix. 1. *Then Jacob liſt up his feet,* (as it is in the original) *and came into the land of the people of the eaſt.* After Jacob had met with God, then he lift up his feet, *i. e.* he went on his journey with ſtrength, with ſpirit and cheerfulneſs. So after we have had fellowſhip with God in the ſacrament, we ſhould, in the ſtrength of that meal, lift up our feet, and go on cheerfully and reſolutely in our journey towards heaven. Nay, we ſhould like Jehoſhaphat, not only have our hands and feet, but alſo our *hearts lift up in the way of the Lord.* We ſhould now run his errand moſt cheerfully, ſing in his ways, and ſerve him with alacrity. When God calls us to any duty, we ſhould preſently anſwer the firſt intimation of his will, *Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.* O communicant, thou oughteſt now to be ſwift to hear every one of God's calls; be like the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xxvii. 8. "When thou ſaidſt, Seek ye my face; my heart ſaid unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek." Though before I have neglected to ſeek thee in public with others, and in private by myſelf, and been, alas, very negligent in the duties of thy worſhip; yet now I will begin to read the ſcriptures, praiſe thy name, and pray diligently, not only in ſociety with others, but alſo by myſelf in ſecret, and do all theſe duties of holineſs mine oath at the ſacrament doth bind me unto. And ſee that you reſolve and perform all theſe, leaning to the ſtrength of your covenanted Redeemer.

DIRECT. III. *Abandon all your former known ſins, and ſtrictly guard againſt them after the ſacrament.*

REmember what Paul ſaith, Eph. iv. 28. *Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more,* &c. In like manner, ſay I, let him that profaned God's name, profane it no more; let him that lyed, lye no more; let him that uſed to break the ſabbath, be drunk, cheat, be unclean, &c. do ſo no more. Hath Chriſt been waſhing you in the laver of his blood? O do not go back to wallow in the mire. Did he ſpeak peace to you at the table? O do not turn again to folly.

Let never that be charged upon communicants, that was laid to Iſrael's charge of old, Exod. xxxii. 6. *The people ſat down to eat and to drink, and roſe up to play.* Oh, will any ſit down to eat and drink at the Lord's table, and then riſe up to play the wanton, play the prodigal, play the apoſtate, and join with the enemies of God. Surely, O communicant, if thou ſhouldſt do ſo, thy ſins will not be of any ordinary dye; they will be very heinouſly aggravated, and far more grievous and piercing to Jeſus Chriſt than the ſins of many others. David was not much troubled at *Shimei's railing*, but *Abſalom's rebellion* pierced his very ſoul, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. *Behold, my ſon which came forth of my bowels, ſeeking my life.* So may Chriſt ſay, The ſins of the wicked are no ſurpriſing thing, but the ſins of communicants are very piercing: *He that did eat bread with me, hath lift up his heel againſt me,* Pſal. xli. 9.

O believer, hath Chriſt delivered thee from ſin and Satan, hell and wrath; and wilt thou rebel againſt thy deliverer? Oh, wilt thou thus requite the Lord for his marvellous loving-kindneſs! Mayſt thou not ſay with the Jews after their return from the Babyloniſh captivity, Ezra ix. 13. 14. *After ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould I again break thy commandments, wouldſt thou not be angry with me, till thou hadſt conſumed me?* If I ſhould again join with the wicked, and return to my old ſins, Oh what a dreadful place in hell might I look for?

DIRECT. IV. *Keep a watchful eye, and a ſtrong guard againſt the temptations of Satan, upon the back of a ſacrament.*

SAtan is never more buſy, nor more violent to tempt and draw men to ſin, than when they are new come from the Lord's table: Why? He is exceeding malicious, and helliſh in his enmity againſt ſouls; and he knows, if he can draw them into ſin upon the back of ſuch a near approach to God, it is the way to make their ſins out of meaſure ſinful before God, and exceedingly to widen the breach betwixt God and their ſouls. Look how Sennacherib dealt with Hezekiah after he had reformed the church, ſettled that worſhip of God, and put all in good order, 2 Chron. xxxii. 1. There it is ſaid, "After theſe things and the eſtabliſhment thereof, Sennacherib king of Aſſyria came and entered into Judah, and encamped againſt the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himſelf." In like manner doth ſatan deal with communicants, after they have been at the ſacrament, and have renewed their covenant with God, and eſtabliſhed their reſolutions againſt the commiſſion of ſin, and for the performance of duty: After theſe things will the devil come with all his forces, and encamp againſt the fenced cities, (the communicants hearts) and ſeek to win them for himſelf. He hath an army of ſtratagems, wiles, devices, ſnares and temptations always at command; and lays many ambuſhments againſt the communicant: Oh what need have we to be on our guard after ſuch a ſolemn ordinance, and to labour to foreſee and prevent ſatan's helliſh deſigns againſt us! It were happy if we could ſay with the apoſtle, *We are not ignorant of his devices.*

O communicant, when ſatan comes to tempt thee to ſin after the ſacrament, ſay, What! wouldſt thou have me perjured before God? Shall I, who have been at God's table, and have ate and drunk with him, lift up my heel againſt him? Shall I take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot? Shall I defile that body, wherein he hath choſen to reſide? Shall I force him out of his habitation by an impurity, or offend him by entertaining nauſeuos thoughts, or the vile ſuggeſtions of that unclean ſpirit? Shall theſe hands, that have received the ſacred elements, work deceit? Shall theſe eyes, that have been filled with tears at the Lord's table, be filled with luſt or envy? Shall the mouth, that hath drunk of the conſecrated wine, be full of rotten diſcourſe? Imitate Joſeph when tempted, flee with haſte out of temptation's way, and ſay, *How ſhall I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* Or ſay with the ſpouſe, *I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?* I have waſhed my ſoul, how ſhall I pollute it with ſin? I have taken on with Chriſt, and how ſhall I turn my back on ſo good a Maſter? *Get thee behind me, ſatan.*

DIRECT. V. *Study that bleſſed art of improving and feeding on the ſacrament, and a crucified Jeſus repreſented therein, after you are gone from it.*

WE ſhould not only feed on Chriſt while at the ſacrament, but we ſhould continue to feed on Chriſt, the matter of this feaſt, when the communion-table is removed. As the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, they did not only drink of the rock when they were at it, but, after they were removed and gone from it, they ſtill continued to drink of it. But, how could that be? The apoſtle tells us, that the rock followed them, 1 Cor. x. 4. *i. e.* the water that iſſued out of the rock followed them as they journeyed, in all their ſtages and removes. So, when we are gone from the clefts of the rock that were ſtreaming to us in the ſacrament, we ſhould continue to make uſe of theſe ſtreams, and ſhare of the virtue and efficacy of this water of life, which follows us, and ſtreams after us, all the while we are travelling in the wilderneſs of this world, till we come home to the heavenly Canaan. And as the ſtreams of the rock not only followed, but alſo accompanied the Iſraelites, and run before them too; ſo we muſt have Chriſt with us, and depend on him in every ſtep of our journey, and likewiſe have our eye ſtill upon him as our guide and leader to heaven. O that we could learn the heavenly art of living by faith on the Son of God, by continued dependence on him, and making application to him for righteouſneſs and ſtrength; righteouſneſs for removing our guilt, and juſtifying our perſons before God; and ſtrength for performing duties, conquering luſts, and bearing croſſes! O that we could come with our daily ſins and pollutions to a crucified Jeſus, and make renewed and daily application of that blood we were bathing our ſouls with in the ſacrament! May we ſtill drink of the ſpiritual rock, and daily find the virtue, efficacy and benefit of the ſacrament following and ſtreaming after us while we are in the wilderneſs! May we conſtantly meditate on the love and death of our lovely Jeſus, carry the print of the nails in our hearts, and coninually bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jeſus; that we may ſtill look to him, draw nouriſhment from him, and walk on in the ſtrength of the ſpiritual meal we have been receiving, till we come to perfection!

DIRECT. VI. *Endeavour to keep up the lively and laſting impreſſion of the vows of God upon you.*

CONSIDER ſeriouſly the engagements you have come under at the ſacrament: You have done like the people of Judah in Nehemiah's time, Neh. x. 29. who entred into a curſe and an oath to walk in God's law, and to obſerve and do all the commandments of the Lord. It is a ſolemn oath, and a fearful imprecation you come under at the Lord's table, to be faithful ſubjects and ſervants to Chriſt: You ſwear allegiance to the King of heaven over the broken body and ſhed blood of the Lamb of God: You imprecate upon yourſelves, that a cup of wrath may be put in your hands, inſtead of the cup of the new Teſtament, if you deal falſly with God in his covenant, which you do here ſeal. Now, if you perjure yourſelves, conſider the hazard; you incur not only all the curſes of God's law, but the ſore vengeance of his goſpel alſo: You not only draw down upon you the wrath of a juſt God, but likewiſe the wrath of a merciful Mediator: And whom have you to interpoſe for you, if he be againſt you?

O communicant, if thou ſhouldſt like Samſon, break all theſe bands aſunder, and venture to fetch that ſacrifice away from the altar, which thou hadſt tied to it with ſuch ſtrong cords of oaths, vows, and covenants; mayſt thou not expect to bring fire from the altar along with it, that will conſume thee?

There are ſome who remember their vows no longer than the ſacrament laſts: While they are at the Lord's table, they have perhaps ſome ſenſe of their obligations to ſerve God and leave ſin; but, when they riſe and depart from the table, the ſenſe of their engagements departs from them. I have read of the Abyſſines, that after the ſacrament they think it not lawful for them to ſpit that day till the ſetting of the ſun. This is ſuperſtition in them, but yet their ſuperſtition will riſe up in judgment againſt the profane carriage of many after the ſacrament. Would they not ſpit that day? What ſhall we think of theſe who ſo ſoon forget their vows, that they do not ſtick to ſpit in Chriſt's face on that very day they eat his bread, by their looſe and ungodly practices afterwards?

There are others not quite ſo groſs, that will lay themſelves under ſome reſtrictions for a day or two after the ſacrament; but then, alas, they drop all their engagements, and return to their former ſinful liberties. Oh, doth the ſacramental covenant bind but for a day or two? Doth the efficacy of that ſolemn ordinance laſt no longer with you? Is not the bond thereof as ſtrong on thy conſcience the next month, or the next year, as the very day thou receiveſt? The ſacrament of baptiſm is but once adminiſtred, and that in our infancy; and yet we own that the baptiſmal vow and covenant doth bind to the day of our death, though we ſhould live an hundred years. Now, is it not the ſame covenant and vow we renew at the Lord's ſupper, which we make in baptiſm? Why, then, ſhould not the bond in this ſacrament be as binding and laſting as in the other?

O communicant, keep up always upon thy ſpirit a freſh ſenſe of thy ſacramental covenant; renew the impreſſions thereof every morning in thy ſecret retirements, and then thou wilt be in better caſe to beat off all temptations to apoſtacy through the day. Say ſtill to temptations, tempt me not from my allegiance and fidelity: The vows of God are upon me ſeal'd at the ſacrament, and recorded in heaven: Not one of my fellow-communicants, but will be witneſſes for God that they ſaw me perſonally and publicly own and renew my covenant with him: Wherefore, for my oath's ſake and thoſe that ſat with me, I will not do this evil and ſin againſt God. Shall I alienate and pollute the heart ſo ſolemnly devoted to God? Shall I make light of my oath, turn diſloyal to my King, and falſe to my God? Shall I ever be ſo ingrate or perfidious, as forget his kindneſs to me, or my vows to him? Shall he eſcape that doth ſuch things? or, ſhall he break the covenant and be delivered?

Thou haſt great need to pray that God may fix the laſting impreſſion of thy vows upon thy heart, for it is naturally deceitful, prone to forget God and gad after the vanities of time. Cry with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 36. 37. *Incline my heart unto thy teſtimonies, and not unto covetouſneſs: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.* Let me never be ſo eager upon the world, as to forget to retire to converſe with my Saviour; Let me never ſo perplex myſelf with worldly buſineſs, as to omit to pray, to meditate, to read and ſing due praiſes to my God. No, no; I will ſay to the world and all time's things, I am not at my own diſpoſal: *I have ſworn, and will perform, that I will keep God's righteous judgments.* O how deeply am I obliged to him that has paid my debt! What ſhall I render unto the Lord? Lord tho' I can do nothing that is ſatisfactory, let me do ſomething gratulatory. Chriſt gave himſelf a ſin-offering for me, let me give myſelf a thank-offering to him, let me offer up myſelf a living ſacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himſelf a dying ſacrifice for my rdemption.

DIRECT. VII. *See that you crucify ſin, after you have been ſeeing Chriſt crucified ſet forth before your eyes in the Sacrament.*

HAth ſin been ſo cruel as to put to death the Son of God? See that henceforth you have no pity upon the murderer of Chriſt your Saviour. As Saul eyed David to kill him, ſo do you eye theſe traitors, your ſins, from this day forward to kill and deſtroy them. Never correſpond or parley with them any more; never entertain a favourable thought of them nor give them a kind look again, ſeeing they have done ſo horrid and inexcuſable a deed.

O communicant, haſt thou ſeen Chriſt ſtruggling to ſatisfy juſtice for ſin, and ſave thee from it; and, will you after all chuſe wilfully to walk in ſin? Will you not burn the ſpear that pierced him, and break in pieces the nails that crucified him? Every one of Chriſt's wounds is a mouth opened to plead for your wounding and killing of ſin. Had you ſeen Chriſt wreſtling in the garden in his bloody agony, ſweating great drops of blood, lying on the ground; had you heard him utter theſe words, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me;* Had you ſeen his ſoul beſet on all hands by your bloody ſins, and even brought to a nonplus, John xii. 27. when he knew not (to ſpeak with reverence) well what to ſay; had you ſeen him bound, led and nailed to the croſs, with a black angry cloud upon his ſoul, crying out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Would you not have vowed a revenge upon ſin? O could you have loved or hugged the ſoldier, or been fond of the ſpear that pierced his bleſſed ſide? Well, O communicant, this thou doſt, when thou hugs, and eſpecially when thou entertains thy predominant luſt or darling ſin: Your other ſins are as the nails in his hands and feet; but this as the ſpear that made a great wound in his ſide, and went nearer his heart than any of the reſt.

Oh, never ſuffer ſin to live any more in you, that would not ſuffer your Saviour to live in the world; never allow that a room in your heart, which would not allow him a room amongſt the living on earth. O beware of crucifying Chriſt afreſh. Never diſpute any more, when a temptation is preſented, whether Chriſt or Barabbas ſhould be preferred; your luſts denied, or Chriſt crucified: But preſently cry out againſt your luſts, *Crucify them, crucify them.* Have you ſeen God taking off your former burdens, and laying them upon the back of his dear Son, who willingly took them on for you, though they preſſed him down to the earth? O then, go not to lay any more loads upon him. Hath he taken you and waſhen you from your ſins in his own blood? O do not return with the ſow that is waſhed to her wallowing in the mire. Hath the Lord been graciouſly ſealing the pardon of your ſins? Go not to turn his grace into wantonneſs, by venturing to run on in a new ſcore. If you have waſhed your feet in the blood of the Lamb, O beware of defiling them again.

DIRECT. VIII. *Walk always under the ſenſe of God's all-ſeeing eye upon you in every thing you do.*

A Holy and circumſpect walk is what every communicant ſhould endeavour, eſpecially after the ſacrament; this would tend, not only to your own peace and comfort, but alſo to the glory of God, and the promoting of his intereſt and kingdom in the world. Were your lives tender, circumſpect, and ſhining in holineſs before the world, there would be little need of miracles to confirm the word, or convert infidels; for your converſations would allure ſtrangers, and mightily recommend religion unto them, ſo that they might thereby be drawn to ſeek acquaintance with the God of holy communicants, as Nebuchadnezzar was with the God of Daniel: and thus you would be inſtruments of turning many to righteouſneſs, and to ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever.

Now, if you would ſhine in a holy walk and exemplary converſation, then you muſt, like Caleb, *walk after God*, Num. xiv. 24. you muſt imitate him in his holineſs and purity. Again, you muſt like Enoch, *walk with God*, Gen. v. 22. live in communion and fellowſhip with him. And then, you muſt, like Abraham, *walk before God*, Gen. xvii. 1. live and carry as thoſe who believe he hath a ſpecial eye upon you in all that you do. And when you go about any action or buſineſs, ſpiritual or temporal, ſay to your ſouls, "I have a watchful eye over me, that pierceth into all my thoughts that diſcovers the principles from which I am acted, and the ends to which I move: Let me act then, as one that ſtill believes this, as one that muſt ſhortly be accountable to God for all I do, and I know not how ſoon." Or ſay to this purpoſe, "Now I am going about ſuch a buſineſs, ſuch a duty; and, if Chriſt ſhall ſend for me at the end of it, what account will I be able to give of my management to him? What do I know but at the end of this duty I may either be in Abraham's boſom, or in a gulf of miſery?"

Walk now in all your ſteps, as if you ſaw Chriſt crucified before you, breathing forth his dying love to loſt ſinners, and pouring out his blood to cleanſe them from ſin. Would not that be a great aw-band upon you, to reſtrain you from ſin? Walk now, as a damned ſoul would walk, were he again to live under the offers of mercy: How diligently (think you) would he obey, how fervently would he pray, and how peremptorily would he reject all temptations to ſin? So ought every ſincere communicant to do, that intends to pleaſe God and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called.

DIRECT. IX. *Endeavour to walk cheerfully and contentedly under every lot and condition.*

YOU may look for trials and difficulties while you ſojourn in this world: But, in midſt of all you ſhould aim to be much in the eunuch's frame after the ſeal of baptiſm, Acts viii. 39. who *went on his way rejoicing*. Have you got the ſeal of God's covenant? Then, whatever your afflictions be, you cannot but have a reviving cordial, for your ſins are pardoned. Let not worthy communicants ſay they are ſick, when their iniquities are forgiven them. Should they walk dejectedly, who have got an intereſt in the new covenant ſecured, and all the promiſes and privileges of it ratified and confirmed to them? For, what do they want, but is to be had here? Whatſoever is a bleſſing is ſecured here, either ſanctified riches, or a contented poverty.

A worthy communicant may ſay, Let God do with me as he will in this world, I deſire to be content, ſeeing he hath engaged himſelf to be with me in all ſtates and conditions, and to order all things for my advantage: Surely *he cannot lie, he cannot deny himſelf;* all his words are oaths for their certainty, and all his promiſes *the ſure mercies of David.* Let my covenanted God chuſe out my lot for me, ſurely it ſhall be with more wiſdom and with more affection than I can chuſe for myſelf. He whom Almighty wiſdom and goodneſs takes a fatherly care of, and hath engaged to feed, cannot but have enough. If Chriſt be mine, all things are mine; nothing is excluded, where he is included.

DIRECT. X. *Delight in the company of the people of God.*

SHAKE off all ungodly ſociety, and have your hearts linked to all theſe that bear Chriſt's image. Set the Palmiſt's example before your eyes in this matter, Pſal. cxix. 115. *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.* And verſe 63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.* It is a true ſaying of Solomon's, Prov. xiii. 20. *He that walketh with wiſe men, ſhall be wiſe; but a companion of fouls ſhall be deſtroyed.* Make the livelieſt of God's people your greateſt intimates, and upon all occaſions improve their fellowſhip to the beſt advantage. Beware of the cooling of your affections to the people of God; but let that divine ſentence ſtill run in your minds, 1 John iv. 11. *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another.* Let the love of God, manifeſted to you at the ſacrament engage you to carry lovingly and affectionately to all his people. Henceforth behave yourſelves as ſervants of the ſame family, branches of the ſame vine, members of the ſame body, and children of the ſame Father

DIRECT. XI. *Study to ſhine in the graces of meekneſs, patience, and forgivneſs of injuries.*

THIS is the way to make you like your glorious Redeemer and Pattern; and this is the way to adorn the profeſſion of religion, and to make it amiable in the eyes of ſtrangers. And ſurely all theſe who have been ſharers of God's infinite mercy and goodneſs in the ſacrament, will come away from it with a diſpoſition to bear injuries, and readineſs to forgive theſe that do them wrong.

DIRECT. XII. *Labour to keep up conſtant longings for communion-occaſions here below, and for the eternal ſupper of the Lamb above.*

SUrely theſe who have met with Chriſt in this ordinance will be breathing for further diſcoveries of his ſweetneſs and beauty. You ought to be ſaying, like Moſes when he came down from the mount, *I beſeech thee, Lord, ſhew me thy glory:* Let me have new manifeſtations of thy excellency, freſh intimations of thy love, and clearer diſcoveries of thy will. Oh, when will the opportunity return? When ſhall I come and appear before God? When ſhall I again ſee his power and glory in the ſanctuary? When ſhall I taſte his love and goodneſs again in the ſacrament? When ſhall I again behold his well covered table, ſit down thereat with his children, and be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs?

But ſeeing this lower table is tranſient and uncertain, look for one to come which is fixed and abiding. *Yet a little while* (ſaith Chriſt) *and I will ſee you again, and I will come and receive you to myſelf.* O believer, your lovely bridgroom will keep his word and his day, he will come and marry you to himſelf for ever: Therefore ever ſtand upon thy watch-tower, wiſhfully looking for his appearance; never ſlack thy watch, nor let thy expectation cool, till he come and take thee home to himſelf, and ſet you down at the higher table, where he ſhall for ever lay aſide his vail, and his amiable countenance never more be clouded with frowns; where you ſhall not have a ſacramental but a beatifical viſion; where you ſhall not remember him, but behold him as he is; where you ſhall feed on him without ſigns, and ſee him without a vail; where all your ſorrows ſhall be turned in to joys, where, for every reproach met with in God's ſervice, you ſhall reap eternal honour; for every hour of ſorrow, you ſhall enjoy endleſs ages of comfort. *Make haſte, my beloved, let the day break, and the ſhadows fly away. Even ſo, Lord Jeſus come quickly.* Take me to that place where myſteries ſhall be turned into revelations, faith into viſion, hope into fruition, eſpouſals into embraces, ſorrowful ſighs into nuptial ſongs, drops of tears, into rivers of pleaſures, tranſient glances into the radiant and direct beams of the ſun of righteouſneſs, ſhort taſtes into everlaſting feaſting and fulneſs. How ſmall are the comforts of the lower table if compared with theſe of the higher table? How dark are the diſcoveries believers have here, if compared with theſe bright manifeſtations above? But, becauſe I have inſiſted on this head formerly I ſhall add no more here upon it; but wiſh that we may come at length experimentally to know the difference, to our everlaſting comfort.

A
SACRAMENTAL CATECHISM;
OR, A
FAMILIAR INSTRUCTOR
FOR
YOUNG COMMUNICANTS:

Plainly unfolding the Nature of the COVENANT of GRACE, with the two Seals thereof, BAPTISM and the LORD's SUPPER.

THE PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH it cannot be denied, that there are many excellent books written, and ſermons delivered concerning the Lord's ſupper; yet it is ſadly to be regreted, that there remains ſtill a lamentable ignorance among many, of the nature of this holy ordinance, and the principal acts required in communicating. Which conſideration chiefly hath moved me to handle this ſubject (of which too much cannot be written or preached, ſeeing it is the Epitome of the whole Chriſtian religion, both as to doctrine and practice) in a plain catechetical method, and have ſtudied the eaſieſt words and expreſſions that I could deviſe to make the nature of the covenant of grace, and the ſeals thereof plain and intelligible to every vulgar capacity.

As I do not know much that is written upon this ſubject, in this method, ſo I have obſerved in treatiſes of the Lord's ſupper, that generally there is but little ſaid, of the nature of the covenant of works with the firſt Adam, or of the covenant of redemption with the ſecond Adam, or of the covenant of grace with the elect, to which this ſacrament is annexed as a ſeal: And that yet leſs is ſaid of the ſacrament of baptiſm, the firſt ſeal of the covenant; which certainly ſhould, in the firſt place, be conſidered and underſtood by every man, before he adventure to partake of the ſecond ſeal of the covenant, which bears a ſpecial relation to the firſt. Wherefore I have thought fit, in this Catechiſm (for the better underſtanding the nature of this ſacrament) to give a ſuccinct view, of the Goſpel-ſcheme, and method of man's ſalvation, by opening up the nature of the foreſaid divine covenant, and of the ſacrament of baptiſm, before I come to treat particularly of the Lord's ſupper.

All Chriſtians ſhould ſtudy to have diſtinct uptakings of the goſpel covenant, and of this ordinance, which is the compend and ſeal of it: And in a ſpecial manner, young perſons before their firſt admiſſion to it, when they are hereby, in a ſolemn and explicit manner, to renew their baptiſmal bonds and give their voluntary conſent to the covenant. O young people, take heed, to your firſt communicating, for very much depends upon it; you are as it were, about laying the foundation-ſtone of your ſalvation-work which ought to be done with much ſpiritual ſkill and knowledge, if you would have a ſure building; if you approach to this holy table in ignorance, you ſtumble in the threſhold; nay, you will ſurely be unworthy communicants, and ſo may provoke God to ſmite you with the plagues of judicial blindneſs, heart-hardneſs and formality, which may cleave to you all your lives, and ſo you are undone for ever. Wherefore, as you regard your immortal ſouls, pray for knowledge and ſpiritual illumination; apply to your great prophet Jeſus Chriſt for it; improve the means and helps which he affords you, and ſeriouſly peruſe this Catechiſm, before you firſt communicate; that ſo you may get ſome right uptakings of the nature of the covenant of grace, and ſeals thereof; and particularly, of the obligations you already ly under by the firſt ſeal, that you may with knowledge, ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity, go, and perſonally renew your baptiſmal covenant with God, and get it ratified, by receiving of the ſecond ſeal thereof. For this cauſe it is that our general aſſembly, by their act, Aſſ. 1706. Seſſ. 12. do recommend to all miniſters, "diligently to inſtruct perſons eſpecially before their admiſſion to the Lord's ſupper, particularly as to the covenant of grace, and the nature and end of this ordinance as a ſeal thereof; and charge upon their conſciences the obligations they ly under from their baptiſmal covenant, and ſeriouſly to exhort them to renew the ſame." And accordingly, I have known ſome miniſters, at very much pains with young perſons before their firſt communicating, inſtructing them as above directed, telling them, that they were now to enter into the ſtate of adult church-memberſhip, to be taken into Chriſt's family, and ſhare of the childrens privileges, ſealed to them in baptiſm; that therefore they muſt now make a choice for themſelves, ratify their parents deed, and become Chriſtians by their own voluntary conſent, as well as by their parents dedication, and renew their baptiſmal covenant with judgment and underſtanding. And after much pains taken upon them in private, they have called theſe young communicants together in a public manner, catechiſing them, and opening up the nature of the goſpel covenant, and their baptiſmal engagement to them; and with ſome ſolemnity aſking each of them their conſent thereunto, and taking them engaged perſonally to renew covenant with God in ſecret and make choice of God for their God, and Chriſt for their Saviour and huſband, before they ſhould approach to his table, and upon theſe terms giving them their tokens. Unto all which they joined ſuitable directions and encouragements, concluding all, by giving up and recommending theſe young communicants to God in ſolemn and fervent prayer. Which method I have known accompanied with great tenderneſs, and many tears, among the young people; one of them helping to affect another, yea, and make very moving impreſſions upon the whole audience; and I doubt not, but ſuch occaſions have been to ſome, the time of their eſpouſals to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which they are to remember with thankfulneſs.

Moreover, I intreat young communicants, to beware of contenting themſelves with a literal knowledge of the doctrine of the covenants, and of the ſacraments; but O preſs and pray hard for the inward teachings of God's Spirit, that light in your heads may be joined with heat in your hearts, And pray for the firm and ſolid belief, and ſincere love of all theſe truths which you know; and that your knowledge may be a ſanctified and practical knowledge, and increaſing, like the morning light.

Again, I beſeech you to beware of reſting upon your purpoſes, prayers or tears, your perſonal covenanting, or any performance of yours whatſomever; let none of theſe come in Chriſt's room; be not ſatisfied with a form of godlineſs without ſeeking after the life and power thereof. Be never eaſy till you get your hearts opened to cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt in the goſpel offers, and get an inward change wrought upon your ſouls, by the regenerating grace and Spirit of God, and grace excited in you to a lively exerciſe; and then you may approach with holy confidence to your Redeemer's table, and expect welcome.

Sacrament days in Scotland have been ſolemn and ſealing days, yea, days of heaven to many; at ſuch occaſions many have had their tryſts, and Bethel meetings with God, which they will never forget. O let us all then beware of formality creeping in among us in our preparation for and partaking of this ſolemn ordinance; for then God will withdraw himſelf from our aſſemblies, and our ſolemn feaſts will be melancholy and heartleſs. How ſad will our caſe be, if communicants and profeſſors of religion, turn eaſy about this matter, and be ſatisfied with the ſhadow without the ſubſtance; with pure ordinances and ſacraments, without Chriſt's preſence in them; with communion days, without communion with Chriſt the Maſter and maker of the feaſt. O communicants, however frequently you approach to the Lord's table, yet ſtill make conſcience of ſecret, ſerious, and ſolemn preparation for it; preſs always for a token of Chriſt's love at his table. There is nothing ſo ſupporting to poor believers, in this wilderneſs, yea, and when under the greateſt trials and difficulties, than the believing views they have ſometimes got, of a well ordered covenant of grace, made over and ſealed to them by this ſacrament: Theſe have been the cordials of many, when they have been ſtepping in over the threſhold of eternity. Let us then be providing ſuch cordials againſt that critical time.

At firſt, when I fell to compoſe this book, I thought to contain it in a ſmall compaſs; but having a deſign to inſtruct, and direct, and confirm ſome; confute, reprove and reform others; the book ſwelled to this bulk, before I could in any meaſure reach my end.

1ſt. My deſign is, to inſtruct the ignorant, in the knowledge of the goſpel way and method of ſalvation, through the mediation and ſuretyſhip of Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore I was obliged to give ſuch, as clear a view as I could, of the covenants of works, of redemption, and of grace, with the ſeals thereof.

2dly, I intend to direct and aſſiſt all ſincere young communicants, that deſire to be rightly guided in this weighty work, ſo as they may not wound Chriſt nor their own ſouls, but pleaſe God, and get a gracious meeting with their Saviour; And for their ſakes, I have fully diſplayed the nature, parts, ends and uſes of the Lord's ſupper, ſhewed what is required of them before they come, what is incumbent on them when they go from the Lord's table; and alſo have ſubjoined to this book ſome ſuitable materials for meditation and prayer, both before and after partaking.

3dly, My end, is to ſupport and encourage theſe troubled and exerciſed ſouls, who dare not neglect this ordinance, and who make conſcience of attending it, and preparing for it, but are oft filled with doubts and fears, leaſt they be unworthy communicants, apprehending they have no right to Chriſt's table, in regard they do not perceive any ſure marks of grace in their hearts, nor find any ſenſible benefit by the ordinance: Wherefore, I have for the ſake of ſuch, laid down many marks for examining their ſtate, their graces, their frame, and profiting by this ordinance: And alſo have intermixed the book with a great variety of caſes of conſcience, which I have handled and reſolved for the relief and ſupport of ſuch ſerious ſouls.

4thly, I deſign to confute theſe, who corrupt this holy ordinance, or in any meaſure deviate from Chriſt's inſtitution; and therefore I have gone through the ſeveral parts of inſtitution, ſhown the uſefulneſs and ſignificancy thereof, and have fairly propoſed the matters in controverſy, with the adverſaries objections, and anſwered them

5thly, I aim to reprove and reform theſe, who ruſh upon this ordinance in an ignorant or careleſs manner, without due preparation; by ſhewing who only have a right to this table, what is the nature and importance of the work of communicating with the ſin and danger of doing it unworthily.

6thly, I intend likewiſe to reprove theſe, who live in the habitual neglect of this ordinance; by laying open the neceſſity and advantages of worthy communicating, and the guilt and hazard of neglecting Chriſt's inſtitution and dying command.

7thly, To reprove theſe, who ſatiſfy themſelves, with communicating once in a year or two years, as they have the occaſion only in their own pariſh kirks, and no oftner; by ſhewing the obligations that lie on all Chriſt's diſciples, to partake often. And I ſhall add in this place, that there is ground to fear, that the unfrequent celebration and participation of this bleſſed feaſt, which Chriſt hath prepared for us, is an evil that many in this church are chargeable with; and for which the Lord may plead a controverſy with us. How can we expect but he will depart from us, when we ſtand at ſuch a diſtance from him, and come ſo ſeldom near him in the method he hath appointed? Can we look for ſmiles of Chriſt's countenance, when we live ſo much in the neglect of his dying words? Is it any wonder our hearts are ſo hard, when we are ſo ſeldom applying the blood of Chriſt for ſoftning them? Or that our graces be ſo weak and withered, when we ſo little uſe the means for ſtrengthning and cheriſhing them? Is not the frequent uſe of this ordinance, in the way Chriſt hath appointed, an excellent help, to ſoften our hearts, renew our repentance, ſtrengthen our faith, inflame our love, increaſe our thankfulneſs, animate our reſolutions againſt ſin, and encourage us to holy duties, and ſhall we willingly neglect it: It is no wonder that we complain we miſs what we aim at, and expect in this ordinance when we are ſo little ſenſible of former neglects. It is a ſad ſign, our receiving of this ſacrament is not right, when it leaves not in us earneſt breathings for the like opportunity; is it poſſible for us to meet with Chriſt, and taſte of his ſweetneſs and fulneſs in this ordinance, and not long for another meeting?

Let none think, that the frequency of the adminiſtration would expoſe to contempt; for I am ſure no worthy communicant will undervalue this ordinance, becauſe of a frequent repetition, but rather prize it the more. Did the primitive Chriſtians bring it to contempt, by partaking every Lord's day? Nay, was not their eſteem of it much higher, than theſe who diſpenſe, or receive it only once in two years? I wiſh, the words of our dying Saviour, and the acts of our general aſſembly, relative to this matter, were more adverted to, by one and all of us.

The mind of our church, with reſpect to this point is well known; For our directory for public worſhip declares, 'That the Lord's ſupper is frequently to be celebrated.' Our reformers appointed it to be adminiſtrate in pariſhes three or four times in the year, and that miniſters who were ſlothful in the adminiſtration of it, ſhould be cenſured, as appears from the acts of Aſſ. 1562. and 1596; which are alſo approven by Aſſ. 1638, who further appoint, 'that ſome courſe be taken for furniſhing of the elements, where the miniſter of the pariſh hath allowance only for once in the year;' that ſo the want of a fund for communion elements, might not hinder the frequent adminiſtration of this ordinance. Again, leſt the multiplicity of preaching, or miniſters aſſiſting at it, ſhould hinder its frequency, the general aſſembly, anno 1645, did appoint, 'That miniſters ſhould have at this work, but two aſſiſtants, who were to provide their own pariſhes at home with preaching; and that there be but one preparation ſermon on the Saturday, only one ſermon on the ſabbath-morning before ſerving of the tables, and one thankſgiving ſermon after the communion.'

And that the church, ſince the revolution, continues to be of the ſame mind with our predeceſſors, concerning the frequency of celebrating this ordinance, appears from the late acts of the general aſſembly thereanent; particularly the 9th act of Aſſ. 1701, where it is recommended to Preſbyteries, 'To take care, that the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper be more frequently adminiſtrate in their bounds; and that the number of miniſters to ſerve thereat be reſtricted, ſo that neighbouring churches be not thereby caſt deſolate on the Lord's day.' But the act, which is moſt plain and particular on this head is the 11th *Act* of *Aſſ.* 1712, entitled, 'Act appointing the more frequent celebration of the Lord's ſupper.' And it runs thus, 'The General Aſſembly conſidering, that the aſſemblies of the national Church, having by ſeveral acts, appointed the freqent celebration of the holy ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, in all the congregations of this church; and judging, that the due obſervation of theſe acts will greatly tend to the glory of God, and the edification of ſouls; therefore, they do hereby enjoin all preſbyteries to enquire, if theſe acts be duly obſerved by all the brethren; and in caſe any miniſter ſhall neglect to celebrate the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, in his pariſh for a whole year, the aſſembly appoints the preſbytery in which the ſaid pariſh lies, to call for an account of the reaſons of his omiſſion of that great and ſolemn ordinance, and to approve or diſapprove the ſame, as they ſhall ſee cauſe, and to record their diligence in this matter. And for making this effectual, the general aſſembly enjoins the ſynods at their ſeveral meetings, to enquire at the preſbyteries within their bounds, what care they have taken to execute the ſaid act, *&c.*' And further, that the Lord's people, may have opportunity of frequent communicating, the general aſſembly, by the 6th *Act*, *Aſſ.* 1711. 'Do recommend to preſbyteries to do what they can, to get it ſo ordered, that the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, may be adminiſtred in their bounds, through the ſeveral months of the year. And this they enacted, for redreſſing the practices, that are too common in moſt places, of crowding the whole communions of the bounds, in the ſpace of a few ſabbaths, in the ſummer ſeaſon; whereby miniſters, who are called to aſſiſt at theſe occaſions, are exceedingly hurried and ſtraitned; and ſerious exerciſed perſons, are deprived of the benefit of that holy ordinance during the reſt of the year, which is certainly a very great loſs; and alſo many pariſhes, by this method, are allowed the ſacrament no oftner than once in two years: Which practices are ſtill continued, notwithſtanding of all the excellent acts to the contrary. However, I am glad to hear, that in ſome pariſhes, miniſters have begun to celebrate this ordinance, twice in the year; I heartily wiſh this practice were general among us, and people had a lively appetite after this quickning feaſt.

I confeſs there is one thing among us, which is a great obſtruction to the frequent celebration of this ordinance, *viz.* The great number of miniſters and preachings now uſed on ſuch occaſions, which truly makes that ſolemn work a buſineſs of ſuch outward toil and labour to the adminiſtrators, as diſcourages them frequently to undertake it. So that till ſome regulation be made in the forſaid reſpect, I deſpair of ſeeing this holy ordinance diſpenſed ſo frequently among us as it ought to be.

In the days of old, there was leſs preaching at communions, but much power and life in them; but in our days, there is much preaching but little power. Not, that I am againſt much preaching at theſe occaſions, where there is an appetite among the hearers, and where plenty of miniſters may be had, without laying the neighbouring congregations deſolate, or proving any let to the frequency of this ordinance; but to make it a ſtanding order, that there ſhall be ſo many preachings, whether there be an appetite or no, or whatever inconveniences ſhould follow, I apprehend cannot be ſo eaſily juſtified. I acknowledge, about the time of our late happy revolution, when ſo much preaching at communions began to be a ſettled practice, there were ſuch vehement deſires among the people, after the ordinance, and lively preaching of the word, that had been ſo ſcarce for ſo many years before, that it was neceſſary to gratify them with much preaching at theſe ſolemn occaſions; but it is not to be expected, that theſe longings ſhould always continue. In theſe primitive times of Chriſtianity, when the diſciples hearts flamed with love, to their lately crucified and aſcended Redeemer, they had ſo burning deſires after the ordinances and preaching of the goſpel, that the apoſtle Paul, at the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, Acts xx. 7. was encouraged to continue preaching to the people till midnight; yet none ever pleaded, that the apoſtle's practice on that occaſion, ſhould be a ſtanding rule for the church, in all time coming.

But that I be not too tedious in this preface, I ſhall only acquaint my reader, that I have choſen to handle this excellent ſubject in a catechiſtical method as being the moſt eaſy and familiar way of inſtructing the ignorant, and moſt eaſy for the memory to retain. The work of catchiſing hath been ſignally bleſſed of God, for inſtructing people in the principles of Chriſtianity: And where this is neglected or contemned, people underſtand little of the moſt excellent ſermons they hear, and are little edified by them. Proper food muſt be provided for children, as well as meat for ſtrong men. And hence it is, that the chief Shepherd enjoins his ſervants, to feed his lambs, as well as his ſheep.

I know the church of Scotland is already provided with excellent Catechiſms, both Shorter and Larger, and with a choice explanation of the Shorter by Mr. Vincent, all which I earneſtly recommend to the reader's diligent peruſal, and eſpecially our Larger Catechiſm, as containing a noble ſyſtem of divinity; it would be the advantage of all the members of this church, to be at more pains in reading, conſidering and laying it up in their memories, than generally they are. The approbation of the Larger Catechiſm, by the General Aſſembly 1648. *Seſſ.* 10. ſhould not be forgotten; in which we find, that after the moſt exact trial and examination, both by the reſpective preſbyteries of this church, and by the aſſembly itſelf, they do declare this Catechiſm to be moſt agreeable to the word of God, and the received doctrine of this church; and that it is a rich treaſure, for increaſing knowledge among the people of God; where alſo they bleſs God that ſo excellent a Catechiſm is prepared, with whom I do heartily join iſſue. But ſeeing it cannot be expected that any Catechiſm of its bulk (which is of an univerſal nature, treating on all the heads of divinity) ſhould be ſo full and copious about the ſacraments, and particularly the Lord's ſupper, as the neceſſity of ſome do require; I have adventured to compoſe this Sacramental Catechiſm, for the benefit of young communicants, and others weak in knowledge; and have ſtudied to contract as much of the doctrine of the covenants, and of the ſacraments, as poſſibly I could, into ſo ſmall bounds. And in doing this, I frankly acknowledge, I have borrowed many things from others that have written upon the ſubject, and eſpecially from our excellent Larger Catechiſm.

And in the whole compoſure, I have copied, as cloſely as I could, after the approven form of ſound words, expreſſed in the word of God, and agreeably thereto, in the Confeſſions of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechiſms of this church, which are juſtly to be accounted moſt valuable pieces of our reformation.

And truly I eſteem it a ſingular mercy to this church, in theſe ſhaking and fluctuating times, when new thoughts and expreſſions in matters of faith are vented, which are not agreeable to the form of ſound words formerly uſed in this church, that we have ſuch an approven ſtandard of doctrine to look to, as is laid down in our excellent Confeſſion of Faith and Catechiſms, plainly founded on the ſcriptures of truth; and which all the members of this church, are ſtrictly bound to maintain, both by ſolemn national vows, and private engagements at baptiſm; not to mention the particular obligation which all the office-bearers of the church come under, both by word and writ thereunto, at their reſpective ordinations and admiſſions to their functions. Only I pray the Lord may give us grace, conſtantly to maintain and keep up the due and ſuitable impreſſions of theſe engagements on our ſpirits; which if we have, there is no doubt, but we will carefully evite every appearance of error; nay, even be afraid to diſuſe the former modes of ſpeaking and expreſſing goſpel truths uſed in the church, or adopt new phraſes and expreſſions in their ſtead; ſeeing ſuch a practice hath often introduced new errors into the church. It cannot but be thought ſtrange, that any lovers of our Zion, for the ſake of ſome fond new thoughts and peculiar expreſſions, (which perhaps their hearers cannot comprehend ſo well as themſelves, but are apt rather to conſtruct to a wrong ſenſe) ſhould chooſe to recede from the old approven ways of ſpeaking, or find fault with thoſe that retain them, whereby their people are brought to ſtumble at worthy goſpel-miniſters that have not learned their new phraſes, and paſs harſh cenſures, on them; which not only tends to marr peoples edification, but alſo to endanger the peace of our mother church, and the purity of her doctrine. For, by ſuch courſes, the ſeeds may be ſown that may ſpring up (if God prevent it not) into the noxious weeds of ſchiſm or error, when we of this generation are rotting in the duſt. I cannot yet be perſuaded, but Rutherford, Gilleſpie, Durham, Gutherie, and other ſuch eminent lights in this church, (that were bleſſed with ſuch large meaſures of the Spirit of God) had as clear diſcoveries of the goſpel-myſteries, and doctrine of grace; were as ſpiritual and evangelical in their preaching, frame, and converſation; and alſo honoured by their maſter, to bring in as many ſouls to him, as any in our day; notwithſtanding that they taught, "The covenant of grace its being mutual, faith being its condition, the neceſſity of perſonal covenanting with God, of leaving ſin in order to come to Chriſt, of cloſing with him upon the terms of the goſpel, of obeying goſpel precepts, making vows at the ſacrament," &c. Though perhaps in ſome places, theſe who would adventure to ſpeak in the ſtile of the foreſaid worthies, may lay their account with being cenſured as legal preachers.

I pray the Lord may give us one heart and one way, that we may all think and ſpeak the ſame things; and that he may always preſerve this church from the infection of error of one ſort or another, whether Arminian or Antinomian; and that no opinion or expreſſion be vented among us, that either tends to the diſcouragement of free grace, by aſcribing too much to the power of corrupt nature in the buſineſs of man's ſalvation; or, that under the pretext of advancing free grace, doth weaken peoples obligation to holy duties.

But reader, I ſhall not any longer detain thee from peruſing this Catechiſm; if thou findeſt in it any thing profitable or edifying to thy ſoul, then give God all the glory: And if any thing in it ſhew the author's weakneſs, I beg you may not raſhly cenſure, but pray for him, who would willingly contribute his mite, for the advantage of the weak and ignorant.

QUESTION.

FOR what end hath the Lord appointed ſacraments in his church?

Anſwer. To be viſible ſigns and ſeals of his gracious covenant with man, in order to repreſent and apply Chriſt and his benefits to his covenanted people; to ſtrengthen their faith in his promiſes, and ſolemnly to engage them in his ſervice.

Q. *Why hath the infinitely glorious God choſen to carry on the buſineſs of man's ſalvation, in the way and method of a covenant, or gracious paction with him?*

A. For theſe reaſons, 1. To diſplay the mildneſs of his nature, and moderation of his government: For tho' he be the abſolute emperor of the world; and may make of his creatures what he pleaſes; yet he ſweetly tempers his ſupremacy with goodneſs, ſeeking (as it were) to reign with his ſubjects conſent.

2*dly*, To ſhew his marvellous goodneſs, and condeſcenſion to the ſons of men; in that he humbleth himſelf to treat familiarly with them, make promiſes, and come under obligations to make them happy and glorious. *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of man that thou thus viſiteſt him!*

3*dly*, God deals thus with men, that he might have reaſonable ſervice from a willing people, and their voluntary conſent to his good laws. For tho' he might preſcribe to man, what condition of happineſs he pleaſed; yet he would require nothing of him but what he ſhould be obliged to judge a juſt and eaſy yoke.

4*thly*, That his people might ſerve and obey him, with the greater delight, having ſuch gracious covenant-promiſes for their encouragement.

Q. *How many covenants hath God made with man, concerning life and ſalvation?*

A. Two; the firſt being called the *covenant of works*; the ſecond, the *covenant of grace*.

Q. *What is the covenant of works?*

A. It is a gracious agreement, which the great Creator made with our firſt parents, Adam and Eve, in their ſtate of innocence; and in them, with all their children deſcending from them, by ordinary generation: wherein God promiſed them life and happineſs, upon their perfect obedience to his holy will and law; and threatned them with death and miſery in caſe of diſobedience, and withal, giving them for the trial of their obedience, a particular command, that they ſhould not eat of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10. 12.

Q. *How doth it appear that God made ſuch a covenant with our firſt parents?*

A. Becauſe in this affair, the ſcripture lays down the eſſential parts of a covenant: We have two diſtinct parties contracting, God on the one part, and man on the other. We have God requiring ſomething of man, *viz.* obedience to his will; and we have this requiſition, attended with a promiſe of life upon obedience; and a threatning of death upon diſobedience. And laſtly, we have Adam ſubmitting or conſenting to all this: For ſeeing he was made after the image of God, perfectly holy; he behoved certainly to conſent to God's holy will, when at firſt laid before him, and that immediately by God himſelf, his gracious and bountiful Creator. And this alſo is confirmed by ſeveral places of ſcripture, Hoſ. vi. 7. Rom. vi. 27. Rom. iii. 14. Gal. iv. 24.

Q. *Why is this covenant, by the compilers of our Confeſſion of Faith, called ſometimes a covenant of works, and ſometimes a covenant of life?*

A. Becauſe works or perfect obedience, was the condition of this covenant, on man's part; and life or perfect happineſs was the reward promiſed on God's part.

Q. *Was there no grace manifeſted in the firſt covenant?*

A. Yes, in ſeveral things; 1. In that the glorious Creator was pleaſed to deſcend (as it were) to a level, and tranſact a covenant with his own creature, and thereby come under bonds and obligations to him, Pſal. cxiii. 5. 6. Rom. xi. 35.

2*dly*, In taking ſuch pains to help the mutability of man's ſtate and free-will, by hedging in his way with promiſes and threatnings; and thereby graciouſly fortifying and arming him, againſt all temptations to ſin, by furniſhing him with arguments, both from the promiſe of reward in caſe of obedience, and the threatning of puniſhment in caſe of tranſgreſſion.

3*dly*, In that he was pleaſed to promiſe a reward ſo great and glorious as eternal life, to man's obedience, when he was ſufficiently obliged to it by the law of his creation, though nothing had been promiſed for it.

4*thly*, In that he created Adam with ſufficiency of power and grace to enable him to perform God's whole will; gave him all the creatures to obey him, and allowed him intimate communion with himſelf.

Q. *What law or rule had our firſt parents given them for their obedience, in the eſtate of innocency?*

A. They had both the moral law, and a poſitive law; both a general commandment, *Do this and live,* and a ſpecial commandment *not to eat of the tree of knowledge.*

Q. *How were theſe laws given and promulgate to our firſt parents?*

A. By their creation in a perfect ſtate, they had the moral law written and engraven in their hearts. But the poſitive law was given them by external revelation, Eccleſ. vii. 29. Rom. ii. 14. 15. Gen. ii. 17.

Q. *What is that ſpecial command called a poſitive law, and diſtinguiſhed from the moral law?*

A. In regard it is of the nature of a poſitive law, to command or prohibit things that before were indifferent, and only become good or evil by virtue of the command, and not of their own nature: So the eating of the tree of knowledge was neither good nor evil, but as commanded or forbidden by God. That law, was not founded on the light or dictates of nature, as all the moral precepts are: which therefore are a ſtanding and unalterable rule of righteouſneſs.

Q. *Why did God forbid the eating of that tree?*

A. 1. To let Adam know that he was not abſolute owner of what he poſſeſſed, but only a ſervant; and that God was the ſupreme Maſter and Lord of all.

2*dly*, To keep him in mind, that his happineſs did not lie in time's things, but in the pleaſing of God, and enjoying his favour.

3*dly*, To try his obedience, and regard to the divine authority; and to render him for ever inexcuſable, if he ſhould diſobey God in ſo eaſy a command, when he had ſuch helps and encouragements to keep it.

Q. *Did our firſt parents keep their covenant with God?*

A. No; for tho' they had ſufficient ſtrength given them for keeping it perfectly; yet being left to the freedom of their own will, they did ſo miſmanage the ſame, that they miſbelieved God, hearkened to the devil, and complied with his temptation to eat the forbidden fruit: Whereby they ſinned againſt the cleareſt light, and were guilty of the moſt curſed ingratitude and rebellion againſt God.

Q. *What ſtate did the breach of the covenant of works bring man into?*

A. Into a moſt wretched and miſerable condition, having thereby loſt God's image, his favour, and all communion with him; plunged himſelf into a fearful gulf of ſin; and fallen under the ſentence of death and all ſorts of miſeries, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal.

Q. *Was the whole poſterity of Adam brought into this awful ſtate by Adam's ſin?*

A. Yes; all of them who deſcended from him, by ordinary generation: So that never any, but the man Chriſt, was excepted.

Q. *How can we be charged with Adam's guilt, ſeeing we were not exiſtent when he ſinned?*

A. Becauſe when the covenant was made with Adam, he acted as a public perſon, repreſenting his whole poſterity who were then in his loins; and thus the covenant being made with them in him, they ſinned in him, and fell with him, Rom. v. 12. 18. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 21. 22.

Q. *Was there no remedy provided for Adam in the firſt covenant in caſe of a breach?*

A. No; for it threatned death for the leaſt tranſgreſſion, and left the tranſgreſſor hopeleſs under the curſe, without a promiſe of pardon upon repentance, or of new ſtrength upon loſing what he had, or of a ſurety to anſwer for him, Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10.

Q. *Was it poſſible for fallen man to find out a remedy for himſelf?*

A. No; for he loſt all power to do any thing that was good; and his miſery called for a ranſom of infinite value; which none but God could provide, Rom. vii. 18. Pſal. xlix. 7. 8. Mic. vi. 6. 7. Hoſ. xiii. 9.

Q. *Is the covenant of works now diſannulled, ſo as it hath no power over any man?*

A. No; for every natural man and unbeliever, is as much under the power and obligation of this covenant as ever Adam was; it ſtill ſtands in full force againſt all ſuch; they are obliged to perform its condition, viz. perfect obedience, and alſo to undergo the penalty for breaking it, for they lie ſtill under its ſentence according to John iii. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already, i. e.* by virtue of the covenant of works, which they have violated. And Eph. ii. 3. it is ſaid, "We are all by nature the children wrath," *i. e.* we are doomed to wrath and deſtruction by the broken covenant of works, and ſtill lie under the ſentence, while we are in the ſtate of nature.

Q. *Is any man now able to anſwer the demands of the covenant of works?*

A. No; for, as we have loſt our ſtrength to perform its condition, ſo it is impoſſible for any created power to pay its penalty, or give ſatisfaction to infinite juſtice for the offence of ſin.

Q. *But how is it conſiſtent with juſtice to require that from us, which we are utterly unable to perform?*

A. Tho' we by our own fault have loſt our ſtrength to obey, yet God doth not thereby loſe his juſt right to demand what belongs to him. A *creditor* loſeth not his right to crave a juſt debt, becauſe the *debtor* has ſquandered away his ſtock, and is turned bankrupt; nay, he is ſtill liable and his children too. So in this caſe our being unable to pay, will not abſolve us from our debts; eſpecially ſeeing the inability is brought on by ourſelves.

Q. *Is there any way for ſuch bankrupts as we are, to be diſcharged of that debt, and looſed from the bond of the firſt covenant?*

A. There is no way, but by taking hold of the new covenant, and flying to its Mediator and Surety for the payment of our debt.

Q. *Are believers in Chriſt, wholly abſolved from the obligation of the covenant of works?*

A. They are wholly looſed from this covenant, as to its power of juſtification and condemnation. It can neither juſtify nor condemn them, ſince God hath entered into a new covenant with them for their juſtification. But tho' it be no ways binding upon believers, as a covenant; yet ſtill it binds them as a law, or rule, for regulating their hearts and lives: For the law being of univerſal moral equity, it remains a perpetual rule of righteouſneſs to believers as well as others; and it is impoſſible that a rational creature can at any time be looſed from its obligation as a holy and juſt law; tho' believers are freed from its condemnation as a covenant. As the law or covenant of works is (in reſpect of its threats and whips) a ſchool-maſter to drive us unto Chriſt for righteouſneſs and juſtification; ſo Chriſt graciouſly frees his people from the rigour and condemning power of this ſchool-maſter; but refers them back to him as a guide and director of their walk and behaviour, Gal. iii. 13. 24. 1 Cor. ix. 21, Rom. iv. 14. Rom. vii. 16. 22. 25.

Q. *Is it ſimply impoſſible for any man now, to enter heaven by the way of a covenant of works?*

A. Yes certainly, for that way was eternally blocked up by Adam's fall; ſo that there is no paſſage by it ever ſince, Rom. iii. 20. Rom. viii. 3. Gal. ii. 21.

Q. *If there be no ſalvation by that covenant, why doth the Lord now require ſinners to perform the condition of it, viz,* perfect obedience; *as he did the Iſraelites of old and that young man,* Mat. xix. 17. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments?"

A. The Lord inſiſts on the terms of the firſt covenant with all ſinners in a natural ſtate, not to ſhew that life is attainable that way, but for theſe reaſons.

1. To ſhew the equity of the terms of the firſt covenant, the juſtice of its ſentence, and his right to demand obedience and ſatisfaction thereto.

2*dly*, To humble proud ſelf-conceited ſinners under a ſenſe of guilt, and convince them of their own impotency.

3*dly*, To drive them out of themſelves, and make them deſpair of ſalvation by their own righteouſneſs, and of finding life by the firſt covenant, Rom. vii. 9.

4*thly*, To convince them of the abſolute neceſſity of betaking themſelves to the covenant of Grace, and the righteouſneſs of the Mediator therein provided, Gal. iii. 22. 24.

Q. *Why have men ſuch a natural inclination to be juſtified and ſaved by the way of the old covenant of works?*

A. It being the covenant of nature, and made with Adam when all mankind was in his loins; men, by nature do ſtill entertain a deep impreſſion of it. Beſides, man by nature being a proud and ſelfiſh creature, he is unwilling to be beholden to another for righteouſneſs and ſalvation, but ſtrongly inclineth to be his own Saviour and to ſtand upon his own legs, and this we all derive by natural generation from Adam. Hence it was that the Jews and Phariſees of old, ſought ſo earneſtly to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and declined to ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, Mat. xix. 16. Luke xviii. 11. Rom. x. 3. Hence alſo the Galatians of old ſought to join their own works with Chriſt's righteouſneſs (as the Papiſts do now) in the matter of juſtification. We are all naturally, married into the law, or a covenant of works, that is our firſt huſband; and from it we muſt neceſſarily be divorced, in order to our being married to Chriſt and his righteouſneſs in a covenant of grace. But ſo ſtrong and rooted is our inclination to our firſt huſband the covenant of works; that even the beſt believers have a natural hankering after it, and find it the greateſt difficulty in the world, to get their hearts weaned and pluckt from ſelf-righteouſneſs; and from ſeeking to be juſtified and accepted with God, by virtue of ſomething in themſelves.

Q. *Did God leave all mankind to periſh under the ſentence and penalty of the broken covenant of works?*

A. No, for God of his own free-grace from all eternity, hath elected ſome to be redeemed and ſaved from it, Eph. i. 4. 5.

Q. *What way hath God choſen to redeem and ſave elect ſinners from their loſt and periſhing eſtate?*

A. Man being wholly miſerable, and incapable of any relief by the firſt covenant; God of his infinite mercy was pleaſed to frame a gracious new covenant, anſwering all the demands of our miſerable circumſtances, and conſtituted his own Son to be the Mediator and ſurety of it; and this is now the only way and method of ſalvation, Gen. iii. 15. Gen. xvii. 2. 7. Rom. viii. 3. Acts. iv. 12.

Q. *What is this gracious new covenant, which God hath made for redeeming fallen man?*

A. It may be ſaid to be twofold, 1. The covenant made from eternity with Chriſt in name of the elect, commonly called the *covenant of redemption.*

2*dly*, The covenant of reconciliation made in time with the elect in Chriſt, commonly called the *covenant of grace.*

Q. *Doth the word of God give any ground for this diſtinction?*

A. Yes, Pſalm lxxxix. 3. &c. Iſa. lix. 21.

Q. *What is the covenant of redemption?*

A. It is an eternal and gracious agreement in the counſel of the glorious trinity, upon the foreſight of man's fall, for the redemption and recovery of elect ſinners: Wherein God the Father out of his infinite mercy gave a certain number of fallen mankind, to God the Son, as their federal repreſentative and ſurety to be by him redeemed and ſaved: And for this end, demanding of him, that he ſhould aſſume their nature, and in their room ſatisfy divine juſtice, by paying their whole debt both of obedience and ſuffering, the which they were obliged to do by the covenant of works: and alſo, that he ſhould undertake to gather all the loſt elect and bring them unto God. And for his encouragement in this great work, it was promiſed to the Son, that he ſhould have all requiſite furniture, ſupport, acceptance, and ſucceſs: And likewiſe a glorious reward to himſelf, together with grace and glory to his people. With which propoſals of the Father, the Son out of his infinite free love did moſt chearfully comply; undertook to do the whole work required of him, accepting of, and claiming the promiſes made unto him, Pſalm lxxxix. 3, 4, 19, 20, *&c.* Iſa. xlix. 3, 4, *&c.* Iſa. lix. 20, 21, 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Heb. x. 5, 9. Pſalm ii. 7, 8. Iſa. l. 5, 6, 7. Pſalm xl. 7, 8. John x. 18. John xvii. 4, 5.

Q. *What is the covenant of grace?*

A. It is God's free and gracious paction with elect ſinners in Chriſt, propoſed to and made with them in the goſpel: Wherein, according to his eternal compact with Chriſt their ſurety, and for the ſake of his mediation and merits, he graciouſly and immutably promiſeth pardon, peace, grace, and glory to them. Particularly, he promiſeth in an abſolute manner, to grant them the bleſſings of vocation, faith, regeneration, and other means of ſalvation. And in order to their obtaining of the pardon of ſin, the adoption of children, and eternal life, (all which bleſſings are purchaſed by Chriſt) he requires of them, that they believe "in his ſon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt," and accept of him, with all the benefits of this covenant by a true and lively faith, which they are called to ſhew forth by a ſincere repentance, and ſtudy of new obedience. All which gracious promiſes and demands, the elect in due time, upon God's call, do cordially acquieſce in, accept of, and give conſent unto; And this they do, thro' the grace and ſtrength of Chriſt their ſurety, according to his eternal engagement for them, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. Heb. viii. 10. John i. 12. John iii, 16. James ii. 18. 22, John

vi. 37. 44. 45. John xvii. 12. Acts v. 31.

Q. *Was not this new covenant a moſt wonderful, gracious, and ſuitable contrivance and remedy for our miſery in a fallen ſtate?*

A. Yes, for tho' the firſt was a glorious covenant contrived in infinite wiſdom; yet ſeeing it could not anſwer the demands of the miſerable circumſtances we plunged ourſelves into, God was content to lay it aſide, and frame a new one ſuitable to our miſery. For the firſt covenant leaving man helpleſs, hopleſs, and remedileſs under its ſentence, having no proviſion for pardon, place for repentance, nor room for a Mediator, God pitied us in our undone ſtate, (tho' he could more eaſily have deſtroyed Adam and his poſterity, and made a new world of innocent creatures to have been governed by the firſt covenant) yea, he took down that glorious fabrick of obedience and rewards, and framed a more gracious and excellent one in its ſtead, for ſaving loſt man. And ſeeing man was diſabled and incapacitate for covenanting with God by himſelf a ſecond time, God found out a Mediator and Surety to bind for him, and perform both the condition and pay the penalty of the firſt covenant, and anſwer for any new thing to be demanded of him. And thus both God's juſtice is ſatisfied, and man's happineſs ſecured: the lawbreaker's life ſaved, and the law maker's honour maintained; and free grace highly glorified.

Q. *Is there not a great affinity betwixt the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace?*

A. Yes, for they agree not only in their ſpring ends, and indiſſolvable nature, but likewiſe in their ſubſtance and matter; in ſo far as the *covenant of redemption* doth comprehend the whole of the *covenant of grace*, both promiſes and demands: for the whole bleſſings and benefits promiſed in the covenant of grace to the elect, were from eternity promiſed in the covenant of redemption to Chriſt their head and repreſentative; and ſo to the elect in him: And for the condition or qualifications required of the elect in the covenant of grace; they were firſt demanded of Chriſt their head in the covenant of redemption, who then undertook and became ſurety for his peoples performance. So that we ſee in ſome reſpect, the covenant of grace is only a tranſcript of the covenant of redemption, according to 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Gal. iii. 16.

Q. *Wherein then doth thoſe two covenants differ?*

A. In theſe reſpects, 1. As to the time of making them; the covenant of redemption being made from all eternity; but the covenant of grace only in time, by the preaching of the goſpel.

2dly, The federates or parties covenanting are different: In the covenant of redemption the Father and the Son are the only parties covenanting; but in the covenant of grace, God and the elect are the parties. I grant, that Chriſt is a federate in the covenant of grace, as well as in that of redemption, but in different reſpects: For in the firſt he ſtood as principal, but in the ſecond as ſurety. In the firſt he was the only party: but in the ſecond he hath the elect joined with him. Chriſt is the mediator and ſurety of the covenant of grace, but the covenant of redemption had no mediator or ſurety; the Father and the Son truſted one another upon the agreement.

3dly, Theſe two covenants differ from one another as a prior treaty or agreement made by one friend for the behoof of another, doth differ from the poſterior ratification of it by the party concerned, for whoſe good it was made. Our bleſſed Redeemer Chriſt graciouſly ſiſted himſelf as the elect's repreſentative in the covenant of redemption, tranſacted with God the creditor for the payment of their debt, and made a moſt advantageous bargain for them. But it being made without the elect's knowledge, it was neceſſary that their conſent ſhould be had to this treaty and method of ſalvation; wherefore God is pleaſed to cauſe it to be promulgate and propoſed to them in the goſpel, for the gaining of their conſent. And God's voice to them in the goſpel, is to this effect: "Are you content with what Chriſt my Son hath engaged and done in your name? Are you willing to quit all other methods of ſalvation, and come to me through a Mediator, and rely wholly upon his righteouſneſs? Are you ſatisfied with the remedy provided for you in the covenant of redemption?" O, ſaith the the poor ſoul, (being determined thereto by the powerful operation of the holy Ghoſt, whoſe office it is, according to the foreſaid eternal agreement to apply the remedy prepared by Chriſt) "This is a moſt noble method of ſalvation, I am well pleaſed with the eternal treaty and the execution of it, with the Mediator and his righteouſneſs, and with the great and precious promiſes made to me in him: I renounce all other ways of ſalvation, and rely entirely on Chriſt to bring me to God." And this is that which we call the covenant of grace.

4thly, They differ in reſpect of their comprehenſiveneſs, the covenant of redemption being far more large and comprehenſive than the covenant of grace, in regard it doth contain it and much more: For the covenant of redemption hath in it, not only what is promiſed to, and required of the elect, but alſo many diſtinct demands of Chriſt as their ſurety, and promiſes made to him as ſuch, which do not immediately concern the elect: Such as theſe, it was required of Chriſt that he ſhould "leave his glory, take a body of fleſh, fulfil the law, and ſuffer death: Alſo, that he ſhould quicken the elect by his Spirit, convert and ſanctify them, guide them through the world, and bring them ſafe to glory at laſt." Again, it was promiſed to Chriſt perſonally, for his encouragement to engage in this work, that he ſhould have all "needful aſſiſtance and furniture for it, acceptance and ſucceſs in it, and a glorious perſonal reward, an honourable reſurrection, and high exaltation above all principalities and powers. That he ſhould have the adminiſtration of all things put in his hands, for the good of his people; as an unſearchable treaſure of grace and rich ſupplies given him, to communicate to them, whatever is for their good and happineſs:" Whereupon Chriſt as our ſurety freely undertook the work propoſed, and laid hold on the promiſes, both theſe made to him perſonally, and theſe made to his ſeed in him, Gal. iii. 16. 2. Tim. i. 9.

Thus we ſee how many things there are in the covenant of redemption, required of, and promiſed to Chriſt as the elect's ſurety and repreſentative, diſtinct from the things promiſed to and required of the elect themſelves: Which laſt part makes up the covenant of grace when promulgate to them in the goſpel for their conſent and acceptance; ſo that it is plainly a part or branch of the covenant of redemption, and differs nothing from it but as a part doth from the whole, or as the map of a particular province diſtinctly bounded and illuminated, with a new inſcription or dedication, differs from a general map of the whole kingdom whereof it is a part. The covenant of grace as propoſed to and made with Chriſt in the elect's name from eternity, can hardly be diſtinguiſhed from the covenant of redemption; for thus it is a conſtituent part thereof, and incorporated with it. But as it is drawn out by itſelf, to be propoſed to the elect in the goſpel and their conſent obtained to it, it becomes a diſtinct covenant. Nay, it is diſtinct both in reſpect of conditions and promiſes.

1. In reſpect of conditions; death and ſatisfaction for ſin thereby, was the great condition of the covenant of redemption on Chriſt's part; but faith and cloſing with Chriſt thereby, is the condition of the covenant of grace on the elect's part. I grant indeed, that Chriſt our Mediator is bound for the performance of both theſe conditions, but it is in different reſpects, for the firſt he is engaged as principal, but for the ſecond as ſurety. Chriſt undertook, for us, things of two ſorts; firſt, things that he was to do for us, by himſelf: ſecondly, things that he was to make and enable us to do: The firſt ſort he performed for us, according to the covenant of redemption, as the principle party engaged for them. The ſecond, he works in us as the ſurety of the covenant of grace, which from eternity he undertook to be. Now there is a great difference betwixt theſe two: for tho' it be certain and true in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, that Chriſt actually died for us, and ſatisfied juſtice for us, and in our room; yet it can noways be ſaid that he repents or believes for us; theſe are formally our acts, tho' it be Chriſt that enables us to do them, and works them in us.

2. In reſpect of promiſes; the great promiſe on God's part to Chriſt in the covenant of redemption, was giving to him a ſeed and a glorious reward: But his great promiſe to the elect in the covenant of grace, is the giving of redemption and eternal life to the party believing. The tenor of the covenant of redemption as made with Chriſt from eternity runs thus; "make thy ſoul an offering for ſin, and thou ſhalt ſee thy ſeed:" But the tenor of the covenant of grace as propoſed to the elect in the goſpel, is, "Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt not periſh in thy ſins, but have everlaſting life," Iſa. liii. 10. John iii. 16.

Q. *Wherein doth the covenant of grace differ from the covenant of works?*

A. In many things, ſuch as, 1. The covenant of works which God entered into with our firſt parents was a covenant of friendſhip, betwixt God and an innocent creature, that were in amity together. But the covenant of grace is a covenant of reconciliation betwixt enemies, an offended God and guilty man; the firſt flowed from divine love and goodneſs; but the ſecond from divine compaſſion and tender mercies.

2. The firſt covenant was univerſal, being made with all mankind in Adam. But the ſecond in particular, being only made with the elect in Chriſt.

3. The condition required of Adam in the firſt covenant, was working and obeying, and that to perfection; but that required of us in the ſecond, is believing.

4. The firſt covenant makes the proper condition of life, and the ground of man's juſtification before God, to be the righteouſneſs performed by the man himſelf: But the ſecond, declares it to be, the righteouſneſs performed by our ſurety Chriſt, apprehended by our faith.

5. The firſt covenant did not provide, not ſo much as admit of a Mediator or ſurety to anſwer for Adam's performing his part of it, or of any remedy in caſe of breaking it; for it allowed no place for repentance, it gave no hopes of forgiveneſs upon any condition whatſoever. But the ſecond covenant doth graciouſly admit and allow of all theſe.

6. The firſt covenant could be broken and diſannulled, but the ſecond is indiſſolvable and everlaſting because of the ſufficiency and faithfulneſs of its ſurety, Iſa. liv. 10. Iſa. lv. 3. Heb. vii. 22. 24. 25.

7. The leaſt ſin or failing on Adam's part, made void the firſt covenant, excluded him from all the bleſſings promiſed in it, and rendered him perfectly miſerable: But all the ſins and failings of the elect cannot diſſolve the ſecond, to deprive them of happineſs, Pſalm lxxxix. 31. 33. 34. Jer. iii. 14. Heb. xiii. 5. 8. 1 John ii. 1. 2.

Q. *Hath our faith the ſame place in the covenant of grace, that Adam's obedience had in the covenant of works? Or is faith the condition of the covenant of grace, in the ſame ſenſe, that Adam's obedience was the condition of the covenant of works?*

A. No, for Adam's obedience was his righteouſneſs before God and the proper ground of his juſtification and claim to happineſs: It was a real and pleadable condition according to the covenant, upon which Adam's title to life and happineſs was properly founded. But this cannot be ſaid of the believer's faith; for faith is not his righteouſneſs before God, nor the ground of his juſtification and claim to happineſs; it being only the inſtrument or applying condition required of him for intereſting him in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt his ſurety; which alone is the proper ground of his juſtification and claim to happineſs; and the only pleadable and meritorious condition of life and ſalvation, which the poor naked and guilty ſoul muſt flee to and depend upon.

2. The condition required of Adam in the firſt covenant was to be performed by him in his own ſtrength, *i. e.* the ſtrength that was given him at his creation. But the condition required in the ſecond covenant, is not to be performed by the elect ſinner in his own natural ſtrength, but by the ſtrength freely promiſed and communicated to him in this covenant.

Q. *Doth not the covenant of grace oblige us to obedience, as well as the covenant of works did?*

A. Yes, but not in the ſame way, or for the ſame ends.

Q. *What is the difference betwixt legal and evangelical obedience?*

A. It is very great in ſeveral reſpects. 1. Legal obedience was peremptorily commanded as man's duty: But evangelical obedience is alſo freely promiſed, and given as the gift of God.

2. The firſt could not be admitted, unleſs abſolutely perfect: But the ſecond is accepted, tho' imperfect, if ſincere.

3. They vaſtly differ in their ends, the firſt was required as the proper condition of life and happineſs, but the ſecond, as an evidence of our faith, and conformity to our Redeemer. The firſt was for the juſtification of our perſons; but the ſecond for the teſtification of our gratitude for redeeming love. The firſt was required as the legal condition for purchaſing of

heaven and glory ; but the ſecond, as a goſpel qualification in order to poſſeſſing it only.

Q. *What names or epithets doth the covenant of grace get in ſcripture?*

A. A great many, particularly it is called a teſtament, a covenant of peace, a covenant of life, a covenant of promiſe, a new covenant, an everlaſting, holy, ſure, and well ordered covenant, Heb. ix. 15. Ezek. xxxvii. 26. Mal. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 24. Iſa. lv. 3. Luke iv. 78. 2. Sam. xxiii. 5.

Q. *Why is this covenant called a teſtament?*

A. It is frequently called ſo in ſcripture, and that becauſe the everlaſting inheritance promiſed in it, with all things thereunto belonging, is freely bequeathed and made over to the elect ; yea, even the things required of them, are freely promiſed to them : And all theſe precious promiſes and legacies are made ſure and firm to them by the death of Jeſus Chriſt the Teſtator, Heb. ix. 15. 16. 17. Matth. xxvi. 28.

Q. *Is the covenant of grace a ſcripture term, and what is the import and meaning of it?*

A. This term indeed is not found in the expreſs words, tho' it be oft expreſt in words equivalent. The term is very ſignificant and moſt fitly appropriated to this covenant ; in regard the free grace (*i. e.* the undeſerved mercy and goodneſs) of God is richly and gloriouſly diſplayed in this covenant. It was free grace that inclined God at firſt to contrive it, that moved him afterwards to reveal and propoſe it. It is free grace that determines the elect to conſent to it, and abide in it. And it is the exalting of God's free grace which is the great end and deſign of it. But more eſpecially it is called a covenant of grace, in reſpect of the matter of it, all the bleſſings and good things promiſed in it, being God's gracious and free gifts to undeſerving ſinners, proceeding merely from his gratuitous bounty and aſtoniſhing free love in Chriſt. Yea, ſo full of grace is this covenant, tho' God is pleaſed to require faith of us, as the condition to intereſt us in the benefits of it, and alſo good works to ſhew forth that faith : Yet, both that faith, and theſe works, are as freely promiſed and given to the elect by virtue of this covenant, as any other bleſſing in it Eph. i. 4. 5. 6. Eph. ii. 8. 9. 10. Zech. iv. 8.

Q. *What are theſe bleſſings, gifts, and benefits, which are ſo freely offered and promiſed to us in this covenant?*

A. They are ſo many, they cannot be numbred ; and ſo great, they cannot be expreſt. The great things ſtipulated on God's part in this covenant, and that which is the ſum and ſubſtance of all his other promiſes, is *I will be your God*, Jer. xxxi. 33. This is the fulleſt, largeſt, ſweeteſt, ſublimeſt, and moſt comprehenſive promiſe in the whole Bible. The covenant of works had no ſuch promiſe that we read of ; God ſaid only to Adam, *Do this and live*, *i. e.* Thou ſhalt have life and happineſs. But in the covenant of grace, he ſaid, *Believe in my Son*, and *I will be thy God*, *i. e.* I'll not only give you life, heaven, and glory, but I'll give you myſelf, a Jehovah, all I am, all I have, and all I can do ſhall be thine. *I'll be thy God*, includes all God's bleſſings to his people, whether grace or glory, earth or heaven, time or eternity. It implies his ſtanding inſtead of all relations to them, his being their father, their king, their huſband, their maſter, their friend, their benefactor, and all things to them. Further, *I'll be your God*, imports an intereſt in all the divine attributs and perfections, you ſhall have my wiſdom for your direction, my power, for your protection, my mercy, for your pardon, my grace for your ſanctification, my faithfulneſs for making good all the promiſes to you, and my ſufficiency for giving you perfect happineſs. Nay, a whole eternity ſhall be yours, the Father with his eternal love and pity, the Son with all the fulneſs of his purchaſe, and the Holy Ghoſt to make application of the bleſſings of that purchaſe unto you.

Q. *What are the bleſſings of Chriſt's purchaſe contained in this covenant?*

A. All the bleſſings and mercies that ever were or ſhall be enjoyed by any believer in time or eternity, they are all the fruits of Chriſt's purchaſe, and run to them in the channel of this covenant. The chief of theſe particular bleſſings, are, "The new heart, illumination, faith, repentance, pardon, freedom from the law's curſes, reconciliation, adoption, ſanctification, acceſs to God, hearing of prayers, the quicknings, conſolations, and conduct of the holy Spirit, increaſe of grace, peace of conſcience, perſeverance, the miniſtry of angels, ſuitable outward proviſion, through-bearing at death, reſurrection to life, and eternal glory :" Together with all the graces of the Spirit and innumerable other bleſſings, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal : Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 26. 27. Heb. viii. 10. 11. 12. Pſalm xxiii. 1. &c. Pſalm. xxxiv. 10. Pſalm lxxxiv. 11. Pſalm xci. 11. Iſaiah xxxiii. 16. Iſaiah xli. 10. Jer. iii. 19. Hoſ. xiv. 4. 5. John x. 28. 1 Cor. i. 30. 1 Cor. iii. 22. 2 Cor. i. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 18. Jer. xxxi. 33. 34. Jer. xxxii. 38. 39. 40. 41. Rom. viii. 26. 28. John iii. 18. 36. John xiv. 16. 17. 29. Iſaiah liv. 13. Iſaiah liii. 11. Rom. iii. 24. 25. 26. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Phil. iv. 19. 2 Pet. i. 4.

Q. *Whether is the covenant of grace abſolute or conditional?*

A. If the defination before given of this covenant with the ſcripture texts whereon it is founded, be duly conſidered and compared, we will find it is partly abſolute, and partly conditional.

Q. *In what reſpect is the covenant of grace abſolute?*

A. In reſpect of the firſt bleſſings and benefits promiſed in it, which ſerve as means for obtaining the ends of the covenant, ſuch as effectual vocation, regeneration, faith and repentance ; theſe are promiſed, and given abſolutely and freely by God for Chriſt's ſake, without depending on any condition to be performed by the elect, Heb. viii. 10. John vi. 44. 45.

Q. *In what reſpect is this covenant conditional?*

A. In reſpect of the ſecond and ſubſequent bleſſings of it, which are as the end of the foreſaid means, ſuch as union with Chriſt, juſtification, adoption, and golorification. God is pleaſed to ſuſpend the beſtowing of theſe till that condition be performed by the elect, which he requires, *viz.* faith, John i. 12. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 19.

Q. *In what ſenſe is faith called a condition on our part, in this covenant?*

A. I ſhewed before, that it is not to be meant in that ſenſe, that obedience is called the condition of the covenant of works ; that we do not underſtand it as an act any way meritorious, or pleadable before God for a reward, or an act performed by our own inherent ſtrength, or elicite by the power of our free-will. But we mean only that faith is an act or qualification required of us in point of duty, as neceſſarily antecendent to the conferring of the promiſed bleſſings of pardon and life: And that the beſtowing of theſe bleſſings is ſuſpended, till this act or condition be performed.

Q. *Is faith the only condition of the covenant of grace?*

A. In this covenant, there are conditions of three ſorts, 1. There is *conditio propter quam*, or a *condition for which* the bleſſings of this covenant are beſtowed on the elect, and that is Chriſt's ſatiſfaction and merits, in reſpect whereof, all the bleſſings of the covenant are truly conditional, except that of election, and God's purpoſe of redemption.

2. There is *conditio per quam*, or a *condition by which* we come to get an actual title to and intereſt in the ſecond, or ſubſequent bleſſings of the covenant before mentioned, and that is faith, which is required as a neceſſary condition, inſtrument, or mean of application on one part, in order to our partaking of theſe bleſſings, Rom. v. 1. Acts xvi. 30.

3. There is *conditio ſine qua non*, or a *condition without which* the foreſaid bleſſings of pardon and eternal life cannot be enjoyed: So repentance and new obedience may be called conditions of this ſort; in regard they are abſolutely neceſſary for all Chriſtians partly as the concomitants, fruits and evidences of a true faith; and partly to prepare and "make us meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light," Luke viii. 3. Zech. xii. 10. Col. i. 10. 12. Heb. xii. 14.

Q. *Doth it not detract from the grace and freeneſs of this covenant, and afford ſomething to the creature whereof to boaſt, to ſay that the covenant requires any condition on our part?*

A. If any act or duty required of us in this covenant, were to be performed by our natural ſtrength, or by the help of common grace; or if it did give a right to the bleſſings of the covenant in any meritorious way, either by way of *congruity* or *condignity* in the popiſh ſenſe: Then indeed, it would derogate from the free grace of this covenant; wherefore, with all ſound Proteſtants, we muſt abhor all thoughts of ſuch duties, works, or conditions as theſe. But when we call faith a condition, and underſtand it only of a gracious inſtrument or qualification in the elect, purchaſed for them by Jeſus Chriſt, abſolutely promiſed by God in this covenant, and wrought in them by the Holy Ghoſt; a grace, that receives all from God and gives the entire glory to God: ſuch a conditionality of faith is noways inconſiſtent with a covenant of grace, or of promiſe, Eph. ii. 5. 8.

Q. *Since faith is not performed by our ſtrength, but wrought in us by the holy Spirit, how can it be ſaid to be a condition on our part?*

A. Tho' the grace and power of believing be derived from God's Spirit, yet the act of believing is properly the act and deed of the gracious ſoul, as being exerted and performed by his faculties: And hence it is that the Spirit of God ſtiles theſe truly our works, that are wrought in us by his grace, Iſa. xxvi. 12. *Lord, thou haſt wrought all our works in us.* They are ſtill termed *our works*, though performed by his grace.

Q. *May not love, repentance, humility, ſelf-denial, holineſs, and new obedience, be called conditions of this covenant as well as faith, ſeeing theſe are likewiſe required of all that enter into this covenant, and many bleſſings of this covenant, are alſo ſuſpended until the performance of them?*

A. There is a very great difference betwixt the conditionality of theſe graces, and that of faith, as I ſhall afterwards make appear. In the mean time, I own, if conditions be taken in a large ſenſe, for every thing, duty, or qualification, that is neceſſarily required of thoſe that enter into this covenant; then indeed all the forementioned graces and qualifications may be called conditions or terms in this covenant: and ſome of theſe terms, conditions or qualifications are neceſſary as antecedents unto our entering into this covenant, others as concomitants of it, and others as conſequents to it, though indeed they are alſo freely promiſed to the elect.

Q. *What are theſe terms or qualifications, that are required as antecedents unto our entering into this covenant?*

A. Such as hearing of the word, ſome knowledge of God, and ſenſe of our miſery, and deſpair of help in ourſelves, and a ſight of our need of a Mediator, *&c.* All theſe may be called antecedent or preparatory conditions of our entering into covenant, in regard they are neceſſarily and previouſly requiſite unto it, Mat. ix. 12. Luke xv. 16. 17. John iv. 10.

Q. *What are theſe terms or qualifications, that are required as concomitants?*

A. Such as, repentance, love, humility, ſelf-denial, ſpiritual hunger, *&c.* theſe may be called concomitant conditions of our entering into this covenant, in regard they do neceſſarily accompany it, and are inſeparable from true faith, Mark i. 15. Acts ii. 38. Luke vii. 47. Luke ix. 23. Phil. ii. 3. 8. Mat. v. 6.

Q. *What are theſe terms or qualifications, which are required as conſequents unto our entering into this covenant?*

A. Such as, evangelical obedience, taking up the croſs, patience, perſeverance, *&c.* theſe we find laid down as fruits and evidences of faith, and required as neceſſary conditions, of our enjoying and poſſeſſing the ends of this covenant, *viz.* eternal life and glory, Gen. xvii. 1, 2. Luke ix. 23. Heb. xii. 14. Heb. x. 36, 38. I ſay, all theſe may be called conditions or terms in this covenant, in the ſenſe before ſpecified; as being duties and qualifications neceſſarily required of all thoſe that enter into it; and ſo we find theſe words, conditions and terms, uſed by many ſound Proteſtant divines.

Q. *What is the difference betwixt the condition of faith, and theſe other conditions required? Or what preference hath faith to theſe, in reference to this covenant?*

A. Repentance, and the other graces and qualifications before-named, are only conditions of certain connection, without which we cannot be juſtified, united to Chriſt, or inherit his purchaſed glory: but faith is the only inſtrumental, uniting and applying condition of our juſtification, by, and through which, as a mean and inſtrument we are actually juſtified, united to Chriſt and intitled to all the bleſſings of his purchaſe. It far excels all other graces, in regard it hath a peculiar influence on our juſtification, and union with Chriſt. It doth that noble office to us, which no other grace or act of ours is capable of, becauſe of its ſpecial aptitude and fitneſs for taking hold of the Redeemer, and cloſing with his righteouſneſs. Hence we are frequently ſaid to be juſtified by faith, but never by repentance, love or any other grace. And the righteouſneſs that doth juſtify us, is oft called the "righteouſneſs of faith and by faith." And it ſo is called to teach us, that as the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is the only meritorious condition of our juſtification and our partaking of the great bleſſings of that covenant ; ſo faith is the only inſtrument and applying condition thereof, Rom. iv. 13. Rom. x. 6. Phil. iii. 9. Gal. v. 5. Heb. xi. 7.

Q. *Doth faith juſtify, and intitle us to the bleſſings of the covenant, as a work, grace, or habit in us, of ſpecial excellency and worth before God ?*

A. Not at all, for if it be conſidered as a work or grace in us, it hath not any more intrinſic worth or value, than other gracious habits, nor any more influence on our juſtification before God, than other graces have, which is indeed none at all. Faith then, doth not any ways juſtify us upon the account of its own worth, or as it is a work or grace of ours ; but only as it is an inſtrument having a peculiar fitneſs as the hand of the ſoul, for apprehending of Chriſt, and applying his righteouſneſs, which is the only ground of our juſtification before God. And upon this account only it is, that faith is preferred to all the reſt of the graces, and called the only condition of the covenant of grace on our part.

Q. *Why is Chriſt called the Mediator and ſurety of the covenant of grace ?*

A. 1. He is called the Mediator of it, becauſe he graciouſly interpoſeth betwixt God and man, who were at variance, and by his blood and Spirit reconciles them together, and brings them into a covenant of peace and friendſhip.

2. He is called ſurety of this covenant, becauſe he graciouſly undertakes for both parties fulfilling their parts of it, *viz.* that God ſhall perform all his promiſes to the elect, and that they ſhall do whatever God requires of them, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. ix. 15. Heb. vii. 22.

Q. *Doth God need any ſurety or cautioner on his part ?*

A. Not at all, upon his own account, for he is the faithful and immutable God, *for whom it is impoſſible to lie*, or falſify his promiſe. But only on our account, for our guilt having made us ſuſpicious, that God would not accept, or dwell with ſuch unworthy creatures : It was requiſite for our comfort that the Son of God ſhould be ſurety to us, for the performance of theſe promiſes, that are truly ſo great in themſelves and may juſtly be aſtoniſhing to our thoughts.

Q. *Is this covenant univerſal, or made and entered into, with all men, as the firſt covenant was ?*

A No ; it is only made and entered into, with ſuch as accept the offers and terms of it, and theſe are none but the elect, Iſa. lv. 3. Ezek. xi. 19. 20. Heb. viii. 10. Rom. ix. 4. Rom. xi. 5. 7.

Q. *Is this covenant offered to none elſe ?*

A. Chriſt and the benefits of this covenant, are tendered to all that hear the goſpel, without exception : And this is plain from the many general calls and invitations of Chriſt to loſt ſinners, with the promiſes thereto annexed, which we have recorded ; together with his peremptory commands, that require every man to come to him, and believe in him, and that under the pain of damnation, Prov. i. 20. 21. 22. 23. Prov. viii. 1. 2. 3. 4 5. Iſa. xlv. 22. Iſa. lv. 1. Mark xvi. 15. 16. Acts ii. 38. 39. Rev. iii. 17. 18. Rev. xxii. 17.

Q. *Have all men, even the worſt, ſufficient warrant from theſe general calls, commands and promiſes to come to Chriſt, and take hold of his covenant, with all its benefits and promiſes ?*

A. Yes ; they may do it warrantably without any fear of preſumption, firmly expecting welcome upon their coming. Nay, they heinouſly ſin againſt God and their own ſouls, if they neglect to do it, Iſa. li. 3. 4. 5. John iv. 37. Heb. ii. 3. Heb. iv. 1. 2.

Q. *Why is this covenant offered and tendred to all the hearers of the goſpel indefinitely, ſeeing it is only made with a certain number of them, viz. the elect ?*

A. Becauſe it hath ſo pleaſed a wiſe and ſovereign God who doth all things *according to the counſel of his will*, and is not bound to give account of his matters. Yet we may adventure to ſay, that he doth it for theſe ends, namely, that he may proclaim the ſufficiency and perfection of Chriſt's ranſom, together with the freeneſs and fulneſs of divine grace, as a ſufficient foundation for all to believe, and flee to Chriſt for refuge. And alſo, that by this method the elect may be gathered out of the multitude, and the refuſers of Chriſt left without excuſe, Eph. it 11. Job xxxiii. 13. Mat. xx. 16. Luke xv. 22. Heb. ii. 3. Heb. xi. 13. 14.

Q. *Is there any way to ſalvation, but by the covenant of grace and Chriſt its Mediator ?*

A. No Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 13. Gal. iit 16.

Q. *How then were the faithful, ſaved who lived under the law before Chriſt's coming in the fleſh ?*

A. Tho' they had a dark and legal diſpenſation of the myſtery of grace, yet they were under the ſame covenant, and ſaved in the ſame method with us ; for they had the ſame Mediator and ſurety, typified to them by Moſes and the ſacrifices ; they had the ſame promiſes of remiſſion and ſalvation, which we have : And they were called to look thro' the types and figures, and act faith on Chriſt to come, as their only Saviour and Redeemer. And ſo they were juſtified by Chriſt in the method of the covenant of grace, and ſaved by virtue of the blood of Chriſt their ſurety, which was agreed upon to be ſhed for them in due time, according to the covenant of redemption ; upon which account he is called "the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. See alſo Pſalm ii. 12. Iſa. xiv. 22. Acts x. 43. Gal. iii. 7. 8. 9. 1 Cor. x. 4.

Q. *Was the covenant of grace promulgate and diſpenſed to the church, always after one and the ſame manner ?*

A. No ; but in different manners ; yea, ſo different that tho' the covenant of grace under all periods, hath ſtill been the ſame for ſubſtance, yet, becauſe of its gradual revelation and different adminiſtration, is diſtinguiſhed into the old and New Taſtament, or the old and the new covenant of grace. The old covenant being that which was adminiſtred before Chriſt's coming in the fleſh ; and the new, that which is adminiſtred ſince his coming, Heb. i. 1. Jer. xxxi. 31. 2 Cor. iii. 6. 7. 8. Heb. viii. 13. Heb. ix. 1.

Q. *Wherein doth the diſpenſation of the new covenant of Grace differ from that of the old ?*

A. The Old Teſtament or covenant of grace, was adminiſtred by promiſes, prophecies, ſacrifices and other types : Which did all point forth Chriſt as to come. But the new covenant of grace is adminiſtred by the preaching of the word, and diſpenſing of the ſacraments of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, which ſhew forth Chriſt as already come. Moreover the new diſpenſation of the covenant is far more eaſy, clear, efficacious and extenſive than that of the old, Heb. x. 1. 2. 3. *&c.* 1 Pet. it 10. Matth. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 23. Heb. viii. 6. *&c.*

Q. *What way hath God taken to eſtabliſh and confirm the covenant of grace to us?*

A. Several ways; 1. By his word of promiſe, 2. By his oath, 3. By the death and blood of his Son. 4. By outward ſigns and ſeals, commonly called ſacraments, Gen. xvii. 7. Gen. xxii. 16. 17. Heb vi. 13. to 18. Heb. xi. 16. 17. Rom. iv. 11.

Concerning the SACRAMENTS.

Queſt. W*HAT is the proper ſignification of the word* Sacrament?

A. It is not a ſcriptural word, more than the word Trinity is, yet ſeeing the thing ſignified is there, and the word is very ſignificant, it may be lawfully uſed. Anciently the word ſacrament was a military word, in uſe among the Romans, and ſignified the "ſolemn oath "which the ſoldiers took, to be true to their general:" Afterwards, it was uſed by eccleſiaſtical writers to ſignify any holy myſtery, and particularly the ſealing ordinances of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper; and indeed it is very applicable to them, ſeeing by receiving theſe ſeals, we ſolemnly engage ourſelves to be the Lord's, and ſwear to ſtand by him as faithful ſoldiers, fighting under his banner, againſt all his enemies.

Q. *What is the true nature and uſe of a ſacrament?*

A. It is a holy ordinance inſtituted by Chriſt in his church, and annexed as a ſeal to the covenant of grace; wherein by outward and ſenſible ſigns, Chriſt and the benefits of his mediation, are repreſented, ſealed and applied to thoſe that are within the covenant, to confirm their intereſt in him, to ſtrengthen and increaſe their faith and all other graces, to teſtify and cheriſh their love and communion one with another, to put a viſible difference betwixt thoſe that belong to the church, and the reſt of the world: And ſolemnly to engage them to the ſervice of God in Chriſt, according to his word, Gen. xvii. 7. 10. Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xi. 24. Rom. xv. 8. Rom. vi. 3. Eph. iv. 5.

Q. *Why is it ſaid to be an ordinance inſtituted by Chriſt in the church?*

A. 1. To ſhew that Chriſt is the ſole king and head of the church, who alone hath the power to appoint her ordinances. 2. To diſtinguiſh the ſacraments of Chriſt's inſtitution from thoſe of Popiſh invention, *viz.* the five baſtard ſacraments, of *ordination, confirmation, pennance, marriage,* and *extreme unction:* None of which are inſtituted by Chriſt for ſacraments; nor have they the parts of true ſacraments, and none of them are ſeals of the covenant of grace.

Q. *What are the parts of a ſacrament?*

A. Every ſacrament hath two parts: The one external and earthly; and the other ſpiritual and heavenly. There is an outward ſenſible ſign, that doth repreſent, convey, ſeal and apply the ſpiritual benefit thereby ſignified.

Q. *What is a ſenſible ſign?*

A. That which is obvious to the outward ſenſes of *hearing, ſeeing, taſting, ſmelling,* or *feeling.* And ſuch are both the ſacramental elements and ſacramental actions.

Q. *What things do ſacraments ſignify and ſeal?*

A. 1. As they are ſigns, they ſignify and repreſent the grace and good-will of God in Chriſt to his covenanted people. 2. As they are ſeals, they ratify and confirm his people's right to all the bleſſings and promiſes of the covenant, and likewiſe their engagemnts to new obedience.

Q. *Is not the word alone ſufficient to ſalvation? What need is there for ſacraments?*

A. It is enough to ſatisfy us, that the infinitely wiſe God hath thought fit to adjoin ſacraments to his word, as neceſſiary means of his peoples ſalvation and comfort. And ſince he hath thus graciouſly appointed them; it becomes us with reverence, thankfulneſs, and diligence to receive them, and to judge the contempt or abuſe of them a heinous ſin before God.

Q. *How doth the word and ſacraments differ as means of ſalvation?*

A. In ſeveral things; 1. The word is directed to the bodily ear; but the ſacraments to the eye and other ſenſes. 2. The word is preached to all without exception; but the ſacraments belong to none but the members of the church. 3. The word is the ordinary mean of begetting faith; but the ſacraments are means for confirming and increaſing it, Mark xvi. 15. Acts xviii. 36. Gen. xvii. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 5. Rom. iv. 11.

Q. *Why hath God adjoined ſacraments to the word?*

A. 1. That he might give a further proof of his condeſcending goodneſs, and tender concern for his peoples good. It is a wonderful condeſcenſion in God to diſpoſe his grace into a covenant form, and enter into a paction with us; but it is yet more, to be content to add ſeals to it, for our further confirmation and conſolation.

2. That they might ſerve to awaken the affections and excite grace. Sacraments are, as it were a viſible goſpel, the offers of free love, and benefits of Chriſt's purchaſe are thereby expoſed to the eye, as the word doth ſound them in the ear. God knows our ſtupidity and dulneſs that we are much more affected with things that we ſee with our eyes, than that which we only hear.

3. That he might provide againſt that prevailing plague of unbelief, in his people; and ſtrengthen their weak faith, by giving them ſenſible ſigns of his love, and viſible pledges of their intereſt in it. For (as Chriſt ſaid to the nobleman of Capernaum, John iv. 48.) "Except ye ſee ſigns and wonders ye will not believe."

Q. *Are the ſacraments efficacious to work grace in all that partake of them?*

A. No; for we read of baptiſm adminiſtred to Simon Magus who ſtill remained a naughty man: And that the Lord's ſupper may be received by perſons unworthy, Acts viii. 23. Luke xiii. 26. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 27.

Q. *Whence have the ſacraments their efficacy?*

A. 1. Negatively they have it not from themſelves, *ex opere operato,* according to the Papiſts: Nor from the intention or holineſs of the miniſter that diſpenſeth them. But, 2. Poſitively, they have it from Chriſt's bleſſing, and the Spirit's working in and by them upon the ſouls of ſuch as partake of them. It is only Chriſt who by his Spirit puts life and virtue in the ſacraments, and makes them effectual means for conveying and applying his ſaving benefits to his peoples ſouls.

Q. What were the ordinary ſacraments of the Old Teſtament diſpenſation?

A. Circumciſion and the paſſover, which are now abrogated by the coming of Chriſt, who was typified by them.

Q. Hath not Chriſt appointed ſacraments under the New Teſtament diſpenſation, in the room of theſe which he aboliſhed?

A. Yes; *viz.* Baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper.

Q. Are not the ſacraments both of the Old and New Teſtament for ſubſtance the ſame?

A. Yes; for they both repreſent and exhibit Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſame ſpiritual benefits and mercies through him, Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. x. 1.

Q. Is there no difference betwixt them?

A. Yes; in ſeveral reſpects: 1. The old ſacraments repreſented Chriſt as to come; but the new as already come. 2. The old repreſented Chriſt more darkly; but the new more clearly and plainly. 3. The old were only to endure till Chriſt's coming in the fleſh; but the new until Chriſt's coming in glory. 4. Their outward ſigns differ much, one from another.

Q. How doth it appear that circumciſion and baptiſm are the ſame in ſubſtance?

A. In reſpect they are both ſacraments for initiation, typifying and repreſenting our outward pollution and original guilt, the neceſſity of being purified from carnal affections, and the way of our ſalvation by the ſhedding of Chriſt's blood.

Q. How doth it appear that the paſſover and the Lord's ſupper are the ſame for ſubſtance?

A. By the following things, 1. They both repreſent Chriſt crucified, and commemorate his love in delivering his people from the bondage of ſin and ſatan.

2. The Iſraelites behoved to prepare themſelves for keeping the paſſover, for ſome time before; particularly they kept the paſchal lamb four days in their houſes, before it was killed; during which time, (as their writers tell us) it was tied to their bed-poſts, that by their conſtant hearing of its bleatings, they might be excited to look back and remember their ſore bondage in Egypt, and their gracious deliverance from it; and alſo to look foreward and remember the ſufferings and agonies of the Meſſiah for their ſins. In like manner, communicants ought to prepare themſelves for the Lord's ſupper, by ſerious and frequent meditating upon their miſery by nature, the evil of ſin, and the bitter agonies which Chriſt endured in delivering them from it.

3. As the paſchal lamb was roaſted with fire; ſo Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper is held forth, as ſcorched with the fire of God's wrath.

4. As the paſchal lamb behoved to be eaten, and that wholly; ſo Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper muſt be received by faith, and that wholly in all his offices.

5. As the lamb in the paſſover, behoved to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs: ſo Chriſt muſt be received in the Lord's ſupper, in truth and ſincerity, with bitter repentings for ſin.

6, As the lamb in the firſt paſſover, was to be eaten by the Iſraelites in haſte, with their loins girt, ſtaves in their hands, and ſhoes on their feet; ſo Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper muſt be received without delay, with holy reſolution and preparation for our ſpiritual journey, travelling as pilgrims through the wilderneſs of this world.

7. As the blood of the lamb was to be ſprinkled on their door-poſts and lintels, for ſecuring them from the deſtroying angel, that cut off the Egyptians firſtborn; ſo in the Lord's ſupper, we muſt have our whole ſouls beſprinkled with Chriſt's blood by faith, for ſecuring us from the ſtroke of divine juſtice; nay, alſo our outward converſation that is viſible to the world muſt be ſprinkled that they may take notice of our having been with Jeſus, Exod. xii. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

Concerning BAPTISM.

Queſt. WHAT *is the true nature and uſe of baptiſm?*

A. Baptiſm is a ſacrament of the New Teſtament, annexed as a ſign and ſeal of God's covenant with believers in Chriſt; wherein Jeſus Chriſt hath ordained the waſhing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; to be a ſign, not only of the ſolemn admiſſion of the party baptized into the viſible church; but alſo a ſign and ſeal of his intereſt in the covenant of grace, with all its bleſſings purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt, repreſented by that water, and particularly to ſignify and ſeal his ingrafting into Chriſt, his remiſſion of ſins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; his adoption into God's family, and reſurrection unto everlaſting life. And likewiſe his ſolemn dedication to God through Jeſus Chriſt; and entering into an open and profeſſed engagement to be the Lord's, wholly and only his; and to walk with him in newneſs of life, Mat. xxviii. 19. Gal. iii. 27. Mark i. 4. Tit. iii. 5. Eph. v. 26. Rom. vi. 4, 5, 6, 11. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. How many ſorts of baptiſm are mentioned in ſcripture?

A. We read of ſix-fold baptiſm, 1. The Levitical baptiſms or waſhings, Heb. ix. 10. 2. The baptiſm of tears or repentance, Luke vii. 38. 3. The baptiſm of affliction, blood, or martyrdom: Thus Chriſt and the martyrs were baptized, Mat. xx. 22, 23. Luke xii. 50. 4. The baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, or the conferring of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, Acts i. 4. 5. It is ſometimes put for the Chriſtian faith or doctrine of baptiſm, Acts xviii. 25. 6. There is the ſacrament of baptiſm, which we now ſpeak of.

But principally, baptiſm is two-fold, external and internal, *fluminis et flaminis*, of water, and of the Spirit.

Q. What parts doth the ſacrament of baptiſm conſiſt of?

A. Of two parts: 1. The outward and viſible part ſignifying. 2. The ſpiritual and inviſible part thereby ſignified.

Q. What is the outward part ſignifying?

A. The waſhing of the body with water, and the uſing of the words of inſtitution.

Q. *What is the ſpiritual part ſignified by the waſhing with water?*

A. 1. The waſhing away of the guilt of ſin, or our juſtification by the blood of Chriſt applied to the ſoul. 2. The waſhing away of the filth of ſin, or our ſanctification by the Spirit of Chriſt in the work of regeneration, Rev. i. 5. John iii. 5.

Q. *What is ſignified by the words of inſtitution or bap-*

tizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt?

A. 1. It ſignifies that miniſters have authority from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to adminiſter this ſacrament of baptiſm, Mat. xxviii. 18. 19.

2. It ſignifies the baptiſed perſon his entering into a ſolemn covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, his chuſing and taking God the Father, as his God and Father; God the Son as his Redeemer and Saviour, and God the Holy Ghoſt as his guide, ſanctifier, and comforter: Alſo it ſignifies his conſecration to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and his coming under engagements to the faith, profeſſion and obedience of the holy Trinity; together with his ſolemn renouncing of the three great enemies of the holy Trinity, *viz.* the devil, the world, and the fleſh, 2 Cor. viii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. *Why is the blood of Chriſt, and bleſſings of the new covenant repreſented here by water?*

A. Becauſe of the near reſemblance they have to one another in theſe things; 1. Water hath a cleanſing virtue, for taking away filth and pollution from the body, ſo Chriſt's blood cleanſes the ſoul from ſin.

2. Water hath a refreſhing virtue to a thriſty traveller, and the dry wethered herbs; ſo Chriſt's blood and benefits are moſt refreſhing to the poor thriſty ſoul.

3. Water hath an extinguiſhing quality, for quenching fire; ſo the blood of Chriſt quencheth both the fire of God's wrath, and the fire of our luſts.

4. Water hath a mollifying virtue, it ſoftens the hardned earth; ſo Chriſt's blood hath ſoftned many a hardned heart into tears, and melted them into a compliance with God's will.

5. Water is moſt neceſſary, our bodies could not live or ſubſiſt without it; ſo the blood of Chriſt is the moſt neceſſary and uſeful thing in the world; our ſouls without it would periſh eternally.

6. Water is cheap and free to all, no man is denied of it; ſo the blood of Chriſt is offered freely to all that pleaſe to accept of it.

7. Water hath no effect nor operation upon us, unleſs it be ſprinkled or applied; ſo neither hath the blood of Chriſt any effect upon us, till it be applied by faith.

Q. Is there no ſacramental element or rite to be uſed in baptiſm, but the waſhing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt?

A. No; for tho' the Papiſts do join herewith, ſalt, ſpittle, oil, and the ſign of the croſs, yet they have no warrant for theſe from Chriſt or his apoſtles: and therefore they are not to be regarded, but as ſuperſtitious and antichriſtian additions to Chriſt's holy inſtitution.

Q. For what ſpecial ends hath the Lord appointed baptiſm?

A. They are various; 1. To be a notour badge of our Chriſtian profeſſion, to diſtinguiſh us from Jews, Pagans and Mahometans.

2. To be a teaching ſign or ſymbol, for inſtructing us in the knowledge of the great articles of the Chriſtian faith; particularly, it is a looking glaſs to ſhew us our natural pollution and miſery by reaſon of ſin, and our remedy provided in the blood of Chriſt.

3. To be a confirming ſeal of God's covenant for aſſuring believers of the reality of his love, the truth of his promiſes, and the certainty of their title to the childrens inheritance, and (as it were) for giving them infeftment and ſeaſing in all the bleſſings of Chriſt's purchaſe; even as men are inveſted in the right, and put in the poſſeſſion of a bargain by formalities of law; as a houſe is delivered us by a key; or a field by ſtone or earth.

4. To be a gracious channel and means for conveying grace, and ſoul-purification, and ſpiritual bleſſings, to thoſe for whom they are deſigned.

5. To be an obligatory bond on our path to be true and faithful to God, to renounce the ſervice of ſin and Satan, and to walk with God in newneſs of life.

6. To be a tryſting-place for parents, to meet and treat with Chriſt concerning the ſalvation of their young ones. For all which ſee Gal. v. 3. Acts ii. 38. 41. Rom. iv. 11. Col. ii. 11. 12. Acts xxii. 16. Eph. v. 26. 1 Peter iii. 21. Luke xviii. 15. 16. Tit. iii. 5.

Q. *When God doth ſeal his covenant with believers at baptiſm; what things are engaged and ſealed on his part?*

A. 1. That he will be our God. 2. Receive and own us as members of his viſible church. 3. Give us a ſealed right to church-ordinances and privileges. 4. Cut off from the old ſtock of nature and ingraft us into Chriſt. 5. Take us into his family, and under his providential care. 6. Entitle us to Chriſt's purchaſe, and make over all the bleſſings and benefits of the new covenant, *viz.* remiſſion of ſin, regeneration, adoption, ſanctification, reſurrection to life, and eternal glory and happineſs.

Q. *Doth baptiſm ſeal and apply theſe things equally to all who are baptiſed?*

A. No; for to elect infants and believers in reality, it ſeals and applies theſe things abſolutely. But to theſe who are only believers in profeſſion it ſeals and applies conditionally, *i. e.* upon ſuppoſition that they be what they profeſs.

Q. *Have unbelievers then no benefit by their baptiſm?*

A. Yes; in ſo far as they are hereby diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the world, externally ſeperated from Satan, the world, and the fleſh, are dedicatd to Chriſt and his ſervice, become members of the viſible church, and have a ſealed right to goſpel-ordinances and privileges, if they do not forefeit theſe by their after carriage, Rom. ix. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Q. *Is there any thing engaged or ſealed on our part in baptiſm?*

A. Yes, *viz.* that we will be the Lord's, *i. e.* that we will be wholly the Lord's, ſoul and body, in all we are, or have. 2. That we will be only the Lord's, and therefore renounce all other Lords and maſters, the devil, the world and the fleſh. 3. That we will be the Lord's by practice as well as profeſſion, that we will mortify ſin, wage war againſt Chriſt's enemies, fight under Chriſt's banner, and ſtudy conformity to him, Rom. vi. 4. 5. 12. 1 Cor. vi. 19. 20. 2 Cor. viii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. *Are the benefits ſealed to believers immediately conferred upon them, at the moment of baptiſm?*

A. Tho' a ſealed right to theſe be then given them yet the efficacy of baptiſm is not neceſſarily tied to that moment of time wherein it is adminiſtred: For God being a moſt free agent makes this ordinance effectual and confers his grace when, and how he pleaſeth; beſides the fruit and power of baptiſm reacheth to the whole courſe of a believers life, John iii. 5. 8.

Q. *Doth not baptiſm remove original ſin, and confer regenerating grace to all the partakers of it?*

A. No; for many partake of baptiſm who are unregenerated ſtill: Baptiſm of its own nature, or by itſelf operates nothing; but only as the Spirit of God, (the author of grace) doth concur therewith; and being a free agent, he works grace before, at, or after baptiſm as he pleaſeth. And for original ſin, it is not then taken away from believers themſelves, except as to its guilt and dominion, (if it pleaſe the Spirit to co-operate at that time, and apply the blood of Chriſt,) but as to its pollution and inherence, it remains in part during their whole lives, as is ſadly verified by the complaints of the beſt of God's people, Pſal. li. 5. 6. 7. Rom. 7. 23. 25. Acts viii. 13. 23.

Q. *What is the neceſſity of baptiſm?*

A. It is neceſſary in reſpect of the command of Chriſt, who hath appointed it as a ſign and ſeal of his covenant, and an external mean of ſalvation; and therefore ought to be held in reverence, and ſought for with all due care: And to contemn or neglect this ordinance of Chriſt's inſtitution is a very heinous ſin, Mat. xxviii. 19 Luke vii. 30. Acts xvii. 14. Exod. iv. 24. 5.

Q. *Is outward baptiſm abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation? Or are they damned who die without it?*

A. It is not the want, but the contempt of this ordinance that expoſeth to damnation; for the converted thief wanted baptiſm and was ſaved; beſides it would be a great injury to free grace, and a horrid thing in itſelf, to ſay, that it is in the power of wicked men to damn the ſouls of others, by their wilful neglect of this ordinance, or that the Iſraelites infants, who died before the eight day, or while they were in the wilderneſs were all damned; neither are parents guilty in this matter, if they do not neglect this ordinance of Chriſt, when and where it may be had, Rom. iv. 11. Acts x. 2, 4. 22, 31 45, 47.

Q. *Where ſhould baptiſm be adminiſtred?*

A. In the place of public worſhip, and in the face of the congregation, where the people may moſt conveniently ſee and hear; and not in private places.

Q. *What is the neceſſity hereof?*

A. In regard baptiſm is the public entry and door to Chriſt's houſe, or the ordinance whereby perſons are ſolemnly admitted into the church, and made members of Chriſt's family: and therefore it is neceſſary that the church ſhould be publicly called and aſſembled to the adminiſtration of this public church-ordinance. And that, for theſe reaſons.

1. That thereby, they may witneſs, homologate and conſent to the admiſſion of new members into the church or family of Chriſt.

2. That the engagement of parents or the party baptiſed may be public and ſolemn before many witneſſes.

3. That there may be many to join in prayer for a bleſſing upon the ordinance, it is much for the intereſt of both parents and children, to have the prayers of all the godly in the congregation for them, on ſuch an occaſion; which to be ſure are far more prevalent and effectual, than the prayers of a few.

4. That the whole congregation may be edified by the diſpenſing of this ſolemn ordinance, and excited to remember and improve their own baptiſm, and be faithful in keeping the covenant engagements which they then ſealed before many witneſſes, and alſo be humbled for former breaches.

Q. *To whom is baptiſm to be adminiſtred?*

A. Baptiſm is not to be adminiſtred to any that are out of the viſible church, "and ſo ſtrangers from the covenant of promiſe," till they profeſs their faith in Chriſt and obedience to him: but infants deſcending from parents, either both, or but one of them, profeſſing faith in Chriſt and obedience to him, are in that reſpect within the covenant, and ſo to be baptiſed, Acts viii. 36. 37. Gen. xvii. 7. 10. Gal. iii. 9. 14. Acts ii. 38. 49. 41. 1 Cor. vii. 14. Luke xviii. 15. 16. Rom. xi. 16.

Q *To whom is baptiſm not to be adminiſtred?*

A. Not to heathens and infidels, or perſons openly ſcandalous; for theſe being without the covenant, and out of the viſible church, have no right to the ſeals thereof; neither have their infants while they continue ſo. But if upon hearing the goſpel they repent and believe, duly make profeſſion of their faith and obedience, they have a right to this ordinance Eph. ii. 12. Mark xvi. 15. 16. Acts viii. 13. 36. 37.

Q. *Who properly have a right to baptiſm?*

A. All the members of the viſible church, and their infants, Acts ii. 39.

Q. *What is it you call the viſible church?*

A. It is a ſociety made up of thoſe who in all ages and places of the world, do profeſs Chriſt and the true religion; and of their children.

Q. *What is the inviſible church?*

A. The whole body of the elect that have been, are, or ſhall be gathered into one, under Chriſt their head.

Q. *Do all that are baptized become members of the inviſible church, and thereby ingrafted into Chriſt?*

A. No; for our baptiſm makes us only members of the viſible church.

Q. *What is it to be really ingrafted into Chriſt?*

A. It is for ſinners to be cut off from the old ſtock of nature, and united to Jeſus Chriſt, that they may grow up in him, and bring forth fruit unto him; and this is done upon our believing.

Q. *Are adult perſons and infants to be baptized in the ſame way and method?*

A. No: for the adult, or perſons come to years, muſt firſt be inſtructed in the faith of Chriſt, and principles of Chriſtianity, and are to make profeſſion of the ſame, with confeſſion of their ſins before they be baptized, according to the ancient practice Matth. iii. 6. Matth. xxviii. 19. Acts viii. 37. But the infants of believers (of whom theſe things cannot be expected or required) are to be baptized without ſuch profeſſion or confeſſion, their parents undertaking as ſponſors for them.

Q. *But how ſhould infants be admitted to baptiſm, till they believe and confeſs their faith, ſeeing according to Mark* xvi. 16. *they muſt firſt believe, and then be baptized?*

A. This is only meant of *adult* perſons without the viſible church And tho' infants do not actually profeſs their faith, as being incapable of it; yet they are to be ranked among believers, as being the children of believing parents: For infants are but parts of the parents wrapt up in another ſkin, and, to be accounted but one perſon with them, as the root and branches are but one tree, according to Rom. xi. 16. We are to judge of children by their parents, till they come to the uſe of reaſon, and be capable to chuſe their own way, and then indeed they may diſinherit themſelves by their degeneracy. But till then we are to judge of them by the parents, as we do of a graft taken from a tree and implanted in a new ſtock; for we judge of the graft by the tree from which it was taken, until it bear fruit by itſelf, whereby it may be diſcerned. It is upon this account that God calls the children of his people, *His children*, and children *born unto him*, Ezek. xvi. 20. Now if children have a covenant relation to God, or be within the covenant (as the children of believing parents certainly are) they have a right to the ſigns and ſeals of it alſo, Gen. xvii. 7. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Acts ii. 39.

Q. *Ought not infants according to this argument, to be admitted to the Lord's ſupper alſo?*

A. The infants of believers have indeed upon the ſame account a remote right to this ſeal likewiſe; tho' for the preſent they are incapable to receive it, as wanting the actual exerciſe of reaſon, which is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to our examining ourſelves and diſcerning the Lord's body; theſe being the indiſpenſible duties of all ſuch as partake of the Lord's ſupper, 1 Cor. xi. 28. 29.

Q. *Should they not for the ſame reaſon, be kept from the ſeal of baptiſm ſeeing they underſtand not the nature of that ordinance, nor the duties of the baptized?*

A. 1. They underſtand as much of it as the Jewiſh infants did of circumciſion, at eight days of age; and yet that ordinance behoved not to be longer delayed. Now there is the ſame reaſon, for adminiſtrating the ſacrament of baptiſm to infants under the goſpel, that there was for circumciſion under the law, ſeeing baptiſm is now come in its room, as the ſacrament of initiation or enterance into the church, which circumciſion then was. If by divine warrant, not only Abraham, but all his ſeed had a right to the initiatory ſeal of the covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. 10. then believers now, who are Abraham's children, and under the ſame covenant with him, muſt ſtill have the ſame privilege; ſeeing that ancient grant was never afterwards repealed, but expreſly confirmed under the goſpel, according to Acts ii. 39. Gal. iii. 9. 14. 16.

2*dly*, Infants may reap the benefit of baptiſm, tho' they underſtand not its meaning. The infants Chriſt took up in his arms, Luke xviii. knew not his meaning, yet they got his bleſſing. An inheritance bequeathed to a poor child in the cradle, is of uſe to it, tho' it underſtand not the advantage at preſent, nor hath the comfortable poſſeſſion, till it come to years.

3*dly*, It is to be obſerved, that tho' the Jewiſh infants did partake of circumciſion, yet they were excluded from the paſſover; and that for the ſame ground, that we exclude our infants from the Lord's ſupper, which is now come in its room, *viz.* the want of the actual exerciſe of reaſon. For none were to ſhare of the paſſover but ſuch as could aſk concerning the meaning thereof, Exod. xii. 26. But this was not abſolutely needful for partaking of circumciſion, in regard that was only for conveying a right; but the other was for commemorating a benefit, which neceſſarily ſuppoſed underſtanding.

Q. *Is there any other ſcripture warrant for the baptiſm of infants, beſide that of the circumciſion of the Jewiſh children?*

A. Tho' that be ſufficient warrant for it; yet we have more; for, 1. Chriſt commands his apoſtles to diſciple and baptize all nations, of which infants are no ſmall part: As our Saviour excludes none from the ordinance, ſo he limits no time nor age for the diſpenſing of it: There was no need to give any expreſs charge concerning infants, ſeeing their privilege was ſettled for many ages before, and they ſtill in poſſeſſion of it, by the initiatory ſeal of circumciſion, which was the ſame in ſubſtance with baptiſm. This was never reverſed, but their right declared to continue, Acts ii. 39.

2. Infants are capable both of grace and glory, and conſequently are capable of baptiſm, which ſeals our right to theſe, Luke i. 15. Mat. xviii. 6. Luke xviii. 15.

3. Children of believers are pronounced holy, 1. Cor. vii. 14. *i. e.* federately holy, as being within the covenant; and therefore they muſt needs have a right to the ſeal of it.

4. Infant baptiſm was univerſally practiſed in the ancient church, they deriving it from the apoſtles, whoſe example they followed in this matter; and of whom we have it ſeveral times recorded, that they baptized ſuch as believed with their whole houſholds, ſuch as the houſe of Lydia, the Jaylor, and Stephanas, Acts xvi. 15. 33. 1. Cor. i. 16.

Q. *To whom pertains it to preſent the infants of the viſible church to baptiſm?*

A. It belongs properly to the parents, and not to theſe who are called *god-fathers* or *god-mothers*—becauſe children have a right to baptiſm, only in and by their parents: and theſe only have a power both by the law of God and nature, to diſpoſe of their young ones, and to order their education; and they only are accountable to God for them. And, in the ſenſe of the law, their will is the childrens will. Upon all which accounts, parents only ought to preſent their infants to God in baptiſm, and conſent for them to the covenant of grace, Joſh. xxiv. 15. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, *&c.*

Q. *What doth the parents bringing and preſenting their children in baptiſm import and ſignify in it ſelf?*

A. It imports theſe things; 1. A public aknowledgment, that their children are defiled by original ſin, and need waſhing aſſoon as they come into the world.

2. That they are bound by the ties of nature and common juſtice, to do all they can, for their childrens help and relief in this miſerable ſtate; that they may (ſo far as lieth in them) repair the injury done them, by conveying original corruption to them.

3. That they believe no remedy can cure them, no fountain can cleanſe them, but that of Chriſt's blood, which is repreſented by the baptiſmal water.

4. That they willingly dedicate and devote their children to God, to be enrolled in his family, numbred among his children, and entirely diſpoſed of by him.

Q. *What are the ſpecial duties incumbent upon parents, on the occaſion of preſenting their children in baptiſm?*

A. 1. To wonder at God's grace and condeſcenſion, in taking ſuch pains on us, as to lay the great myſtery of godlineſs and ſcheme of our ſalvation before our eyes by viſible rites and ſigns, thereby to affect our ſenſes, and the more effectually to excite our minds to a ſerious conſideration of the great things which God hath done for us. Since the goſpel report which the word brings daily to our ears (concerning our miſery, and remedy, our ruin by ſin, and recovery by Jeſus Chriſt) makes but little impreſſion on us; he is pleaſed to give a perceptible view of theſe things by baptiſm to the eye, to try if our eyes will affect our hearts, according to Lam. iii. 51. And ought not this goodneſs to melt even the hardeſt heart?

2. To admire God's free grace and mercy, that he is willing to take both us, and our children into covenant with himſelf: That after the firſt covenant was broken on our part, he was content to enter into a ſecond (a covenant of grace) and that with his own condemned rebel creature! Abraham fell upon his face when God was covenanting with him; and David was aſtoniſhed with admiration at it, Gen. xvii. 3. 2 Sam. vii. 19. And ſo ought we upon this occaſion.

3. Parents ought to ſearch and ſee, if they be really in covenant with God themſelves: For, when we diſpenſe this ſacrament, we are to look on the parents that claim the benefit of it to their children, to be perſons in covenant with God, otherwiſe their children have no right to this ſeal of it. Therefore it highly concerns parents on this occaſion, to enquire if they have as yet entered into covenant with God, by their own perſonal tranſaction, and renewing of their own baptiſmal dedication and engagements. And if they have dealt faithfully with God in this covenant, yea, or not.

4. Parents ought on this occaſion, to renew the covenant which they made with God in their own baptiſm, take hold of the covenant of grace for themſelves, accept of Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator of it, cloſe with his righteouſneſs, and dedicate themſelves, as well as their children, to the Lord; and thus tranſact with God and Chriſt in ſecret. Which they are likewiſe publicly to own and renew (at the preſenting of their infants) by a ſolemn profeſſion of their faith in God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and dutiful obedience to him according to his word: Believers ſhould rejoice to come with their children to baptiſm, becauſe every time they do it, God renews his covenant with them and theirs; as he did with Abraham at circumciſion, Gen. xvii.

5. They ought to be fervent in prayer, wreſtling with God for the purification and acceptance of their young ones through Chriſt's blood; and for a ſolemn bleſſing upon the ordinance to be diſpenſed to them: that God may join the inward and privy ſeal of his Spirit, with the outward ſeal of this ſacrament.

6. They ought to ſtudy to be well acquaint with the great truths of the Chriſtian religion, as contained in the holy ſcriptures, and agreeable thereto, ſummed in our Confeſſion of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechiſms; that ſo they may be capable to inſtruct and train up their children in the knowledge of theſe truths, according to the engagements which they publicly take on. Alas! there is little conſcience made of ſuch a ſolemn promiſe by many; they are ignorant of our excellent Confeſſion of Faith and Catechiſms, and will not ſo much as buy them, or read them over; notwithſtanding of their reiterated engagements on this occaſion.

7. They are to make a ſolemn ſurrender and dedication of their children to God in Chriſt, as children of his family, ſubjects of his kingdom, and members of Chriſt's myſtical body: And that for the end they may be waſhed in Chriſt's blood, ſaved by his grace, guided by his Spirit; ruled by his laws, and diſpoſed of by his providence. Thus we are to bring and preſent our children to God in baptiſm, as *living ſacrifices to him acceptable through Chriſt Jeſus.*

8. We are in the name and behalf of our infants (they being parts of ourſelves, as was ſhewed before) to conſent to the gracious offers and terms of the covenant of grace, and that they will be the Lord's wholly and only his. And for this end to teach them (when they come to underſtanding) the knowledge of God, and the way of ſalvation through Chriſt, according to his word; and to inſtruct them in the duties of the covenant, particularly, the neceſſity of faith, repentance, and new obedience. And becauſe children are more ready to be influenced by our examples than our precepts, we are to engage to ſhew them the copy of a holy life, family worſhip, and ſecret prayer, in our own converſation. Thus Abraham the father of the faithful, entered into covenant with God for himſelf and his ſeed after him, Gen. xvii. 7. 9. And according to that covenant, *he commanded his children, and houſhold after him, to keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. And ſo believing parents under the goſpel, being under the ſame covenant with faithful Abraham, *ought to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, Eph. vi. 4.

Q. *What are the duties incumbent upon the congregation, or theſe that are witneſſes to the adminiſtration of the ſacrament of baptiſm?*

A. 1. Patiently to attend, and wait till it be done; for, to remove before the adminiſtration of baptiſm, as many do, argues both a contempt of Chriſt's ſolemn ordinance, which he hath inſtituted for his church's good; and want of charity to theſe who are to be baptized, in that they decline to ſtay and pray for them, and receive them into the communion of the viſible church. And likewiſe it ſhews that they have little regard to their own ſouls, when they turn their backs upon ſuch an excellent mean of edification, as this is. Let ſuch conſider, whither it had been juſt and becoming for the whole congregation to have dealt ſo with reſpect to them when they were baptized, as they deal now in reference to others. Stay ſtill and pray for the members to be ingrafted, as others did for you.

2. To witneſs the adminiſtration of it, with a holy awe and becoming reverence to the great author of it, and myſtery repreſented by it. Remember that it derives its authority and inſtitution, not from man, but from the exalted Lord of angels and ſaints. Had this ordinance been of man, it had been vilipended and come to nought many years ago; but being of divine original, it hath kept its authority throughout the whole Chriſtian world, for the ſpace of theſe 1700 years. Wherefore it becomes us all to pay a dutiful regard to the adminiſtration of it.

3. Admire the wonderful kindneſs of God to fallen man that he pitied us when wallowing in our blood and pollution, and provided a ſuitable remedy for us. Tho' he might in juſtice have ſuffered ſuch wretches to drop into the devil's arms and hell's flames from the very womb; yet, behold! he ſtretched out his merciful and fatherly arms to embrace us, aſſoon as we enter into the world; *Suffer little children* (ſaith he) *to come unto me*, to *me* their Friend and Saviour.

4. Bleſs God that ordered your lot to be born with-

in the pale of Chriſt's church, of Chriſtian parents who early preſented and dedicated you in ſuch manner to God, whereby you got a ſealed right to goſpel ordinances and privileges, nay, to Chriſt and all the benefits of the new covenant upon the condition of your faith ; ſo that now you have encouragement to come and claim your right. Eſpecially you whoſe happineſs is to be born of godly and believing parents, bleſs God for this mercy, plead your intereſt in the covenant, for your claim is certainly better than others ; you may go to God as your father's God, and therefore plead he is yours too ; for when God entered into covenant with your fathers, he made it both for them, and for you their ſeed : And how pleaſant is it to ſing with Moſes at the Red-ſea, Exod. xv. *He is my God, I will prepare him an habitation ; my father's God, and I will exalt him.* But beware of thinking that your being of ſuch parents, neceſſarily entitles you to the ſaving bleſſings of the covenant, tho' you ſhould do nothing yourſelves ; nay, if you put not in your claim when you come to age, you forefeit your right. Yet queſtionleſs, your birth ſtill entitles you, to many external privileges and mercies ; upon which account, it is ſaid, 1. Pet. iii. 21. *The like figure unto Noah's baptiſm doth now ſave us* ; *i. e.* as the ark (which was a type of baptiſm) wrought a temporal ſalvation for all Noah's family ; ſo baptiſm entitles the families of believers to many temporal privileges and bleſſings. But tho' all Noah's family was admitted into the ark, this did not entitle them to admiſſion into heaven ; ſo neither will our outward baptiſm ſave us from the deluge of God's wrath, and bring us to heaven : and therefore the Apoſtle adds for explication in the forecited verſe, *Not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God ; i. e.* not the outward waſhing of the body with water ; but the faithful anſwer of a reſolved ſoul, accepting of and adhering to the covenant ſealed in baptiſm : For at the firſt planting of Chriſtianity, people were generally grown up when baptized and made anſwer publicly for themſelves, making profeſſion of their faith and obedience to the holy Trinity, and their renouncing the devil, the world, and the fleſh.

5. Bleſs God that you are born under the new Teſtament times, when the fountain for cleanſing ſinners is ſo fully opened in the word and ſacraments, that the ſtreams of it are daily ſo near you, and you invited to waſh therein. Our acceſs to the fountain is now plain and eaſy. It is not lock'd up, covered with leaves, or abſconded with types and figures, as under the law : we have now an open view of it : There is a wide vent made to its ſtreams, by Chriſt's death and wounds upon the croſs ; and excellent channels framed for conveying it to us, *viz.* the preaching of the goſpel with its ſacraments. O how inexcuſable will we be for ever ! if after all this we contemn the water of life, and die in our pollution.

6. Be concerned for the precious ſouls of thoſe that are to be baptized ; pray fervently for them, that God may come and bleſs his own ordinance to them ; give the inward grace with the outward ſeal : applying Chriſt's blood to the ſoul, as water is ſprinkled upon the body ; that he may regenerate them by his Spirit, ſtamp them with his image, make them inſtruments of his glory : that they may riſe up, and do God better ſervice in their generation, than, alas, we have done in ours.

7. When you ſee and hear parents ſolemnly engaging for their children at their baptiſm ; let ſuch as are parents, that have come under the like engagements, conſider how they have performed them. Do ye make conſcience of praying for your children, teaching them the principles of religion, admoniſhing them of their duty, warning them againſt ſin, and learning them to read and pray ? When took you them aſide to tell them of the vows you took on at baptiſm in their name, and preſs them to renew perſonally their baptiſmal covenant ? O have you not cauſe on this occaſion to be humbled for your neglect and ſhortcomings in performing your ſolemn engagements, and ſeek forgiveneſs through the blood of ſprinkling ! O negligent parents ! remember what a fearful meeting will be betwixt you, and your graceleſs children one day at Chriſt's tribunal, when they will come with accuſations and curſes in their mouths againſt you for your unfaithfulneſs in performing your ſolemn engagements, with reſpect to their precious ſouls.

8. Let every one upon ſuch an occaſion call to mind his own baptiſm, how he was thus once preſented, dedicated and ſprinkled in like manner ; and ſtudy by all means to improve his own baptiſm, which is a moſt needful, tho' much neglected duty.

Q. *How is it that we ought to improve our baptiſm ?*

A. 1. Be ſenſible of the greatneſs of the privilege and dignity conferred upon you, in being baptized in the name of Chriſt, and ſacramentally ſprinkled with his blood for the remiſſion of ſin ; and think much upon it. Alas, there are many who never think on Chriſt, or his blood, and put no value upon their baptiſm. I have read of Lucian a ſcoffing Atheiſt, when he apoſtatized from the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, he mocked at his baptiſm, ſaying *He got nothing by it, but a ſyllable to his name* : he was Lucius, before, and at baptiſm was called Lucianus. And what do many get by their baptiſm, but a name ! Why, they undervalue their baptiſm, never think on it, nor ſtudy any way to improve it.

2. You ought perſonally and explicitly to renew your covenant and ſolemn dedication to God ſealed at baptiſm. It is not enough that you are Chriſtians by your parents dedication, but you muſt be ſo by your own alſo, by ratifying your parents deed, when you are of age ; otherwiſe your baptiſm will profit you nothing ; nay, inſtead of profiting you, it will be a witneſs againſt you, if you do not perſonally tranſact with God in Chriſt, and give away yourſelves to the Lord in truth and ſincerity.

3. Improve your baptiſm, by labouring to ſecure and clear up your intereſt in the pardon of ſin, adoption, ſanctifying grace, and other bleſſings ſealed to you in that ſacrament. Remember, that theſe bleſſings were only ſealed to you conditionally, upon your believing in Chriſt ; and that they are not actually conferred, till you be ſenſible of ſin, and cloſe with Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. Go then, O penitent ſinner, apply to the blood of Chriſt, by faith, which was ſacramentally applied to you at baptiſm, and plead with God for pardon of ſin ; make uſe of your baptiſm as a ſtrong argument for it, ſay, " Lord, have I not thy ' ſeal, as well as thy promiſe for my pardon ? Got I not ' a pledge of it from thee, at my baptiſm ? Behold thy ' ring and thy bracelets, are they not thine ? Lord,

‘ make good thy word, thy ſeal'd promiſe;” I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.

4. Preſs alſo for the joyful ſenſe of this benefit of pardon ſealed to you in baptiſm; the having whereof, is the moſt comfortable thing in the world. We ſee the Eunuch, when he had got this ſeal of baptiſm, went on his way rejoicing. “ O now (thought he) my caſe ‘ is bleſſed, I am a pardoned man, God hath received ‘ me into his family, and taken me into covenant with ‘ himſelf, and implanted me a member of his myſtical ‘ body: I that was a plant of a ſtrange vine, am now ‘ ingrafted into a noble ſtock; and ſhall I not be glad ‘ and rejoice in his ſalvation?” Thus, O believer, improve the ſeal of baptiſm, in order to your growing up to the comfortable aſſurance of your pardon of ſin and adoption into God's family; ſeeing theſe bleſſings are irreverſibly promiſed and ſealed to you in that ſacrament.

5. Improve your baptiſm as a ſpur to holineſs and diligence in Chriſt's ſervice; forget not him whoſe name you bear, whoſe livery you wear, and whoſe colours you are ſworn to. Seeing you are ſolemnly dedicated to God, and all you have is conſecrated to him at baptiſm; O then live as theſe who are not your own; ſpend your ſtrength and time, not in ſerving ſin and the world, but in worſhipping of God, in loving, praiſing and glorifying of him, *whoſe you are, and whom you ought to ſerve*. Alas, there are many, who liſt themſelves to God's ſervice by baptiſm, and yet turn deſerters, and go over to the devil's camp, taking on to fight againſt their King and Lord, to whom they are ſworn. They live as if they had been ſolemnly devoted to, and baptized in the name of the curſed Trinity of hell, the devil, the world, and the fleſh, inſtead of the ever bleſſed and glorious Trinity of heaven: Alas, they live as if they had renounced that, and not the other; which is certainly a moſt fearful guilt, and cannot miſs to be attended with a ſevere doom.

6. Be humbled for your manifold pollutions, your falling ſo much ſhort of the grace of baptiſm, and walking unſuitably to your ſolemn engagements. Have you not cauſe to lament before God, for forgetting and ſlighting the free love of God manifeſted to you in baptiſm; and for having ſo little recourſe to the fountain that was opned to you theren, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs; and that you feel ſo little of the efficacy of the precious blood of your Redeemer (which was repreſented and applied to you in that ordinance) for melting of your hearts, cleanſing you from ſin, and quickning you to holineſs.

7. Improve your baptiſm as a ſhield againſt Satan's temptations: 1. Are you tempted to deſpairing thoughts of mercy, or troubled with perplexing doubts and fears? Then remember the ſeal of free love you got in baptiſm. Chriſt himſelf was tempted after his baptiſm, to doubt of his filiation and Sonſhip: but gave Satan a peremptory repulſe; teaching us thereby to do the ſame: Luther ſaith, That all his anſwer to the devil, when he tempted him to deſpair, was, *Baptizatus ſum, & credo in Chriſtum*, I am baptized into the belief of Chriſt. 2. Are you at any time tempted to ſin? Then remember your baptiſm; Luther alſo tells of a holy virgin, that when ſhe was tempted to ſin, replied, *Baptizata ſum*, I am baptized and indeed this is a ſufficient anſwer to all Satan's temptations. ‘ I am baptized and ‘ dedicate ſolemnly to God; I am not my own, but the ‘ Lord's; I am ſworn to Chriſt, and how ſhall I ſerve ‘ the devil?” Profanity in a Chriſtian is apoſtacy from Chriſt, and on the matter a renouncing of his baptiſm, which is a fearful, nay, a deviliſh ſin.

8. Improve it, as an argument to courage and reſolution in time of danger or perſecution. Stedfaſtly adhere to the doctrine of the Trinity, in whoſe name you are baptized; be not aſhamed of Chriſt or his truths, ſeeing his name is called upon you, and you, ſolemnly owned him before the whole congregation. ‘ He that ‘ is aſhamed of me (ſaith Chriſt) and of my words, in ‘ this ſinful and adulterous generation, of him alſo ſhall ‘ the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the ‘ glory of his Father, with the holy angels,” Mark viii. 38. Dionyſia encouraged Majoricus her ſon, an African martyr, when he was going to die, with theſe words, *Remember, ſon, that thou waſt baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.*

Laſtly, Do not truſt to your baptiſm, and your having the name of Chriſt called upon you: An empty name and profeſſion of Chriſtianity will not ſave you; Simon Magus was baptized, and yet periſhed: Many go with baptiſmal water on their faces, and ſacramental bread in their mouths to hell at laſt. Kings have both their common and privy ſeals; Reſt not in the outward ſeal, but ſeek the inward ſeal of God's ſpirit, changing your nature, and applying the blood of Chriſt for cleanſing your ſouls.

Q. *Why may not baptiſm be adminiſtered to a perſon oftner than once, as well as the Lord's ſupper?*

A. 1. It is not commanded to be reiterated, as the Lord's ſupper is, 1. Cor. xi. 26,

2. Circumciſion under the old Teſtament was not reiterated.

3. The nature of this ſacrament doth not require or allow of repetition: For as the Lord's ſupper is for nutrition, this is for initiation and implantation. This is the ſacrament of our new birth, and admiſſion into the church: Now as we can be but once new born, and once entered into the church; ſo we are no oftner to be baptized, Tit. iii. 5.

Q. *Wherein doth the two ſacraments of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper agree?*

A. In theſe things, 1. They have both the ſame author Jeſus Chriſt. 2. They ſignify and ſeal the ſame things, *viz.* Chriſt and his benefits. 3. They are both to be diſpenſed by miniſters of the goſpel, and by none elſe. 4. They are both to be continued in the church till Chriſt's ſecond coming.

Q. *Wherein then do theſe two ſacraments differ?*

A. In theſe things; 1. Baptiſm is to be adminiſtred but once, but the Lord's ſupper often. 2. There is but one element in the firſt, *viz.* water; but in the ſecond, there are two, *viz.* Bread and wine. 3. The firſt may be adminiſtred to infants; but the ſecond, only to thoſe that are of years, and capable to examine themſelves. 4. The firſt doth ſignify our regeneration and admiſſion into the church: But the ſecond doth repreſent Chriſt as our ſpiritual nouriſhment and ſealeth our continuance and growth in him. 5. Baptiſm is the door of Chriſt's houſe, by which we muſt enter; but the Lord's ſupper is the table, at which the children muſt feed, and receive ſtrength.

Concerning the LORD's SUPPER.

Queſt. W*HAT is the Lord's ſupper?*

A. The Lord's ſupper is a ſacrament of the new Teſtament; wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Chriſt's appointment, his death is ſhewed forth: and the worthy receivers are not after a corporal or carnal manner, but by faith made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their ſpiritual nouriſhment and growth in grace; to the confirming of their union and communion with Chriſt, renewing of their covenant with God, and their thankfulneſs to him; and their mutual love to, and fellowſhip one with another, as members of the ſame myſtical body, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. 2. Cor. xi, 23. 24, 25, 26. 1 Cor. x. 16. 17.

Q. *Who is the author of this ſacrament?*

A. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the glorious King and head of his church to whom alone it appertains to inſtitute her ordinances.

Q. *What may we learn from its being Chriſt's ordinance?*

A. That we ought therefore to have a ſpecial reard to it, and beware of either neglecting or abuſing it.

Q. *When did Chriſt inſtitute this ordinance?*

A. In the ſame night wherein he was betrayed, and immediately after he and his diſciples had eaten the Jewiſh paſſover.

Q. *Was not that a very remarkable night?*

A. Yes, it was a night ever to be had in remembrance, being the laſt night before Chriſt's death, the night where in he began his bitter agonies, and ſwate the bloody ſweat for us; A night wherein he ſaw heaven, earth, and hell, even juſtice, men, and devils, all drawn up in battle-array againſt him.

Q. *Why did he inſtitute this ſacrament at ſuch a time?*

A. For theſe reaſons; 1. Becauſe this ordinance was to commemorate his death, and ſo it was very fit to appoint it when he was going to die.

2. To encourage and ſtrengthen the hearts of his drooping diſciples, now when he was about to leave them (as to his bodily preſence) and they were to meet with many trials.

3. To ſhew the great weight and import of this ordinance; had it not been a matter of the greateſt concern to our good and his glory, it had not taken up the thoughts and care of our great Redeemer juſt when he was going to die, and undergo ſuch unſpeakable ſufferings.

4. To lay the greater obligation upon us to attend this ordinance and religiouſly to obſerve the charge and inſtructions he gave concerning it; as being the words of a dying man; nay, of a dying Saviour, who did more for us that night he ſpoke them, than all the angels of heaven, or relations on earth could or would have done.

Q. *Did not Chriſt's matchleſs love to us appear wonderfully, in chuſing ſuch a time to inſtitute this ordinance?*

A. Yes; 1. In that he minded and ſpoke ſo much of us, when his time was ſo ſhort. 2. That he provided ſo carefully for us, when his danger was ſo great. Which ſhews that ſtill his people lay neareſt his heart; that he regarded their intereſt more than his own, and preferred their comfort to his own ſafety; for tho' he ſaw all his enemies in a full march againſt him, and his all at ſtake, whence it might have ſeem'd high time for him to be providing for his own ſafety: Yet he ſpent much of the ſhort time he had, in providing a ſweet feaſt, and bequeathing rich legacies to his poor people that he was to leave behind him.

Q. *Why did Chriſt inſtitute this ſacrament immediately after the Jewiſh paſſover?*

A. To ſhew that the paſſover was thereby abrogated, and the Lord's ſupper come in its room.

Q. *Are we not bound to receive this ſacrament at night, after Chriſt's example?*

A. The circumſtances of time, place, and company, in the firſt adminiſtration, not being eſſential to the ordinance, were not intended for our imitation. We are no more required to receive it at night, than to do it in an upper room, with but twelve in company. Moreover, the time was occaſioned by the paſſover, that was always eaten at night, and in private families: In the room whereof, and after which the Lord's ſupper was to be inſtituted. But now when we have numerous aſſemblies for religious worſhip, the night would be highly inconvenient for them.

Q. *What are the uſual names and deſignations given to this ordinance?*

A. It is called the *ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, the Lord's table, the communion, the breaking of bread, the cup of bleſſing, the feaſt, Chriſt's teſtament, the euchariſt,* 1 Cor. xi. 20. 1 Cor. x, 16. Acts ii, 46, 1. 1 Cor. v. 8. Luke xxii, 20.

Q. *Why is it called the ſacrament?*

A. It is called ſo, by way of eminency: And becauſe here we take a moſt ſolemn oath of fidelity to our Redeemer.

Q. *Why is it called the Lord's Supper?*

A. Becauſe, 1. It was inſtituted when Chriſt was eating the paſſover ſupper with his diſciples, which was at night. 2. The ſupper then was accounted the principal meal of the family. 3. It is ordained only for thoſe that dwell in Chriſt's family, and abide with him both day and night.

Q. *Why is it called the Lord's table?*

A. Becauſe he is the author of it; yea, he is both the maker and the matter of this entertainment; the feeder and the food alſo.

Q. *Why is it called the communion?*

A. Becauſe in the right partaking of this ordinance, we have communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt, ſhare with him in the benefits of his death and purchaſe, and alſo have communion one with another.

Q. *Why is it called the breaking of bread.*

A. Becauſe, in this ordinance, bread is broken and made uſe of, as the outward ſymbol and ſeal of Chriſt's wounded and broken body, with all the glorious benefits flowing therefrom.

Q. *Why is it called the cup of bleſſing?*

A. Becauſe, 1. In the uſing it, we bleſs God for his free love to us in Chriſt. 2. It contains offers, and ſealeth to us in a ſacramental way, all the bleſſings of the new covenant.

Q. *Why is it called Chriſt's Teſtament?*

A. Becauſe in this ordinance we have Chriſt's Teſtament and latter will ſeal'd, and a copy of it put into the believer's hand, containing the rich legacies he hath left them.

Q. *Why is it called a feaſt?*

A. Becauſe hereby the believers are richly entertained by Chriſt, have ſweet intimacy with him, and great expreſſions of his love; and their ſouls are nouriſhed and ſtrengthened for duty. It is both a marriage feaſt and a feaſt of commemoration.

Q. *Why is it called the* Euchariſt *by the ancients?*

A. It ſignifies the *thankſgiving*; becauſe, 1. When this ſacrament was inſtituted, it both began and ended with the giving of thanks. 2. Becauſe the great deſign of it is to keep up the thankful remembrance of Chriſt's death and redeeming love. And believers when they partake, ſhould with their whole ſouls give thanks to God becauſe he is good; and ſing glory to God in the higheſt.

Q. *What parts doth the Lord's ſupper conſiſt of?*

A. Of two parts; 1. The outward ſenſible ſigns, 2. The ſpiritual and heavenly things thereby ſignified.

Q. *What are the ſenſible ſigns made uſe of in this ſacrament?*

A. They are of three ſorts; 1. Sacramental elements. 2. Sacramental actions. 3. Sacramental words

Q. *What are the ſacramental elements here made uſe of?*

A. Bread and wine.

Q. *What are the things ſignified and repreſented by them?*

A. The body and blood of Chriſt, with all the benefits and bleſſings flowing therefrom.

Q. *What is the neceſſity of two elements or ſigns in this ſacrament, bread and wine both, might not one ſuffice?*

A. The Lord hath thought fit to ordain them both to be uſed: and for theſe reaſons; 1. To ſhew us the fitneſs and certainty of his covenant, and to ſtrengthen his people's faith the more in the belief of its promiſes. Why hath he annexed two ſeals or ſacraments to his covenant, but chiefly for this end? And why hath he inſtituted a two fold ſign in this ſacrament, but for the ſame deſign? What Joſeph ſaith to Pharaoh's dream, is moſt applicable here, Gen. xli. 32. *The dream is doubled to Pharaoh twice, becauſe the thing is eſtabliſhed of God, and God will ſhortly bring it to paſs.* In like manner, O believer, you may perceive here, by the doubling of the ſign, that the mercies and bleſſings ſealed in this ſacrament are firmly eſtabliſhed to you, they are even *the ſure mercies of David*, and God will ſhortly beſtow them upon you.

2. Theſe two ſigns are both appointed, becauſe of the unbelief, and hardneſs of our hearts. It is a ſad truth of us all, what Chriſt ſaid to the two diſciples, going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv 25. *O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe what the prophets have ſpoken.* Nay, we are ſlow to believe even that which Chriſt the great Prophet himſelf hath ſpoken, when he came in our nature to teach us. And therefore, for curing of this plague, the Lord gives us one ſign after another, as he did to the hard hearted and unbelieving Iſraelites in Egypt, when he ſent Moſes to deliver them: To convince them the more of his truth and faithfulneſs he gave Moſes two ſigns to ſhew them: and ſaith to him, Exod. iv. 8. *And it ſhall come to paſs, if they will not believe, nor hearken to the voice of the firſt ſign, they will believe the voice of the latter ſign.*

3. Both theſe ſigns are appointed here, that we may have a more full and diſtinct repreſentation of Chriſt's death and ſufferings; and may be helped to be the more diſtinct in our meditations and acts of faith upon this wounded and bleeding Saviour.

4. To ſhew us the plentiful redemption that we have in Jeſus Chriſt. That there is in him not only ſufficiency but all fulneſs and abundance. That he hath ſuitable ſupplies for our neceſſities, and complete nouriſhment for our ſtarving ſouls. There is here both the bread of life, and wine of conſolation.

Q. *Are not bread and wine too mean things to be ſeals or ſigns of God's covenant?*

A. Altho' they are but common things in themſelves, yet having the ſtamp of divine inſtitution, they become highly valuable, in reſpect of their ſignification and ends A ſmall piece of wax or lead is of little worth in itſelf; yet when appended to a charter by authority, it ſerves to give or confirm a right and title to a great inheritance. Of the ſame uſe are bread and wine in the Lord's ſupper; they are ſeals appended to God's covenant by divine authority, and ſerve to confirm the believer's right to Chriſt's purchaſe, pardon of ſin, and eternal life, and ſo are highly valuable. Our gracious Redeemer thought fit to chuſe for this end, things that were not coſtly or rare, but common and eaſy to be had (tho' moſt uſeful in themſelves to human life) becauſe he would not be burdenſome to his people with any of his ordinances.

Q. *Why hath Chriſt choſen bread to repreſent his body?*

A. Becauſe of the reſemblance betwixt bread and Chriſt's bleſſed body, in theſe things; 1. Bread ere it be fit to nouriſh us muſt be firſt ſown, and die in the earth; ſo Chriſt's body behoved to die, and be buried in the earth, in order to feed and nouriſh our ſouls.

2. Bread muſt be prepared by threſhing, bruiſing, and grinding in the mill, and baking in the oven; ſo Chriſt, that he might be a fit Saviour to us, was content to be bruiſed betwixt the milſtones of God's juſtice and our ſins, and to be ſcorched in the oven of his Father's wrath.

3. Bread thus prepared is moſt excellent and uſeful for nouriſhing and ſtrengthning our bodies; yea, it is the moſt neceſſary thing in the world, none can live without it: Hence it is oft called the ſtaff of bread, as being the ſupport of human life. So Chriſt's broken body is a moſt excellent and neceſſary means provided by God, for preſerving our ſouls lives; without which we would eternally periſh.

4. Bread is moſt pleaſant, as it doth refreſh, ſtrengthen, and ſatisfy our hungry bodies; and hence it is called bread that ſtrengthneth man's heart, Pſal. civ. ſo Jeſus Chriſt and his broken body is moſt precious, pleaſant, and ſatisfying to a ſenſible needy ſinner. The hungry believing ſoul will highly prize this food, tho' others, who are full, and inſenſible of their wants, do loath and deſpiſe it.

5 Bread muſt be broken, eaten, and received into the ſtomach, before it can be of any uſe to the health, and advantage of our bodies; ſo Chriſt's body muſt be broken, received, and fed upon by faith, ere it can be of uſe to the ſpiritual health, and advantage of our ſouls in this ſacrament.

6. Bread, thus received and eaten, becomes one with our bodies; ſo we by a believing partaking of Chriſt's broken body, become one with him, John vi. 56.

Q. *Why hath Chriſt made choice of wine to repreſent his blood in this ſacrament?*

A. Becauſe of the reſemblance betwixt wine and his precious blood, in the following particulars;

1. Wine, in order to prepare it for our uſe, muſt be ſqueezed out of the grape, which for that end is cruſhed and bruiſed in the wine-preſs; ſo our bleſſed Saviour was cruſhed in the wine-preſs of his Father's juſtice, till the precious juice of his ſacred body did guſh out, for the ſaving of our ſouls. None could afford our periſhing ſouls this remedy, but Chriſt alone: Hence he ſaith, Iſa. lxiii. 3. *I have troden the wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me.*

2. Wine doth refreſh and chear the heart of man, Pſal civ. ſo Chriſt's blood doth much more chear and refreſh the ſoul of a humble penitent ſinner, that makes application of it by faith.

3. Wine doth warm the cold heart: Much more doth Chriſt's blood warm the cold affections with the heat of divine love.

4. Wine is uſeful to animate and encourage the fainthearted; much more doth Chriſt's blood revive and embolden the poor drooping and diſconſolate ſoul. It heartens him to go with a holy boldneſs to the throne of grace: *yea, to walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, and fear no ill.*

5. Wine is good for medicine; it cleanſes and cures; ſo the blood of Chriſt is the moſt medicinal thing in the world; for it cleanſes and cures the putrifying wounds of the ſoul, 1 John i. 7. Iſa. liii. 5.

6. Wine, however excellent in itſelf, can be of no uſe to us, unleſs it be drunk and applied; ſo Chriſt's blood, (tho' the moſt ſovereign thing in the whole world for our periſhing ſouls) will do us no ſervice, if it be not received and applied by our faith.

So much for the ſacramental elements: *Let us come next to the ſacramental* actions.

Q. *What are the outward ſacramental actions in the Lord's ſupper?*

A. They are twofold, ſome on the part of the adminiſtrator; and ſome on the part of the receivers.

Q. *What are theſe actions on the adminiſtrator's part?*

A. They are four; as may be ſeen in Chriſt's example: 1. He took bread. 2. He bleſſed the bread and wine. 3. He brake the bread. 4. He gave both of them to his diſciples.

Q. *What is ſignified by the miniſter's taking of bread?*

A. It ſignifies God the Father his chuſing and taking Chriſt among men, to be a ſurety and ſacrifice for loſt ſinners, and his laying upon him as ſuch, the whole ſins of the elect, John iii. 16. Iſa. liii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 14.

Q. *What is ſignified by the bleſſing of the bread and wine?*

A. It ſignifies theſe things; 1. The conſecrating and ſetting apart of the bread and wine, from a common, to an holy and ſacramental uſe; and that by ſolemn prayer for a bleſſing from heaven upon them.

2. This bleſſing being alſo expreſſed by the giving of thanks, it ſignifies a ſolemn thankſgiving to God for his aſtoniſhing grace and mercy to loſt ſinners in giving them a Saviour and ſurety: and alſo for his giving them this bleſſed ordinance for conveying and ſealing Chriſt's glorious purchaſe to them.

3. This bleſſing being of the ſame import with conſecrating or ſanctifying, it ſignifies God's ſending his Son to the world, ſanctified, bleſſed and furniſhed with all gifts and graces needful for the diſcharge of his meditatory offices, and for anſwering of his peoples exigencies.

Q. *What is ſignified by the breaking of the bread in this ſacrament?*

A. It ſignifies the breaking and wounding of Chriſt's body, and the bruiſing of his ſoul for elect ſinners, in order to ſatisfy God's juſtice, pacify divine wrath and purchaſe ſalvation for them. And that now the whole work of man's redemption is compleated by Chriſt's death, which is here repreſented by theſe elements and ſigns.

Q. *Is the breaking of bread a neceſſary or eſſential action in this ſacrament?*

A. Yes; it being inſtituted by Chriſt, and practiſed by his apoſtles, with deſign, to teach us the neceſſity of Chriſt's death, and that an unbroken Chriſt could not profit ſinners. And conſequently we may infer, that papiſts and others, who diſpenſe the ſacrament with an unbroken wafer, do egregiouſly ſwerve from the inſtitution and marr their ſouls profiting by his ordinance.

Q. *What is ſignified by the fourth ſacramental action, viz. Chriſt's giving the broken bread, and the poured out wine to his diſciples: And the miniſter's doing this after his example?*

A. It ſignifies theſe things; 1. God's gracious and free offering of his Son, and Chriſt's offering of himſelf to be ours, with all his purchaſe, upon our believing.

2. God's actual making over, giving, and ſealing Chriſt and all the benefits of the new covenant to the worthy receivers. For as truly as bread and wine, are put into their hands, and given them to be their own, and diſpoſed of for the uſe: ſo truly is Chriſt and all the benefits of the covenant made over, given and ſealed to them, to be their inheritance and portion, and to be by them freely enjoyed and poſſeſſed as their own.

3dly, It ſignifies God's offering and giving Chriſt fully to us. For as he gives us not only the bread, but the wine alſo, that we may have complete entertainment: So he makes over and gives a full and complete Saviour to believing communicants. He gives Chriſt and all Chriſt's to them; and all that is in him, all his offices, all his benefits, and all his promiſes. There is no promiſe reſerved, no bleſſing excepted, or kept back; all is theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

4thly, It ſignifies God's making a gartuitous donation and a free gift of Chriſt and all his purchaſe, to believing communicants. For as the ſacramental bread and wine are given freely by the miniſter to the communicant, without requiring any price or good deed for them; ſo Chriſt and all his purchaſe are made over and and given to believers in a way of the freeſt grace, without any worth or deſert of theirs, or any thing done by them for which they are beſtowed, Iſa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 18.

5thly, The breaking, dividing, and diſtributing theſe elements among all the communicants, do ſignify that Jeſus Chriſt is really tho' inviſibly preſent, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and ſufferings to all the worthy communicants, young and old poor and rich, without exception of any. He is a moſt knowing and faithful ſteward in his Father's houſe, who will not paſs by the meaneſt of the family.

Q. *What is ſignified by the pouring out of the wine in the cup?*

A. Chriſt's ſuffering and pouring out his blood moſt freely and plentifully to waſh and ſave his people from their ſins; even as freely as the wine in the ſacrament is poured out to them. Hence it is ſaid, Iſa. liii. 12. *He poured out his ſoul unto death*, i. e. he gave his life and ſoul ſo freely and willingly for us as we pour out water out of a veſſel.

Q. *After what manner are the elements to be given to the communicants? Is the bread to be put into their mouths, or the cup into each of their hands by the miniſters?*

A. No; this is not agreeable to Chriſt's practice in the firſt inſtitution, nor with the table poſture then in uſe, which he kept with his diſciples in time of the actions; ſpeaking to them (at the giving of the elements) in the plural number, *Take ye, eat ye, drink ye all of it*, which import his giving the elements to thoſe that ſat next him, to be handed about from one to another: For had he given them to every particular man, he would have ſaid, *Take thou*. Beſides, this practice of our Saviour with his diſciples ſuits beſt with that familiar way of feaſting, common among people that are come to age and the uſe of their reaſon. And the communicants taking the elements into their own hands, doth carry ſome reſemblance of the free and deliberate conſent of faith, requiſite in our receiving of Chriſt in the ſacrament, John i. 12.

Q. *What are the outward ſacramental actions, on the part of the communicant?*

A. They are theſe; 1. Their taking the bread, and the cup into their hands. 2. Their eating the bread, and drinking the wine. 3. Their dividing the elements among themſelves and giving to one another.

4. Their doing all this ſitting in a feaſting poſture.

Q. *What is ſignified by the communicants taking the bread and cup to their hands?*

A. Their chearful ſtretching forth of the hand of faith to accept of a crucified Chriſt for their Saviour with all his benefits, as offered to them in the goſpel: and the ſoul's hearty compliance with the gracious terms of that offer.

Q. *What is ſignified by our receiving of both the elements?*

A. Our taking and receiving Chriſt wholly, as he is held forth and offered unto us in the goſpel, without making exception of any of his offices or demands. We profeſs hereby that we are ſatisfied to take Chriſt as he is, his perſon, his offices, his benefits, promiſes, and all that is in him: That we are content with his laws, as well as his love; his precepts, as well as his promiſes; and his croſs, as well as his crown.

Q. *Have communicants a right to the cup as well as the bread?*

A. Yes certainly they have, conform to our Saviour's inſtitution and pattern, and his apoſtles practice, which we have plainly recorded, Mat. xxvi. 26. 27. 28. 29. 1 Cor. xi. 24. 25. And if one of the ſacramental ſigns were wanting, believers would not have a full repreſentation of their Redeemer's ſufferings, nor a complete feaſt for their nouriſhment and ſtrength.

Q. *Are not Papiſts much to blame then, in taking the cup from the people?*

A. Moſt certainly they are; for as they do a great injury to the people, ſo they are guilty of the greateſt ſacrilege before God, and rebellion againſt his authority, who inſtituted this ſacred ordinance. For by the inſtitution, the people have as good a right to the cup, as to the bread. Nay, our Saviour (as it were) foreſeeing the Papiſts encroachment in this particular, is more expreſs in his injunction concerning the cup, than the bread; in theſe words, *Drink ye all of it*. Alſo their obedience to this injunction, is more expreſly recorded than with reſpect to the bread, in theſe words, *And they all drank of it*; compare Mat. xxvi. 27. with Mark xvi. 23.

Q. *What is ſignified by the communicants eating the bread and drinking the wine?*

A. In general, it ſignifies our making cloſe and particular application by faith, of Chriſt and all his benefits unto our ſouls, and their various neceſſities and exigencies, each of us ſaying of Chriſt in a believing manner, with Thomas, John xx. 28. *My Lord, and my God*. But more particularly, theſe actions of eating and drinking in the ſacrament do ſignify; 1. Our near union with Chriſt: For as, by eating and drinking, the bread and the wine enter our bodies, become ours, and turn one with us; ſo we by receiving and applying Chriſt's broken body and ſhed blood in the ſacrament by faith, Chriſt is myſtically united to us, he is made one with us, and we one with him. All that he hath, his blood, and all the purchaſe of it, his merits graces, influences, riches, &c. all are ours.

2dly, They ſignify the great ſatisfaction and complacency, which the believer hath in partaking of Chriſt and his benefits: For as eating and drinking are actions very gratifying and pleaſant to the body; ſo our taſting and partaking of Chriſt's dainties in the ſacrament, is moſt pleaſant to the hungry ſoul.

3dly, They ſignify the ſtrength and increaſe of grace, which the believer receives by this ordinance. For as, by our eating and drinking of earthly food, our bodies are increaſed and ſtrengthned for labour; ſo by this ſpiritual food, our graces are increaſed, and ſouls ſtrengthned, for the duties of religion.

Laſtly, Theſe ſacramental actions denote the mutual giving, and taking ſeaſing and infeftment betwixt Chriſt and the believing communicant. As by the giving and receiving earth and ſtone among men, infeftment is given or taken of a field or heritage; ſo by the giving and receiving of bread and wine in a ſacramental way, believers get infeftment of Chriſt and his purchaſe as their own inheritance; and alſo Chriſt hereby takes infeftment of them, both ſoul and body, as his people and portion, his ſervants and ſoldiers, to obey him and fight for him all the days of their lives. Likewiſe by theſe ſacred ſymbols, he takes poſſeſſion of their ſouls and bodies as his temples, ſolemnly conſecrated to him for his ſervice and reſidence.

Q. *Why ſhould communicants divide the elements among themſelves and give to one another?*

A. 1. That they may the more cloſely imitate the practice of Chriſt and his diſciples, in partaking of the paſſover and the Lord's ſupper, Luke xxii. 17. Mat. xxvi. 26. 27.

2dly, That they may teſtify their mutual Chriſtian love and union among themſelves, and their communion and fellowſhip one with another, 1 Cor. x. 16. 10.

Q. *What ſhould be the bodily poſture of communicants in time of receiving?*

A. It ought to be a feaſting-poſture, or ſuch a table-poſture as is ordinary at feaſts in the place of the world where we live; and that is ſitting. And this we have authorized by the example of Chriſt and his apoſtles at the firſt inſtitution, Mat. xxvi. 20. 26. Luke xxii. 14. John xiv. 31. I grant indeed they ſat leaning, yet ſtill that poſture is termed a ſitting, as in the forecited texts. Beſides, that was the ordinary table poſture then in uſe among the Jews; which clearly warrands us to uſe that poſture which is ordinary among us. This alſo is proper to ſignify that holy familiarity which Chriſt allows his people with himſelf at this ordinance: for it is a bleſſed Love-feaſt, wherein he treats his people as his friends and intimates.

Q. *But may it not be thought preſumption, or want of due reverence in ſinful man, to adventure to ſit at Chriſt's holy table?*

A. 1. It is far greater preſumption in ſinful man to think to amend or alter Chriſt's wiſe and holy inſtitution to the better; or to pretend to be wiſer, holier, or humbler than the apoſtles and primitive church who uſed this poſture; or to accuſe them of indecency and irreverence.

2dly, It is no preſumption to ſinful men to receive that honour which their Lord and Saviour put upon them; or to uſe that holy familiarity with him, which he allows them: For the diſciples were ſinful men as well as others, and yet they ſat with their Lord and maſter, at the firſt communion, and continued afterwards ſo to do.

Q. *Why may not the reverend and humble poſture of kneeling be admitted at the Lord's table?*

A. 1. It cannot, becauſe of the reaſons above-mentioned; for we muſt not be wiſe above what is written, or think to pleaſe God by our inventions in his worſhip.

2dly, It is of a Popiſh original, for Pope Honorius the ſecond was the firſt that ordained this poſture of kneeling, in the beginning of the thirteenth century; and that as a native conſequence of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, which had been decreed ſome time before, by his predeceſſor Pope Innocent the third. And we ought not to ſymbolize with Papiſts in their errors.

3dly, There is too much ground to ſuſpect this practice of idolatry, or having a tendency that way. For, 1. The Papiſts by this poſture, do profeſſedly worſhip the ſacramental bread, believing it to be Chriſt's real body; and plainly ſay, that if they believed not this, they would neither worſhip it, nor kneel in receiving it. *2dly*, Our kneeling before the elements, and that out of reverence and reſpect to them, in an act of worſhipping God or Chriſt, ſeems to ſay, that we worſhip God or Chriſt, in or by the uſe of them: Now theſe elements being conſecrated creatures, of purpoſe placed before us, to be an image and repreſentation of Chriſt to us, it hath too great appearance of evil, to uſe an outward poſture of adoration before them: eſpecially ſeeing, this is not done in the other ſacrament, *viz.* that of baptiſm.

Q. *Do not many who uſe this poſture, profeſs they have no deſign of worſhipping the bread as the Papiſts do, and conſequently are not to be ſuſpected of idolatry?*

A. 1. Tho' they have no ſuch deſign, yet ſtill they do a thing that hath a dangerous tendency, and an appearance of evil, which we are expreſsly commanded to ſhun.

2. A good intention will not excuſe an idolatrous action; the Iſraelites pretended not to worſhip the golden-calf, but Jehovah before it, and yet that did not excuſe their ſin.

Concerning the Sacramental WORDS.

Queſt. ARE *not the ſacramental elements, actions, and words to be reckoned all three together, as the outward ſenſible ſigns in this ordinance for exhibiting, ſealing, and applying Chriſt and his benefits to worthy communicants?*

A. Yes.

Q. *Is there any difference betwixt them?*

A. Tho' they all be very ſignificant and inſtructive to us in partaking, yet they ſeem to differ in this; that the ſacramental elements mainly hold forth the ſpiritual matter and ſubſtance which we partake of; the ſacramental actions ſerve as a rule or example to regulate our practice in it: and the ſacramental works point forth the doctrine, uſes, and ends of the ordinance.

Q. *What are the ſacramental words chiefly to be uſed in diſpenſing and diſtributing the elements in this ſacrament?*

A. Theſe words which Chriſt ſpoke at the firſt inſtitution.

Q. *What were the words which Chriſt ſpoke?*

A. He ſpoke ſomething concerning the bread, ſomething concerning the wine, and ſomething concerning the whole ſacrament.

Q. *What did Chriſt ſpeak with reſpect to the bread?*

A. He ſaid. 1. Something by way of command, *viz. Take, eat, this do in remembrance of me.*

2dly, Something by way of explication, *viz. This is my body which is broken for you*, 1. Cor. xi. 24.

Q. *What did Chriſt ſpeak concerning the wine?*

A. He ſaid likewiſe, 1. Something by way of command, *viz. Drink ye all of it, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*, Mat. xxvi. 27, 1. Cor. xi. 25.

2dly, Something by way of explication, *viz. This cup is the new teſtament in my blood, which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins*, Mat xxvi. 26, 28. Luke xxii. 20.

Q. What ſpake Chriſt with reſpect to the whole ſacrament?

A. He ſaid by way of argument to enforce it, *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's death till he come.* 1 Cor. xi. 26. He likewiſe added on this occaſion, *I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom*, Mat. xxvi. 29.

Q. What is the import of theſe words concerning the bread, Take, eat?

A. It is, as if Chriſt had ſaid, receive and make uſe of this broken bread, as a ſign and ſeal of my broken body, with all its benefits. As ye take the bread out of my hand, and by eating receive it into your ſtomachs; ſo accept of a Saviour as he is offered unto you, receive the atonement, approve of it, and conſent to it; come up to the gracious terms on which Chriſt and his benefits are propoſed to you, accept of his grace, and ſubmit to his government.

Q. What ſhould we think upon, when we hear theſe words?

A. We ſhould think upon the infinite free love of

God in giving his Son, and of Chriſt in giving himſelf to ſuch poor wretches as we are. Yea, we ſhould in a contemplative and believing way, think we ſee Chriſt (as it were perſonally) at the head of the table, making offer of himſelf to us in the freeſt manner, ſaying, *take me and the whole purchaſe of my death and ſufferings; take my ſealed teſtament, and all the legacies in it: take a ſealed pardon of all your ſins, and a ſealed right to eternal life.*

Q. *In what manner are we to take Chriſt and his benefits in this ſacrament?*

A. We are to take Chriſt and all the bleſſings of his covenant in the following manner. 1. Sincerely and honeſtly, without all diſſimulation of hypocriſy, which is a thing moſt hateful to God.

2*dly*, Intirely, fully, and without exception of any thing required of you.

3*dly*, With cloſe and particular application, ſaying, *My Lord, and my God.*

4*thly*, With thankfulneſs and praiſe, ſtirring up your ſouls, and all that is within you to bleſs his holy name. Bleſs God for ſuch a glorious ſurety, ſuch a rich purchaſe, ſuch a free covenant, and ſuch ſuitable promiſes.

5*thly*, With humility and ſelf-denial, reckoning yourſelves unworthy of the leaſt crumb from his table, renouncing all confidence in your preparations, humiliations, or qualifications of any ſort, ſaying, *In the Lord only have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*

Laſtly, We ought to take Chriſt and his purchaſe in the ſacrament with full aſſurance of faith; looking on the ſacramental bread, as the Lord's ſeal and pledge of our intereſt in, and title to all the bleſſings of the covenant: And taking this bread as a ſure ſign and token from Chriſt, that this body was broken for us; believing that Chriſt and all the bleſſings of the covenant, and purchaſe of his death, are herewith given to us, as really as Chriſt gives the bread into our hands.

Q. *What is the meaning of theſe words, This is my body broken for you?*

A. The meaning is, this bread is my body ſpiritual and ſacramentally, or, it ſignifies and repreſents my body; and is a viſible ſign and token of my body its being broken, bruiſed and crucified; yea, crucified for you, O worthy communicant, even *wounded for your tranſgreſſions and bruiſed for your iniquities.*

Q. *Do we not partake of Chriſt's body and blood in the ſacrament, after a corporal or a carnal manner, or by the mouth of the body?*

A. No; we only do it ſpiritually by faith, which is the mouth of the ſoul.

Q. *Is not Chriſt really preſent in the ſacrament: and are not believers ſaid to be partakers of Chriſt?*

A. Tho' Chriſt is not bodily preſent, yet he is really and truly preſent in a ſpiritual and inviſible manner. He is preſent by his God-head, and by his Spirit. He is preſent by his power and efficacy, communicating and applying the virtue and benefits of his death: And thus we are really made partakers of Chriſt in this ordinance. We partake of the ſun, when we have its beams of light and heat darted down upon us, although we have not the bulk and body of the ſun put into our hands: So we partake of Chriſt in the ſacrament, when we ſhare of his grace, and the bleſſed fruits of his broken body, though we do not actually eat his fleſh with our mouths.

Q. *Are not the bread and wine, by the words of conſecration tranſubſtantiate, and really turned into the body and blood of Chriſt, as the Papiſts do maintain?*

A. No; the opinion is falſe and abſurd, in regard; 1. It is deſtructive of the very nature and end of a ſacrament, which is to ſignify and commemorate an abſent Chriſt; for according to this opinion he would be corporally preſent, and ſo there would be no difference betwixt the ſigns and things ſignified.

2*dly*, It is alſo deſtructive of the nature of Chriſt's body; for, according to this opinion, it would not be a true human body, *in all things like unto his brethren*, Heb. ii. 17. if it could neither be ſeen or felt, or could be contracted into the bounds of a ſmall bit of bread.

3*dly*, It is expreſly contrary to the ſcriptures, which call the elements after their conſecration, ſtill bread and wine, as formerly; Mat. xxvi. 29. 1 Cor. x. 16. yea, many times over, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. Again, the ſcriptures inform us, that when Chriſt firſt adminiſtred this ſacrament, his body was entire, and his blood in his veins; and that the ſame body afterwards went forth and ſwate blood in the garden, was crucified, buried, and roſe again, appeared alive to many witneſſes, and at length really aſcended up into heaven, where he ſtill continues; and his body muſt remain there till his coming at the laſt day; and ſo it neither was, nor can be corporally eaten in the ſacrament, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xv. 4, 5, 6. Acts i. 9, 10, 11. Acts iii. 21. 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. Heb. viii. 4.

4*thly*, It is contrary to ſenſe and reaſon; for it is moſt obvious to us, that the bread and wine after conſecration are the ſame in ſubſtance that they were: We ſee, feel, taſte, and ſmell them to be real bread and wine ſtill: They retain both their quantities and qualities; they have the length, thickneſs, breadth, colour, taſte and ſmell of bread and wine. Reaſon alſo tells us that the ſame body cannot be at the ſame time both glorified in heaven, and broken and eaten upon the earth. That Chriſt's body could not be intire, living, ſitting at the table and ſpeaking with his diſciples; and yet at the ſame time broken, dead, lying on the table, and eaten by his diſciples; yea, and by himſelf alſo.

Beſides theſe, many other monſtrous abſurdities and contradictions do follow upon the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation.

Q. *What are the other abſurdities of this doctrine?*

A. 1. It would follow hence, that either Chriſt behoved to have many thouſand bodies, which would be monſtrous; or that the ſame one whole body of Chriſt can be in many thouſand places at the ſame time: both whereof are equally abſurd.

2*dly*, It deſtroys the teſtimony of our ſenſes in all other caſes; ſo that the being or power of God cannot be proven by the works of creation, which is contrary to the apoſtle's doctrine, Rom. i. 20. Nor can the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection be proven from the teſtimony of the witneſſes, or from their ſeeing, feeling and hearing, which is contrary to Luke i. 1, 2. 1 Cor. xv. 5. 6. 7. 1 John i. 1. According to this doctrine, there was no ſtrength in the argument which Chriſt uſed to prove the verity of his reſurrection when he appealed to the ſenſes of his diſciples, biding them *handle him and ſee, behold his hands and feet, and thruſt their* *hand into his ſide,* Luke xxiv. 39. 40. John xx. 27. And this would go far to ſtake the truth of Chriſtianity itſelf, which depends on the reſurrection of Chriſt.

3dly, This doctrine allows a power to a ſilly maſs-prieſt, which is not granted to all the angels in heaven, *viz.* to make his Maker, and eat his God: for he worſhips what he makes, and eats what he worſhips.

4thly, According hereunto, Chriſt's glorious body would yet be liable to ſufferings, ſubject to corruption, and obnoxious to be eaten by wicked men, yea, by dogs, rats, mice, *&c.*

5thly, It would follow that a miniſter could give to a communicant, the thing ſignified as well as the ſigns, which is the prerogative of God alone.

6thly, That other figurative expreſſions in ſcripture ſhould alſo be underſtood literally; and ſo Chriſt would alſo be turned really into a door, a vine, a rock, *&c.* For he doth as expreſly call himſelf by thoſe names, as he calls the bread in the ſacrament his body.

Q. *Is there no change made at all upon the elements at conſecration?*

A. Yes; but it is not a phyſical, but a moral change; it is only a change as to their uſe, and ſignification. By conſecration they are ſet apart from common uſe to a ſacred and myſtical uſe. They are no more for ordinary aliment to the body, but become thereby ſigns of Chriſt, ſeals of grace, pledges of juſtification, and earneſts of ſalvation; which is not done by deſtruction of their nature, but by divine deſignation. As of common wax a valid ſeal is made to a charter, by putting an authoritative ſtamp upon it, tho' it be ſtill the ſame that it was, as to its ſubſtance: So here the conſecrated elements, ſtill retain their former nature, and are not Chriſt's real body and blood, under the accidents of bread and wine; as the Papiſts moſt abſurdly aſſert.

Q. *How then can Chriſt's words be true, when he ſaith expreſly of the bread, this is my body?*

A. Theſe words are moſt true in a ſacramental ſenſe; for Chriſt ſpeaks here in a ſacramental dialect and retains the ſame ſtile he had uſed formerly concerning the paſſover, Exod. xii. 11. *It is the Lord's paſſover.* Now this cannot be meant but figuratively; for certainly the lamb, or the eating of it, was not literally the Lord's gracious act of paſſing over the Iſraelites houſes, when he came to deſtroy the Egptians on every ſide of them; but a ſign or token of his paſſing over them; and yet he ſays expreſly, *It is the Lord's paſſover.* Thus alſo did he ſpeak of the other ſacrament, *viz.* circumciſion, when he inſtituted it, Gen. xvii. 18. *This is my covenant.* Now circumciſion was not literally the covenant itſelf, but only a ſign and ſeal of the covenant. Alſo in the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper, he uſeth the ſame ſort of figurative ſpeeches; and if the Papiſts will not grant this concerning the bread, when Chriſt ſaid of it, *this is my body*; yet whether they will or not, they muſt own it, concerning the wine, when he ſaith, *this cup is the new-teſtament.* For here is a two-fold figure; firſt, he did not mean this properly or literally of the cup or veſſel that contained the wine; for ſo the cup cannot be the new-teſtament or covenant of grace, but the wine contained in the cup. Neither, ſecondly can the wine be properly called the new-Teſtament or covenant itſelf, but only a ſign or pledge of it. So that we ſee ſuch metonymical and figurative ſpeeches are the ordinary ſacramental language that God in all ages hath made uſe of, in inſtituting the ſeals of his covenant. And can Papiſts give any ſolid reaſon, why ſuch ſpeeches as theſe, ſhould be taken in a figurative ſenſe in one place and not in another, when the caſe is the ſame, and the neceſſity plainly equal.

Q. *What is the meaning of Chriſt's words concerning the cup, Drink ye all of it, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me?*

A. He means theſe things; 1. To diſcover the freeneſs of his grace, and the ready welcome he gives to all his gueſts, even the meaneſt and pooreſt of them.

2dly, To teach us thirſtily and affectionately to receive (together with the cup) the precious blood of Chriſt, and by faith apply it to our ſouls in a particular manner, for the curing of all our diſeaſes, the waſhing away all our ſins, and the ſupply of all our wants.

3dly, That in the receiving and drinking of this cup, we ſhould entertain and keep up a freſh and thankful remembrance of Chriſt's ſufferings, and of his dying love in ſhedding and offering up his blood as a propitiatory ſacrifice for our ſins. We ſhould remember and think upon, both what he hath done, what he is ſtill doing, and what he is about to do for us.

Q. *Why are we ſo expreſly charged to remember Chriſt in this ordinance, are we in any hazard of forgetting him?*

A. Yes; our Saviour knows that we have worldly hearts, treacherous memories, and ſtand in need of all theſe memorandums, to keep up the lively remembrance of his love.

Q. *What is implied in remembering of Chriſt?*

A. It hath in it, 1. The knowledge of Chriſt and the method of redemption through his blood.

2dly, Some precious acquaintance with him, by a work of grace on the heart, and cloſing with him by faith.

3dly, A believing contemplation of his death and ſufferings.

4thly, Such a remembrance as makes deep and ſuitable impreſſions on our ſouls.

Q. *What obligations ly upon us to keep up the remembrance of Chriſt?*

A. 1. Becauſe he is our moſt loving Friend; a friend that remembered us in our low eſtate, and that hath done more for us than all the friends of the world could or would have done.

2dly, Becauſe he is an abſent Friend; yea, abſent on our account, and ſtill negotiating our affairs at the court of heaven. He conſtantly remembers his people, and hath them ſtill on his heart, and in his eye.

3dly, Becauſe he is a Friend quickly about to return. He is ſtill meditating on it, and faſt preparing for it. He is haſting to come again in the clouds to meet his people, take them home to his palace, and put them in poſſeſſion of all his purchaſe.

Q. *What kind of remembrance of Chriſt ought we to have, in receiving the ſacrament?*

A. Not a bare hiſtorical remembrance, for ſo Judas, Pilate, and the devils in hell may remember how they betrayed and crucified Chriſt on earth; but it is a remembrance with ſuitable impreſſions on our ſouls.

1. We muſt have an awful and reverential remembrance, adoring the juſtice and holineſs of God, diſplayed in the ſufferings of Chriſt his dear Son. O how vehemently did he hate ſin, that he would not ſpare him

when he cried, and was but ſurety for another! May not we cry with the Bethſhemites, 1 Sam. vi. 20, *Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord God?*

2dly, It muſt be a *mournful and heart-breaking* remembrance, looking on a ſlain Chriſt in the elements, as one pierced through and crucified by our ſins; and our eye ſhould affect our hearts with grief and ſorrow for theſe ſins that nailed and killed the Lord of life.

3dly, We muſt have a *ſin loathing* remembrance, abhorring with the utmoſt deteſtation our curſed ſins that made a ſtrong and mighty Redeemer to ſweat blood, and groan under their weight; yea never parted with him till they brought him to a bitter death.

4thly, It muſt be an *affectionate* remembrance. The unparalleled love of Chriſt diſcovered in the ſacrament, muſt not be thought on without love. Our hearts ſhould even burn with affection to him, when we remember the great floods of wrath that brake in upon Chriſt's ſoul, and yet could not drown his love to us.

5thly, It muſt be a *thankful* remembrance, ſaying, O what ſhall I render to Chriſt for undertaking my deliverance, and wading through hell to ſave me from periſhing there for ever! O if men and angels would help me to extol his free grace and wondrous love!

6thly, It muſt be a *fiducial* remembrance, laying the whole ſtreſs of our ſoul's juſtification and ſalvation upon the death of Chriſt; pleading it with God, for anſwering all the accuſations of Satan, the indictments of the law, and challenges of our own conſciences.

Q. *What is the import of theſe words of Chriſt, concerning the cup: This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood, ſhed for many for the remiſſions of ſins?*

A. It is a figurative ſpeech, as I ſhewed before, and the plain literal ſenſe of it is, the wine in this cup, as repreſenting the ſhedding of my blood for your ſins, is a ſure ſign and token to you, of God's making and confirming the New Teſtament or covenant of grace with you; and of his ſealing all the bleſſings of it unto you; or, this cup is a viſible pledge to you of that rich covenant with its bleſſings, which is brought about and ratified to you by the ſhedding of my blood for ſin.

Q. *What are the ſweet inſtructions and meditations which theſe words of Chriſt do afford us?*

A. They are many, ſuch us theſe; 1. The covenant of grace is Chriſt's teſtament, wherein all manner of precious legacies are freely bequeathed unto his people.

2dly, That this teſtament is ſure, and of undoubted force, being confirmed by the death of the teſtator, and ſealed with his blood.

3dly, That Chriſt puts a ſealed copy of his teſtament into every worthy communicant's hand, at the Lord's table.

4thly, That the covenant of grace, with all its bleſſings, is purchaſed by Jeſus Chriſt to believers, by the price of his blood.

5thly, That pardon of ſin is one of the choiceſt legacies in Chriſt's teſtament, and to be highly valued.

6thly, That without the ſhedding of blood (even the precious blood of Chriſt, which is the blood of atonement) there is no remiſſion of ſin.

7thly, The blood of Chriſt cannot be effectual to any, unleſs it be received and applied by the hand of faith.

8thly, That in order to make a good title to covenant bleſſings, it is abſolutely needful, that every man for himſelf do take hold of the covenant, as tendered in the goſpel ordinances.

9thly, That the news of a covenant ratified, and pardon ſealed by the blood of Chriſt, is moſt reviving and refreſhing to the guilty ſoul; as wine that makes glad the heart.

Q. *What are the legacies and bleſſings contained in the Teſtament given, and ſealed to believers in the Lord's ſupper?*

A. There is the holy Spirit to teach, guide, and comfort them; there is pardon of ſin, and peace with God; in a word there is wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, redemption, grace, and glory. All which, with many more, were mentioned before, among the promiſes of the covenant of grace.

Q. *How ſhall we know if we have any part in Chriſt's teſtament, or if our names be in it?*

A. By theſe two things, 1. If we do heartily take hold of it, embrace its promiſe, and acquieſce in the method of ſalvation contained in it.

2dly, If we can prove ourſelves to be among Chriſt's poor relations, or claim any ſibneſs to him by faith and regeneration. All theſe being children and heirs, have an intereſt in Chriſt's Teſtament, Iſa. lvi. 4, 5. John i. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. Rom. viii. 17.

Q. *What are the marks of theſe who are children of Chriſt's family and heirs of his Teſtament?*

A. They are ſuch as are begotten by the word to a lively hope, tranſplanted from natures garden to grace, and become plants of his right-hand's planting.

2dly, They know ſomething of the Spirit of adoption, and his operations in their ſouls; particularly in diſcovering ſin, exciting to prayer, conquering luſts and ſanctifying the heart, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. Eph. iv. 23, 24.

3dly, They have childrens frames and diſpoſitions of heart. *viz.* A filial fear, and reverence of God, a filial love and affection to Chriſt, and a deep hatred of every thing that is offenſive or diſhonourable to him. Alſo they have a great concern for their mother the church, and a love to their brethren, the ſaints. They love their Father's preſence, and deſire to be much about his hand, Mal. i. 6. John viii. 42. Pſalm cxix. 136. Pſalm cxxxvii. 6.

4thly, They have childrens appetites for their food: They earneſtly deſire the ordinances, and communion with Chriſt in them, Pſalm lxxxiv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

Q. *How are we aſſured that Chriſt's teſtament is firm and unalterable?*

A. From theſe three things; 1. The faithfulneſs and immutability of the Teſtator, Heb. x. 23. Heb. xiii. 8. Rev. i. 5.

2dly, It is become of unalterable force by the Teſtator's death, and is confirmed by his blood, Heb. ix. 16, 17. Mat. xxvi. 28.

3dly, He hath appended the two great ſeals of heaven to it, baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, of purpoſe to declare the validity and fulneſs of his teſtament.

Q. *But how are we certain that this teſtament will be duly execute, conform to the Teſtator's will?*

A. Becauſe, 1. He hath left it in a ſure and faithful hand, even that of the holy Spirit, who is the executor thereof, to apply it, and beſtow the legacies it bequeathes, upon theſe who are named in it, John xiv. 16, 26.

Yea, 2*dly*, The bleſſed Teſtator is riſen from the dead, and lives for ever, to ſee the execution of his own teſtament himſelf, Rev. i. 18. Heb. vii. 25.

Q. *When will all the legacies be beſtowed on the heirs of this teſtament? Is it juſt now?*

A. They are juſt now infeft, and veſted therein, by the word and ſacraments; whereby their right is ſufficiently ſecured to the great eſtate, which Chriſt hath left them by his latter-will. And in the mean time, they have out of it a ſufficient maintenance, to continue till the time appointed come, when they ſhall enter into the full poſſeſſion of the whole. Believers while here, are but Minors, and not fit to be entruſted with the management of their eſtate, ſo that it is ſecured for them in good hands, till they arrive at full age.

Q. *What is the meaning of the words which Chriſt ſpoke with reſpect to the whole ſacrament,* For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's death till he come?

A. It is as if he had ſaid, ſee that ye make conſcience of coming to this holy table, and of coming frequently; for every time you do it in a right manner, you keep up the memorial of yor Lord and Saviour's death, in a way that is pleaſant to him; ſeeing he hath appointed this as a ſtanding ordinance in the church to continue till his ſecond coming to judgment; when he will call his whole ſervants to account concerning their obſerving his injunctions, and this among the reſt.

Q. *What obligations ly upon us to come and partake of this ordinance?*

A. All the profeſſors of Chriſt are obliged to it on many accounts; 1. In point of duty. 2. In point of intereſt. 3 In point of gratitude. 4. in point of ſafety.

Q. *How are we obliged in point of duty?*

A. Becauſe Chriſt our Lord and law-giver hath peremptorily commanded it; nay, for the more ſecurity, he repeats the command twice, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. *This do ye, this do ye:* and ſurely all of us owe obedience to his authority, without reſerve.

Q. *How are we obliged to partake in point of intereſt?*

A. Becauſe of the great advantages which are to be got by it, ſeeing Chriſt and all the benefits of the new covenant, are here ſealed and applied.

Q. *How are we obliged to partake in point of gratitude?*

A. 1. Becauſe the command enjoining this duty, was among the laſt words of our dying friend and Saviour, who did more for us than all the world could have done.

2*dly*, Becauſe the deſign of the ordinance is to keep up the memorial of the love, which our dying Saviour expreſſed at the firſt inſtitution of it, in ſuffering death, and offering up himſelf a ſacrifice to divine juſtice in our ſtead.

3*dly*, Becauſe he ſeeks no greater return for his love, than a thankful remembrance of it.

4*thly*, Becauſe he puts us to no greater charge to expreſs it, than by eating and drinking at his table.

Q. *How are we obliged to partake in point of ſafety?*

A. Becauſe the ſlighting, wilful neglecting of this ordinance, is a great ſin before God, and very provoking to him as well as dangerous to ourſelves.

Q. *Wherein lies the ſin of neglecting this ordinance?*

A. In reſpect it is no leſs than contempt of the words of our dying Saviour, diſobedience to his command, ingratitude to our greateſt benefactor, a baſe ſlighting of God's love, Chriſt's ſufferings, and all the great preparations he hath made for us: a wronging of our own ſouls, and deſpiſing of our choiceſt mercies and privileges.

Q. *What is the danger of neglecting this duty?*

A. It draws on the wrath and vengeance of God, nay, of Chriſt the Mediator; which muſt be very terrible. As God threatned to cut off theſe that neglected the paſſover of old; ſo he threatned ſevere wrath againſt theſe who ſhould neglect the goſpel-feaſts, Numb. ix. 13. Zech. xiv. 16, 17. 18. And theſe threatnings are renewed, Mat. xxii. 7. Luke xiv. 24.

Q. *Is it a good excuſe for neglecting this ordinance for the people to ſay, they are not prepared, have quarrels with their neighbours, or cannot get ſuch particular ſins left?*

A. No; for the want of preparation is our ſin, and one ſin can never excuſe or anſwer for another. It is a fearful thing to live in a ſinful courſe againſt light, and then to make ſin an excuſe for the neglect of commanded duty.

Q. *Is it not enough that we partake of the Lord's ſupper once in our lives, as we do of the other ſacrament, baptiſm?*

A. No; for baptiſm being the ſacrament of initiation, is not to be repeated; but the Lord's ſupper being for nutrition, is often to be received.

Q. *What obligations ly on us to partake often?*

A. We are obliged to it; 1. By our Saviour's word's at the firſt inſtitution, 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. *As often as ye do this;* which have the virtue of a command to frequency in communicating.

2*dly*, By the examples of the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, whoſe practice it was to communicate frequently, nay for ordinary, every Lord's day, Acts ii. 42, 46. Acts xx. 7.

3*dly*, Our ſouls neceſſities do call for frequency in partaking; for we are oft ready to forget Chriſt, and therefore we oft need this ordinance to bring him to our remembrance. We are oft ſubject to ſpiritual deadneſs, weakneſs of faith, and decays of grace; and therefore have frequent need of this ordinance, for ſtrength and quickning.

Q. *Are we as much obliged to frequent communicating, as the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians were?*

A. Tho' they were in a much better frame for it, as having had more recent and warm impreſſions of the love and death of their Redeemer conſtantly upon their ſpirits, than we have; yet certainly we are under as ſtrong obligations to frequent partaking, as the firſt Chriſtians were. For we had the ſame Lord and Saviour that they had, and are under the ſame obligations of love and gratitude to him. We have the ſame need of the application of Chriſt's blood, and a confirmed intereſt in his meritorious death that they had; and conſequently the ſame need of this memorial feaſt and ſealing ordinance.

Q. *Is not frequency apt to breed formality in this duty?*

A. 1. The ſame things may be alledged with reſpect to other duties, which yet is no good argument for the unfrequent practice of them.

2*dly*, This fault is noways chargeable upon the holy ordinance and inſtitution of Chriſt, but upon the corruption and careleſneſs of our hearts; which we ought diligently to watch and ſtrive againſt; endeavouring in Chriſt's ſtrength, as often as we partake, ſo often to prepare for it, with all due care and ſolemnity.

Q. *What is meant by ſhewing forth the Lord's death in the ſacrament, which ſeems to be laid down as our main buſineſs in this ordinance?*

A. We may be ſaid to repreſent, ſhew forth and annunicate the death of Chriſt in this ſacrament, three ways; 1. With reſpect to ourſelves. 2*dly*, With reſpect to the world. 3*dly*, With reſpect to God.

Q. *How are we to ſhew forth the death of Chriſt with reſpect to ourſelves?*

A. As the external elements and ſigns, in the Lord's ſupper, do give a plain repreſentation of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt to the eye of the body; ſo in partaking of theſe elements, we ought to ſet the things repreſented by them (*viz.* the death of Chriſt, with the matchleſs love he therein expreſſed) before the eyes of our minds and underſtandings, in order to beget a freſh remembrance of that dying love, and to raiſe our faith, and hope in a crucified Saviour.

Q. *How are we to ſhew forth Chriſt's death in the ſacrament with reſpect to the world?*

A. By owning hereby, in the moſt public manner, that we are the diſciples of a crucified Jeſus; not aſhamed of our Maſter, or his ignominious death, but declaring before all that we glory in him, and rely upon the merits of his death here ſhewed forth, as the only hope of our ſalvation; and that we have no Saviour beſides him.

Q. *How are we to ſhew forth Chriſt's death in the Sacrament with reſpect to God?*

A. Two ways; 1. We are to ſhew it forth to a loving and merciful God in a way of thankſgiving and praiſe; aſcribing all glory to him for ſuch a noble ranſom and ſacrifice, as he hath found out and provided for us.

2*dly*, We are alſo to ſhew forth Chriſt's death in the ſacrament to a juſt and ſin-revenging God, in a way of faith and prayer; pleading this ſacrifice with God, as a ſkreen and defence againſt the ſword of juſtice, and curſe of the law; and preſenting it as the ground of all our hopes and expectations.

Q. *Is the Lord's ſupper to be reckoned a ſacrifice to God: as the Papiſts have turned it in their maſs, into a proper atoning ſacrifice for the ſins both of the dead and living?*

A. Not at all; for that is nothing but an abominable corruption of this bleſſed ordinance. For tho' the Lord's ſupper be a repreſentation and memorial of the ſacrifice of Chriſt's death and ſufferings, which he offered to God upon the croſs for our ſins; and in partaking thereof we may by faith plead this ſacrifice with God: Yet the ſacramental bread and wine are no ſuch ſacrifice to God themſelves; but only a ſign and ſeal thereof, given by God to us for ſtrengthening our faith in his mercy promiſed unto us through Chriſt's death.

Q. *What are the abſurdities of the Papiſts doctrine and practice in this matter?*

A. 1. The *Popiſh maſs-prieſts* do abſurd Chriſt's Prieſt-hood and office, pretending really to offer up Chriſt a ſacrifice to God, which none but himſelf could do.

2*dly*, This highly reflects upon the perfection of Chriſt's ſacrifice, that he once offered up on the croſs, which we are aſſured by the word of God, was acceptable to God, perfect, and never needing to be again repeated, Heb. ix. 25. 26. 27. 28. Heb. x. 12. 14.

3*dly*, This is bottomed on their abſurd doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, which teacheth that the bread in the ſacrament, is turned into Chriſt's real and true body, which is moſt falſe; as I proved before.

Q. *What is the import of ſhewing forth the Lord's death till he come?*

A. *Till he come*, imports, 1. That this ſacrament is to endure till Chriſt's ſecond coming, and no longer.

2*dly*, That in communicating, we ſhould have the lively faith of Chriſt's coming at the great day, to judge of our ſincerity and faithfulneſs in covenanting with him; as alſo to fulfil all his promiſes to worthy communicants.

3*dly*, That communicants ſhould always live in the hope and expectation of the coming of Chriſt, and of everlaſting glory, Tit. ii. 15. Jude ver. 21.

Q. *Why cannot this ſacrament continue after Chriſt's coming?*

A. Becauſe in heaven there is no need of ſacraments. Here we hold communion with Chriſt by ſigns and ſymbols, in regard of our darkneſs, diſtance and imperfection; but above believers will ſee *him as he is*, and enjoy him perfectly. Faith ſhall be turned into viſion, and hope into fruition. The day will then break, and all the ſhadows will flee away, Cant. ii. 17. Rev. xxi. 22. 23.

Q. *What is the meaning of theſe words of Chriſt at the firſt inſtitution, Henceforth I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom?*

A. Chriſt deſigns hereby to teach his diſciples ſeveral things; 1. That now he was taking his leave of ſacraments and ordinances here below; and that there is no uſe for ſuch above.

2*dly*, That the Lord's ſupper here, is an emblem of the marriage ſupper of the Lamb hereafter: Or, a repreſentation of that heavenly communion above, which the ſaints for ever will partake of with the Lord Jeſus, which is held forth by the pleaſures of a banquet of wine.

3*dly*, That the pleaſures of that communion, which they ſhould entertain with him in heaven, will never wax old, but always continue freſh and new.

4*thly*, That in this world, they were no more to have communion with him in his bodily preſence, as they had formerly enjoyed; but they muſt henceforth feed on him by faith, till their happy meeting together in heaven; where faith will be ſwallowed up in viſion.

5*thly*, That notwithſtanding of the want of his bodily preſence, they ſhould ſtill keep up communion with him in the uſe of this ordinance, patiently waiting and looking for the full accompliſhment of it, in that glorious eternal feaſt above.

Q. *Is there not great difference betwixt the communion here, and the communion above; or betwixt our drinking the fruit of the vine here, and our drinking it new with Chriſt in his father's kingdom:*

A. Yes, the odds are very great: For, 1. The communion, which Chriſt allows his people here, is but the foretaſte or firſt-fruits of the promiſed land, given to wean their hearts from this world, and ſharpen their appetites and deſires after the Canaan above, where theſe firſt-fruits do grow and are fully ripe.

2dly, The comforts of the lower table are but ſmall, and of ſhort continuance for ordinary: But theſe of the higher table are full, ſatisfying, and everlaſting.

3dly, Here we feed on an abſent Chriſt by ſigns and ſymbols, and have but bad appetites for our food: But the communicants above will enjoy Chriſt's bodily preſence, ſee him as he is, and have vaſt and never failing appetites for that heavenly feaſt.

4thly, Here communicants meet in parcels, and in ſundry places: But above, the church of the firſt-born ſhall meet together in one general aſſembly; and be all ſet together with Chriſt as it were at one table.

5thly, Here many traitors and unworthy communicants do thruſt themſelves in among the children, and many things happen to marr the childrens comfort: But above, no Judas or unfurniſh'd gueſt can come, nor any thing fall out to impair the glory of that feaſt.

6thly, The lower table is placed in temples made with hands, with earthly men attending; but hereafter the glorious heavens will be the rooms, and the heavenly hoſts the attendants.

7thly, Here the communicants are entertained with the ſinging of pſalms: But above there will be the multitude of the heavenly hoſt, ſinging, "Hallelujah to the "Lamb that ſits upon the throne, and glory to God in "the higheſt."

Q. *What are the great ends and uſes of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. 1. To keep up the ſolemn and lively remembrance of Chriſt's death, and dying love to loſt ſinners among men, while the world ſtands.

2dly, Solemnly to make over, apply, and ſeal Chriſt, his purchaſe, and all the benefits of the new covenant unto true believers.

3dly, That hereby we may have occaſion to make public profeſſion of our owning and receiving a crucified Jeſus, as our only Saviour and Maſter.

4thly, That we may teſtify our thankfulneſs to God, for giving his Son to die for our redemption; and to the Son for laying down his life ſo willingly for us.

5thly, That we might get a pledge and ſeal of our union and communion with Chriſt, and our faith in his promiſes ſtrengthned and confirmed.

6thly, That we may renew and ſeal our covenant with God in Chriſt, perſonally ratify our baptiſmal vows, and ſolemnly bind ourſelves to take God for our God, and give up ourſelves to be the Lord's people, and to walk with him in the ways of goſpel obedience.

7thly, It is appointed as a ſign and bond of believers union and communion among themſelves; their mutual love to and fellowſhip one with another.

Laſtly, It is deſigned as a ſpiritual meal, for ſtrengthning of the Lord's people in the inward man, for nouriſhing their graces, chearing their hearts, removing their fears and faintings, and giving them a pledge of heaven, and a fore taſte of the eternal communion above. For all which, ſee Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xi. 20, 25, 35, 36. Gal. iii. 1. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17.

Q. *Is it not to be feared that many have not right ends in coming to the Lords ſupper?*

A. There is too much ground for it; and people's ends are ſurely wrong; 1. When they come to the Lord's table to make atonement for their ſins, or purchaſe and enſure heaven to them; as ſome ignorant perſons think they do by this action.

2dly, When they come, thinking hereby to hide or cloke ſome ſin or wicked practice, they are preſently living in.

3dly, When they come only to comply with the cuſtom and faſhions of the places where they live, or to prevent peoples having bad thoughts of them, or ſome worldly inconveniences to themſelves.

4thly, When they come to pleaſe miniſters and friends, or to gain applauſe and a good name in the world.

5thly, When they come in order to qualify or put themſelves in a capacity for obtaining or keeping lucrative poſts or places of preferment in the world.

6thly, When people come to this ordinance, thinking to be converted by it, and brought into Chriſt.

Q. *May not people be converted by this ſacrament?*

A. This is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance in its own nature, which doth ſuppoſe that theſe who come to it, are converted, and in Chriſt before. Yet we muſt own that this ordinance hath been the occaſion of converting many thouſands, by reaſon of the word preached or dropt at the diſpenſing of it, which God hath ſignally bleſſed to them. But tho' ſovereign grace may do ſo, this is no warrant for unconverted perſons to come and partake of this holy feaſt, which the maker of it hath not inſtituted for them, but for his people.

Q. *To whom is the Lord's ſupper to be adminiſtred?*

A. Only to theſe who have a goſpel-right to it, and goſpel-preparation for it.

Q. Who are theſe who have a goſpel-right to this ordinance?

A. There is a two-fold goſpel-right; 1. An external right, with reſpect to the church. 2. An internal right with reſpect to God.

Q. Who have an external right with reſpect to the church?

A. Theſe who being baptized, have a competent meaſure of Chriſtian knowledge, profeſs their faith in Chriſt, and live religious and blameleſs lives before men. Theſe have ſo far a right to this table in the ſight of men, that they cannot be juſtly debarred from it by the office-bearers of Chriſt's houſe, Acts viii. 36, 37, 38. Phil. i. 27.

Q. Who are theſe that have not this right, and are to be kept back from this holy table?

A. All who are groſsly ignorant, or openly profane.

Q. Who are to be reckoned groſsly ignorant?

A. All theſe who know not God in his nature, perſons and attributes; who know not their miſery by nature and the way of their recovery by Chriſt; who know not the nature of regeneration or converſion; nor the ends and uſes of the Lord's ſupper.

Q. Why ſhould ſuch ignorant perſons be kept back from this ordinance?

A. Becauſe they are not capable to examine themſelves in order to prepare for coming, nor rightly to diſcern the Lord's body in the ſacrament when they do come; and ſo they would provoke God, and get no benefit by their coming, but much hurt, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29. 1 Tim. v. 22.

Q. Who are to be reckoned openly prophane?

A. All ſuch as live in the open and known commiſſion of ſin, and omiſſion of duty, with repentance, or ſerious reſolution to reform their lives.

Q. Why are ſuch to be kept back?

A. Becauſe ſuch do but mock God, when they pretend to ſeal a covenant with him: They diſhonour God, and prophane the ordinance, when with unholy hands, they preſume to meddle with ſuch holy things: Yea, they contract the guilt of Chriſt's blood, and *eat and drink judgment to themſelves*, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. Mat. vii. 6. Numb. ix 6, 11.

Q. Are all theſe who have knowledge in their heads, or morlity in their lives, to be thought worthy communicants?

A. Tho' ſuch have a right to this ordinance before men; yet many ſuch may want grace in their hearts and ſo have no right before God; and conſequently unworthy communicants.

Q. Who are theſe who have an eternal and true right to the Lord's table in the ſight of God?

A. All ſuch who are truly in covenant with God; believe in Chriſt with their hearts, obey him in their lives, and make ſuitable preparation for this holy ordinance.

Q. Doth not God call and invite all the profeſſors of Chriſt to come to his table, and conſequently have they not all a right?

A. Very true, all profeſſors, nay, the greateſt ſinners, are called to come; but ſurely God doth not call them to come to his table in their ſins, but to come in due order, firſt to quit their ſins, cloſe with Chriſt, and then to come to his table: We are firſt to prepare, and then come. And tho' many unprepared perſons may have allowance from men, who know not their hearts or ſecret actions; yet, none but the prepared (notwithſtanding of the general call) have God's allowance to come to his table, or can expect benefit or welcome from him, Iſa. lv. 7. Mat. xxii. 11, 12.

Q. Why have none God's allowance and welcome to his table, but believers in Chriſt.

A. Becauſe this is a ſeal of God's covenant with his people, which ſuppoſeth that it ſhould be made, and conſented to on our part before hand, otherwiſe we annex the great ſeal of heaven to a blank; which is a mocking of God. So that this ordinance is inſtituted to confirm believers who are in the covenant; and not to convert unbelievers, and conſequently none but believers have a right before God.

Q. Are all believers ſtill welcome gueſts to his table; or can they never be guilty of unworthy communicating?

A. There is more requiſite to worthy communicating, than being in a good ſtate; we muſt alſo be in a good frame: There muſt not only be faith in a habit, but faith in the lively acts. So that if a believer neglect to examine himſelf, fail in his preparation, or want grace in exerciſe, he even communicates unworthily: Yet neither this, nor any other of his ſins will bring him unto condemnation, tho' it brings on chaſtiſement, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 30, 31, 32. Mat. xxv. 5. Rom. viii. 1. Pſal. lxxxix. 32.

Q. What is it to communicate unworthily?

A. It is for a man to partake in an unworthy ſtate, an unſuitable frame, or with wrong ends. Or, more particularly, it is for a perſon to approach ignorantly, without ſuitable knowledge: Or, to approach formally without a ſuitable reverence and awe of God; or to come without due preparation, without the exerciſe of faith, love, repentance, ſpiritual hunger, thankfulneſs to God, covenanting with him, and reſolutions againſt ſin. Or, to come entertaining ſome known ſin in the life, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, or harbouring ſome ſecret luſt in the heart, ſuch as pride, malice or revenge.

Q. Is not unworthy communicating, both highly ſinful and dangerous?

A. Yes; for, 1. The ſin of it is no leſs than murdering the Son of God, and being acceſſary to the guilt of ſhedding his innocent blood. 2. The danger of it is both temporal ſtrokes and eternal damnation: For this heinous ſin, God is provoked to throw the bodies of many into the grave, and the ſouls of many into hell, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. 30.

Q. Why ſhould this ſin be reckoned ſo very heinous?

A. For theſe reaſons; 1. It argues a low eſteem and an undervaluing of Chriſt, his precious blood, and redeeming love.

2dly, It is a ſolemn affront to Chriſt; as it is to a king, to throw his picture or great ſeal into a puddle.

3dly, It is a horrid mocking of Chriſt, as it is a pretence of love to him, and hatred of ſin, while in the mean time ſin is hugged and Chriſt deſpiſed.

4thly, It is a plain acceſſion to the guilt of the Jews and Romans, who embrewed their hands in Chriſt's blood; for he is reckoned acceſſory to a murder who conſents to it, aids or abetts the murderers, and this unworthy communicants are guilty of.

Q. Is not the guilt of unworthy communicants in ſome reſpect more heinous than that of the Jews?

A. Yes; for the Jews when they pierced him and ſhed his blood; they did it ignorantly, they did it to one they reckoned a criminal and a blaſphemer, they did it to him when he was in the frame of a ſervant, in a ſtate of humiliation. But unworthy communicants do this wittingly againſt him, they own him to be their innocent Saviour, now glorioſly exalted at the right hand of God; and at a time when he is diſplaying his love and making a rich feaſt to them; which makes the crime horrid and monſtrous. Which conſideration ſhould make us all tremble, and cry with David, Pſal. li. 14. *Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God.*

Q. Who are thoſe that may be reckoned worthy communicants?

A. Theſe who are in a worthy ſtate, *viz.* a ſtate of grace; who have a worthy frame of ſpirit, *viz.* the lively exerciſe of grace; and who have worthy ends and deſigns, *viz.* to *ſhew forth Chriſt's death, and renew covenant with God.*

Q. Are there any worthy communicants in a legal ſenſe?

A. No; for the beſt ſaint hath no worth or merit before God; he hath nothing in himſelf to found his claim or plea for any of theſe good things which God beſtows in the ſacrament. There are ſtill many ſins and imperfections in the beſt, ſo that after we have done all, we muſt acknowledge ourſelves to be moſt *unworthy and unprofitable ſervants*, Gen. xxxii. 10. Luke xvii. 10.

Q. *What is meant then by the worthineſs which ſome communicants are ſaid to have?*

A. Nothing, but a goſpel ſuitableneſs and meetneſs of our ſouls ſtate and frame, in this holy ordinance; for worthineſs is oft taken in this ſenſe in ſcripture, Mat. xxii. 8. Luke iii. 8. Col. i. 10. Rev. iii. 5.

Q. *Is perfect holineſs, a ſtrong faith, or a very great meaſure of knowledge in religion, or ſenſible joy and comfort at the Lord's table, eſſentially neceſſary to worthy communicating?*

A. No, for there may be worthy communicants in a goſpel ſenſe, graciouſly owned and accepted of God, who yet may have many ſins and doubts, much darkneſs and confuſion: but where there is any meaſure of true faith in Chriſt, tho' weak, the Lord marks not iniquity, but looks on the ſoul as white, through the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, Numb. xxiii. 21. Pſal. cxxx. 3. 4.

Q. *What is it then to communicate worthily; and wherein lies the nature of this work and duty?*

A. It is a complex act, and a very great work; and it lies ſhortly in our receiving Chriſt and his benefits with the hand of faith, and making particular application of them for our ſouls neceſſities; as we receive the elements with our bodily hand, and make uſe of them for our bodies. Or, it is, to caſt our guilty ſouls into the open arms of a crucified Saviour for mercy, and in the mean time, to embrace and claſp about this bleeding high Prieſt, with the arms of faith, as our Saviour and Lord; ſaying with Thomas, *my Lord, and my God.* It is a flying into his wounds for ſhelter, and applying his blood for pardon and cleanſing. It is a taking Chriſt's body and blood to ſave us, and a giving up our ſouls and bodies to be ſaved, taught and ruled by him. Or in a word to communicate worthily, is to eat and drink at Chriſt's table, with a believing and thankful remembrance of his love, reſting on his merits, mourning for ſin that pierced him, and ſolemnly reſolving to pierce him no more.

Q. *What are the advantages of worthy communicating?*

A. They are very many, and very great; hereby Chriſt and his benefits are received, the ſouls diſeaſes and plagues are cured, our ſins and luſts weakned and killed, and our graces ſtrengthned, and increaſed. Hereby the hard heart is ſoftned, and the cold heart inflamed, the dead ſoul quickned, the palſy hand cured, and feeble knees ſtrengthned. Hereby the ſtraitned ſoul is enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping deſires elevated, the fainting heart ſupported, the cloudy mind brightned, the uneaſy conſcience ſatisfied, and doubting ſouls reſolved, many times hath Chriſt made himſelf known to his diſciples in the breaking of bread, herein he hath allowed them the ſmiles of his face, the comforts of his Spirit, and ſeal of their pardon, and a ſight of the King in his beauty, and a Piſgah-view of Canaan. O worthy communicant, is there any meal in the world ſo profitable as this? A meal that proves life to your ſouls, and death to your ſins, a cordial to your hearts, and balm to your wounds, ſtrength to your graces, and poiſon to your luſts.

Q. *What are the diſadvantages of unworthy communicating?*

A. It draws down judicial ſtrokes from God upon the ſoul, diſeaſes and untimely death on the body, and eternal wrath upon both. It brings on deſertion from God, and the rebukes of his anger, darkneſs on the mind, deadneſs and impenitency on the heart, barrenneſs and leanneſs on the ſoul, decay and withering on the graces, formality and lifeleſneſs in duties, fearedneſs, and ſometimes horror on the conſcience: Yea it lets looſe Satan againſt the ſoul. And ſome of theſe plagues have even believers themſelves ſmarted under, for their careleſs communicating, 1 Cor. xi. 29. 30.

Q. *What is the meaning of theſe words,* 1 Cor. xi. 29. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body? *Is this ſin ſo damnable that there is no pardon for it?*

A. Tho the ſin be heinous, yet it is not unpardonable: That is not the meaning of the words; the word *damnation*, in the original is *Krima*, which properly ſignifies *judgment*, as well as *damnation*, and therefore our *aſſembly divines* uſe this word upon this ſubject, *They eat and drink judgment to themſelves, i. e.* they make themſelves liable to temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal judgments: Temporal and ſpiritual judgments will follow them in this world, and without a timely repentance, theſe will end in eternal damnation in the other. This is pardonable, as well as others, through *the blood of Chriſt which cleanſeth from all ſin.* For as the virtue of this precious blood ſaved and cleanſed many, who actually ſhed it at Jeruſalem; ſo it can ſave and cleanſe theſe who ſpill and trample it under foot in the ſacrament, upon their application to it, Luke xxiv. 46. 47 Acts ii. 36. 38. 41. 1 John i. 7.

Q. *Doth the preſence of a wicked man pollute the ſacrament to worthy receivers who ſit at the table with him?*

A. No; for it is ſaid, *he eateth and drinketh judgment to himſelf* only, not to another that receives with him: Otherwiſe Chriſt and his apoſtles had been defiled by the company of Judas; for at the ſacrament of the paſſover he certainly was.

Q. *Why is the guilt of this damning ſin, laid upon the unworthy communicant's not diſcerning the Lord's body?*

A. Becauſe he doth not diſtinguiſh betwixt common bread and the ſacrament bread, which repreſents the Lord's body; but uſeth it with as little preparation and regard, or as careleſly, as he uſeth the other; which infers dreadful guilt before God.

Q. *Where is the ſacrament to be adminiſtred?*

A. Only in the congregations and aſſemblies of God's people. For, 1. Chriſt gave it to his diſciples when met together, and not to any of them apart, Mat. xxvi. 20. 26.

2dly, It was the practice of the primitive and apoſtolical churches to adminiſtrate and partake of this ſacrament publicly, when the congregation or church was aſſembled together in one place; which is ratified by the apoſtle, 1 Cor. xi. 20.

3dly, Becauſe it is one great deſign in this ordinance to teſtify union or communion of Chriſtians one with another, 1 Cor. x. 16. 17. *For we being many are one bread.* Now this union of man cannot be expreſſed where there are not many conveened together to do it.

Q. *Wherefore may not the ſacrament be adminiſtred to the ſick, or perſons on a death bed?*

A. It ought not, becauſe of the foreſaid reaſons; and alſo in regard of theſe following, 1. We have neither precept nor example for this practice in the word of God; and ſo it cannot be done in faith, Rom. xiv. 23.

2dly, It derogates much from the awfulneſs and ſolemnity of this great and auguſt ordinance, to adminiſtrate it ſo privately, and with ſo little deliberation and preparation, as often it is done, where this practice is allowed.

3dly, Few ſick or dying perſons are privileged with ſuch ſtayedneſs of mind, calmneſs of thought, free exerciſe of reaſon, and undiſturbed uſe of the faculties, as is neceſſary for a man's examining himſelf before he partake, and ſo exerting the ſeveral acts of faith, and the other graces which are requiſite in partaking. And to adminiſtrate the ſacrament to theſe who are toſſed with ſickneſs, diſtracted with pain or incapable of any freedom or diſtinctneſs of thought (as moſt ſick people are) is to profane the ordinance, and to do the ſick perſon more harm than good.

4thly, This were to ſymbolize with Papiſts and idolaters in their ſuperſtitious practices, and to homologate their errors: For Papiſts believe that the ſacraments do of themſelves confer grace, and that all is well, if they at laſt partake of this ſacrament. From all which errors, idolatries and ſuperſtitious cuſtoms, we ought to keep a due diſtance in obedience to God's command, Exod. xxiii. 24. Levit. xviii. 3. Deut. xii. 30. 1 Cor. x. 6. Rev. xviii. 4.

Q. *Seeing it is our indiſpenſible duty to communicate, and that frequently; and it is ſo highly dangerous to communicate unworthily: What courſe ſhall we take, in order to our being worthy communicants?*

A. We muſt with all earneſtneſs ſeek after that goſpel fitneſs and preparation, which God requires of theſe that approach to this holy ordinance.

Concerning our PREPARATION for the LORD's SUPPER.

Queſt. WHAT *ſort of preparation is it, that God requires of ſuch as come to his table?*

A. It is not a ſlack or careleſs preparation to be put by in a haſty and ſuperficial manner, as ſome do, who never ſet about it till Saturday or the Lord's day morning before they communicate. No, it muſt be timeous and deliberate, conſcientious and impartial, diligent and fervent in the uſe of all appointed means, depending upon God for the gracious preparation of the heart, according to his promiſe, Pſal. x. 17. Prov. xvi. 1.

Q. *What is the neceſſity of ſuch ſolemn preparation for the Lord's table?*

A. For theſe reaſons; 1. God requires it, 1 Cor. xi. 28. *2dly*, There was alſo a great preparation required for the paſſover, Exod. xii. Numb. ix. And this was not put by in a ſhort time; for the trumpet was blown in Jeruſalem to make intimation of its approach fifteen days before; and every family was to have the lamb in their houſes four days before the eating of it, Pſal. lxxxi. 3. Exod. xii. 3, 6. Alſo their houſe was to be prepared and narrowly ſearched for leaven, and that with candles; Chriſt before eating it, cauſed beſpeak and make ready an upper room, furniſhed, ſwept and garniſhed for that purpoſe: All this ſerves to teach us, what preparation we ſhould make for the Lord's ſupper, that now is come in room of the paſſover.

3dly, The ſoul makes a near approach to an infinitely holy God in this ordinance; yea tranſacts and renews covenant with him, which doth call for our making ſolemn preparation, as it was the ſaints practice of old on ſuch occaſions, Gen. xxxv. 2, 3. Joſh. iii. 5. 1 Sam. vii. 3. 1 Sam. xvi, 5. Pſal. xxvi. 6.

4thly, There is need for it, becauſe we are naturally unfit and unprepared; we have carnal hearts, dead affections, and unholy ſouls; and therefore they muſt be renewed, quickened, and purified, before we can hold communion with a holy God at his table.

5thly, God makes great preparations for us in this ordinance, he hath made all things ready on his part; a rich feaſt, a complete Saviour, a full covenant, a ſufficient ranſom, a perfect righteouſneſs, ſuitable promiſes, ſovereign remedies, a glorious purchaſe, and everlaſting inheritance. And are not we bound in duty and gratitude to prepare for receiving theſe great things, Prov. ix. 2. Mat. xxii. 4.

6thly, There is great danger in coming unpreparedly, even of eating and drinking damnation: Of which I have ſpoken before. We muſt not think that we can eſcape the eye of a jealous and all-ſeeing God at this feaſt; for he narrowly views all the gueſts, and will ſpy out every unprepared communicant. As he did the man that wanted the wedding garment, Mat. xx. 11. about whom he gave moſt fearful orders, ver. 13.

Q. *What are the parts of preparation required of us in order to our approach to God's table?*

A. There are generally two, but very comprehenſive, *viz.* ſelf-examination and exciting of the graces.

Q. *What is the nature of this work of ſelf-examination?*

A. It lies in a free-communing with our own hearts and bringing our ſouls before the tribunal of conſcience, and there judging them according to God's word. And in this proceſs, there muſt be an awakening ſummons given and impartial enquiry made, plain accuſations tabled againſt us, and a juſt ſentence pronounced upon us, concerning our ſtate. And if the ſentence be bad, there muſt be the poor pannel's earneſt cries for mercy, and a fleeing quickly to our Surety for repealing of the ſentence of the law. All this I include in ſelf-examination, as neceſſary for preparing us to come to the Lord's table.

Q. *Is there an abſolute neceſſity for ſelf-examination before communicating?*

A. Yes, 1. Becauſe without it, we cannot know how it is with us as to our ſtate, and whither we have a right to approach or not. *2dly*, Without it, we cannot know our wants and miſeries; ſee our need of Chriſt, or eſteem him precious. *3dly*, Without it we cannot have a full diſcovery of our ſins, and ſo cannot reform from them. *4thly*, Without it, we cannot know the deficiency or weakneſs of the ſacramental graces in us, and ſo cannot excite them. *5thly*, Without a particular knowledge of our plagues and diſtempers, we cannot make particular application of the remedy provided for us in the ſacrament.

Q. *What are the properties of this duty?*

A 1. It is abſolutely neceſſary: For it is the firſt ſtep to our converſion.

2dly, It is a duty much neglected by the moſt part of the world, they have no acquaintance with themſelves.

3dly, It is very difficult and diſpleaſing to nature. We are moſt unwilling to turn accuſers of ourſelves;

it being againſt ſelf-love, which always inclines us to flatter ourſelves.

4thly, It is a duty we ſoon tire of, and are ready to flinch from, after we begin it. It is no eaſy matter to keep the mind cloſe at this work for any conſiderable time together.

Laſtly, It requires a conſtant dependence on, and looking to God for his Spirit's aſſiſtance and light, without which we cannot make right diſcoveries of ourſelves, Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Q. *What are theſe things, we ought to examine ourſelves about, before we approach to the Lord's table?*

A. Concerning theſe five things. 1. Our ſtate and condition. 2. Our ſins and ſhort-comings. 3. Our wants and neceſſities. 4. Our ends and deſigns. 5. Our graces and qualifications.

Q. *Is it poſſible to know the ſpiritual ſtate and condition of our ſouls, if it be bad?*

A. Yes, by marks and evidences laid down in ſcripture; particularly our ſtate is bad, if we love the world more than God; if we mind our bodies more than God; if we mind our bodies more than our ſouls. If we be inſenſible of the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of Chriſt to our ſouls. If we make religion only our by-work, and give God no more ſervice, than what the world and the fleſh can ſpare. If we live vain and careleſs lives, and allow ourſelves in known ſin, 1 John ii. 15. 2 Tim. iii. 4. John v. 40. Rom. viii. 5. Rom. x. 3. Mat. x. 37. Pſal. lxxiii. 27.

Q. *How may we know if our ſpiritual ſtate be good?*

A. By ſuch evidences as theſe: If we be heartily concerned about our ſouls and eternity, and carefully ſeek the favour of God through Chriſt: If we place our happineſs in the enjoying of communion with God, and not in the world's comforts: If Chriſt the Mediator, his ordinances, people, and all that belongs to him be precious to us; if indwelling ſin be our burden, and we ſincerely ſtrive againſt ſin both in heart and life; if we make conſcience of our words and ways, and have a reſpect to all God's commandments. Theſe are marks of our ſtate being good, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. Rom. viii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 7. 1 John iii. 9. 14. Gal. v. 24. Rom. vii. 24. Pſalm cxix. 6, 128.

Q. *What is that good ſtate we muſt neceſſarily be in if we would be worthy communicants?*

A. We muſt be in covenant with God through faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and acquaint with a ſaving change of our hearts and natures by a work of regeneration.

Q. *Who are theſe that are in covenant with God?*

A. Theſe who have actually taken hold of the covenant of grace, and have cordially conſented to its gracious offers and terms by faith; particularly, theſe who have been throughly convinced of their miſery under a covenant of works, and have betaken themſelves to the new covenant; having heartily acquieſced in the way and method of ſalvation through Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; have cordially accepted of Chriſt in all his offices and promiſes; and in him have made choice of God the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, as their God and portion; have alſo given up themſelves ſoul and body, and all they have to be the Lord's, to be for him, and not for another: And in Chriſt's ſtrength have engaged to live for God, and walk with him in newneſs of life; as becomes his covenanted people: And this is what we call our perſonal-covenanting with God, which ought to be ſolemnly gone about, by all that would ſeal a covenant with God at his table, Pſalm xvi. 2. Pſalm l. 5. Iſa. xliv. 5. Jer. l. 5. Pſalm cxix. 57. 2 Chron. xxx. 8. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Rom. vi. 4. 13. 2 Cor. v. 15.

Q. *Is not perſonal covenanting with God, the ſame thing with faith?*

A. Yes, only it imports a very ſolemn implicit, and diſtinct exerting of the ſeveral acts of faith, and lies mainly in theſe two, acceptance and dedication.

Q. *Is our accepting of Chriſt as a Lord and ſevereign, that act of faith which entitles us to the covenant and its bleſſings; or that it is a mean and inſtrument of our juſtification before God?*

A. No, for tho' it be eſſentially requiſite to our entering into the covenant, and neceſſarily connected with our juſtification; yet it is not, itſelf, that very act of faith, whereby we are entitled to the covenant and juſtified before God.

Q. *What is the preciſe act of juſtifying faith then whereby that is done?*

A. The act of faith, whereby we are abſolved, reconciled and juſtified before God, and intitled to the covenant, and all Chriſt's purchaſe therein offered, is preciſely the ſoul's embracing Chriſt as a bleeding High-prieſt, offering up himſelf a ſacrifice to divine juſtice, for expiating our guilt, and acting the part of a cautioner in paying our debt: So that the proper object of that faith which is juſtifying, is Chriſt crucified and his righteouſneſs, and upon this alone doth the believing ſoul rely for pardon and ſalvation. Yet, as I ſaid before, with this act of faith, which accepts of Chriſt as a High-prieſt and Surety, is inſeparably connected that other act, *viz.* the accepting of Chriſt as a King and Lord, to rule and govern us all the days of our life; which is abſolutely requiſite to our covenanting with God. And hence it is that there is a diſtinction made betwixt juſtifying faith and ſaving faith. So that we ſee perſonal covenanting is alſo one with faith; only it comprehends more of its act than that which is preciſely juſtifying, Deut. xxi. 17.

Q. *Since the firſt act in perſonal-covenanting is acceptation; what are theſe things we muſt accept of?*

A. We muſt firſt accept of Jeſus Chriſt as our peacemaker, and Mediator with God, ſeeing it is only by him we have acceſs to God, and all the promiſes come to us in him. Then we muſt accept of all the covenant bleſſings, even a whole God-head as our portion; God the Father, as our father in Chriſt; God the Son as our Redeemer, our Prophet to teach us; our Prieſt to attone for us, and our King to govern us; God the Holy Ghoſt as the applier of Chriſt's purchaſe by his renewing us, ſanctifying, comforting and guiding us to glory. We muſt accept of all the divine attributes and perfections; God's wiſdom for our direction, his power for our protection, his mercy for our pardon, and his faithfulneſs for making good all the promiſes to us. We muſt accept of all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, faith, repentance, love, hope, fear, patience, &c. as our portion in Chriſt. We muſt accept of all the divine precepts as our rule; all his ordinances and providences as our helps to heaven: His covenant as the treaſure of our ſupplies and comforts: His rod to reclaim and ſpur us on to duty: His people as our companions in travel: And his heaven as our home and eternal dwelling place.

Q. *Seeing dedication is the other act in perſonal covenanting, what is it we are to dedicate to God?*

A. As God gives himſelf wholly to us, ſo we muſt dedicate and give ourſelves wholly and unreſervedly to him; our ſouls with all their powers and faculties; our underſtandings to embrace God's truths; our wills to comply with his will: our conſciences to recieve his orders; our memories to lay up his counſels; and our affections, and deſires to be centered upon him, as the object of our happineſs. Alſo we muſt devote and give up our bodies with all their ſenſes and members to be for his ſervice: Our eyes to read his word and behold his works: Our ears to hear his calls: Our feet to walk in his ways pleaſing to him: Our hands to ſupply his people in diſtreſs; and our tongues to pray, and ſpeak the language of Canaan. Again, we muſt give up our enjoyments to him, our time and talents, our eſtates and ſubſtance, our relations and friends, our gifts and graces, our power and intereſt, to be employed for God and his honour, and to be entirely diſpoſed of for his ſervice and glory. Likewiſe, we muſt dedicate our ſervice and endeavuors to God, with all the actions and performances of our lives; aiming at his glory in all we do, reſolving and engaging in Chriſt's ſtrength to live wholly to God, perform every duty he commands, ſuffer patiently what he lays on us, watch againſt every ſin he forbids, and renounce all his enemies. In a word, we muſt give up and reſign our whole man to God, and all that we have, to be guided by his Spirit, ruled by his laws, and diſpoſed of by his providence. And in theſe things lies our perſonal-covenanting with God, which certainly is the communicant's beſt token, to warrand him to approach to the Lord's table.

Q. *Is not the gracious covenant, which believers are brought into by their cloſing with Chriſt, called* God's covenant, *and a covenant which he makes with us? How then can we be ſaid to make a covenant with him?*

A. I grant that it is God's covenant, and that ordinarily he is ſaid to make the covenant with his people; and for this good reaſon that God is the bleſſed author and deviſer of this covenant, and revealer and propoſer of it to us; and he that affords us grace and ſtrength to conſent to it, and do our part of the covenant. But the covenant of grace being a marriage-covenant, it neceſſarily imports in its nature a bargain that is mutual, and requires the conſent of both parties, in order to the making and concluding of it. So that we are to be active, and not wholly paſſive in this tranſaction; ſomething muſt be done on our part when we enter into this covenant; not that we have this principal of activity in and from ourſelves; no, it is the fruit of Chriſt's purchaſe, and his Spirit's operation, freely promiſed and given us by God, Jer. xxix. 13. But ſeeing this activity is put forth and exerted by our faculties, it becomes the act and deed of the gracious ſoul. That this covenant is mutual, and doth require activity on our part, is plain from ſcripture, and the ſeveral ways that faith is expreſſed therein. Our entering into this covenant is held forth by the ſinner's yielding himſelf to the Lord or giving his hand to the Lord, as in the original, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. by our taking hold of the covenant, Iſa. lvi. 4. our making a covenant with God, Pſa. l. 5. 2 Chron. xxix. 10. Jer. xxxiv. 18. ſo that we are ſaid to make it with God, as well as he is ſaid to make it with us. Alſo it is held forth by our joining ourſelves to the Lord in a covenant, Jer. l. 5. Our avouching the Lord to be our God, Deut. xxvi. 17. Our ſwearing to the Lord, 2 Chron. xv. 14. Our being married to the Lord, Jer. iii. 14. Hoſ. ii. 19, 20. Our ſubſcribing with the hand unto the Lord, and ſaying *I am the Lord's*, Iſa. xliv. 5. Our ſouls ſaying to the Lord, *Thou art my Lord, thou art my God, and my portion*, Pſal. xvi. 2. Pſal. xxxi. 10. Hoſ. ii. 24 Lam. iii. 24. Likewiſe in the New Teſtament our covenanting with God is held forth by our coming unto God by Chriſt, Heb. vi. 25. laying hold upon the hope ſet before us, Heb. vi. 18. embracing of the promiſes, Heb. xi. 13. Receiving Chriſt, and being married to him, John i. 12. Mat. xxii. 2. Rom. vii. 4. All which expreſſions import our activity in covenanting with God. I grant indeed, that it is God that works in us, and that it is he that is the firſt mover in this bleſſed bargain; he courts us before we conſent; he chuſes us before we chuſe him, Hoſ. ii. 23. Zech. xiii. 8, 9. ſo that this covenant is all free grace; for tho' God puts a condition in it on our part, yet he graciouſly works it in us and promiſes it to us, ſaying, *Ye ſhall be my people*, Jer. xxiv. 7. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 28. Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Q. *In what manner muſt we go about this work of perſonal covenanting with God?*

A. 1. We muſt have our hearts prepared and put in a ſuitable frame for it; they muſt be ſpiritual, humble, and panting after God in Chriſt.

2dly, We muſt be deliberate in managing this weighty tranſaction, and labour to have a clear view of the nature and frame of the covenant of grace: what God offers and promiſes to us, and what he requires of us; and endeavour by grace to get our hearts wrought up to a ſtedfaſt reſolution to comply therewith.

3dly, We muſt ſtill bring Chriſt alongſt with us in our covenanting with God, we muſt bring the ſacrifice of his merits to atone for the breach of the firſt covenant, and his ſuertyſhip to anſwer for our faithfulneſs in the ſecond, ere we can expect to be taken into covenant with God, and owned as his people.

4thly, We muſt give up and engage ourſelves to God in a moſt humble and ſelf-denied manner, narrowly watching againſt a ſelfiſh and legal frame of ſpirit in this work (which we are moſt ready to decline unto) and guarding with all care againſt any ſecret relying upon our own engagements and doings, or letting them come in the room of Chriſt, who alone is *the Lord our Righteouſneſs*. Therefore in managing this work, let us rely wholly upon Chriſt's righteouſneſs to procure us acceſs to God, and acceptance with him; and upon his ſtrength and grace both in making and performing our promiſes and engagements to him; let theſe ſcripture-texts be ſtill in our view, Pſal. l. 5. Jer. xxiii. 6. Iſa. xlv. 24. 1 Cor. i. 30. Phil iii. 8, 9.

5thly, We ſhould ſet about this work of perſonal covenanting timeouſly and ſpeedily, without delay or loſs of time; and particularly let it be done in the ſeaſon of youth; or when perſons firſt get their eyes opened to ſee their loſtneſs by nature, and their need of Chriſt.

And then, laſtly, it ought to be undertaken and gone about in an humble dependence upon divine grace, and conducted, with all ſecrecy and retiredneſs, ſeriouſneſs and holy awe; and yet in the moſt ſolemn and explicit manner with the expreſs words of the mouth, as well as the fixed purpoſe of the heart; yea, ſubſcribing it with the hand and calling heaven and earth to witneſs our ſincerity in this grand affair. An example whereof I have ſubjoined in the appendix of this catechiſm.

Q. *What is the neceſſity of our perſonal covenanting with God?*

A. 1. Becauſe God requires it of us, and promiſes great happineſs to them, who did it in ſincerity, 2 Chron. xxx 8. Pſal. l. 5. Iſa. lvi. 4. 5. 6. 7.

2dly, The nature of faith (which is required of every man) implies covenanting with God: For faith is the uniting grace, and carries in it not only an aſſent to the underſtanding, but alſo the conſent of the will to embrace God's offers of ſalvation through Chriſt, and accept of Chriſt on his own terms, both as our Saviour and ruler, Mat. xi. 28. 29. Mat. xvi. 24. He is a High-prieſt on the throne, Zech. vi. 13.

3dly, Our baptiſm obligeth us to perſonal covenanting with God. For the whole of the covenant of grace is contained in baptiſm, and every man's conſent to it is implied in theſe words, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, i. e.* I ſprinkle thee with water (which repreſents God's bequeathing and making over to thee all Chriſt's purchaſe) in ſign and teſtimony that thou doſt own God the Father for thy Father in Chriſt, God the Son for thy Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghoſt for thy Sanctifier: Now it is certainly requiſite that we ſhould, when we come to age, perſonally renew our baptiſmal covenant, and ratify our parents deed, that we may be Chriſtians by our own free choice and conſent, as well as by our own parents dedication. And this every individual man and woman that would be ſaved, muſt do for themſelves, by their own particular conſent, and perſonal coming into the bond of this covenant, Ezek. xx. 37. The which if we neglect to do, our baptiſm will not profit us, for God will rank and puniſh us with the uncircumciſed, Jer. ix. 25, 26.

4thly, This was the practice of God's people of old, Deut. xxvi. 17. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. 2 Chron. xxix. 10. Neh. ix. 38. Pſalm l. 5. Jer. xxxiv. 18. Jer. l. 5. Iſa. lvi. 4. 6. Nay, it is the practice of all the New Teſtament believers, 2 Cor. viii. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 2, For our giving ourſelves to the Lord, in marriage tranſaction, doth plainly import our perſonal covenanting with God.

Q. *But what warrant have we for ſuch an expreſs verbal way of covenanting with God, as before mentioned?*

A. I do not ſay that ſuch an explicit or formal tranſaction is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, ſeeing a man's ſtate is ſafe, if he with his heart cloſe with God's offer of ſalvation through Chriſt: But yet this expreſs verbal tranſacting is very neceſſary on ſeveral accounts.

1. Becauſe it is a matter of the greateſt moment and concern to our ſouls to be in covenant with God, and we can never be at too much pains to make it ſure. Shall we be ſo very expreſs, plain and peremptory in other bargains of leſſer moment, and yet be content to be overly in this, upon which our eternal concerns do depend?

2dly, It is neceſſary, that ſo the impreſſions of our conſent and engagements to the Lord may be fixed the deeper in our minds and memories; and ſo may be the more abiding with us.

3dly, It is neceſſary for the ſtrengthning of faith and preventing many groundleſs fears and jealouſies about our ſouls eſtate. There is nothing ſo liable to be queſtioned and brought into debate as our intereſt in Chriſt, and our being in covenant with God through him; and therefore we ſhould do all we can for maintaining a comfortable ſenſe of it upon our ſpirits, that we may be the more chearful in our obedience to God. And this way of ſolemn verbal tranſacting with God is a proper means for that end; it being, as it were a formal inſtrument taken and put in record, of what paſſeth betwixt God and the ſoul.

4thly, This practice is very advantagious and ſupporting to God's people in the day of trouble and diſtreſs, or when they are in the view of death. How comfortable is it then, to call to mind former experiences of the ſoul's communion with God, and particularly for them to remember how, at ſuch a time and place, they joined themſelves to the Lord in a perſonal and perpetual covenant: Then and there God ſpake with them, ſealed their pardon, and owned them as his covenanted people. The ſoul was helped ſolemnly and expreſly to ſay unto the Lord, *Thou art my God;* and God graciouſly anſwered the ſoul, *I am thy ſalvation.* This was very comfortable to the royal Pſalmiſt in the time of his greateſt ſtraits, and when in proſpect of eternity, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Pſal. xlii. 6. 11. Pſal. lxxvii. 10. 11. 12. 13. Pſal. cxliii. 5. Pſal. cxliii. 5. 6.

5thly, Expreſs tranſacting with God, hath been the uſual practice of the beſt and holieſt of God's people; and ſtill is moſt frequent in theſe times and places, where the power and life of religion do moſt abound: This practice of God's people hath been viſibly owned by God; by this method many of them have attained to the comfortable aſſurance of their intereſt in Chriſt and the bleſſings of the new covenant, which hath been very ſteadable to them through the whole courſe of their lives. And to the neglect of this ancient and uſeful practice, many think the great decay of religion in our day is to be imputed.

6thly, There is ſolid foundation and warrand given for expreſs verbal tranſacting with God, from his word and the practice of his ſaints therein recorded. For the covenant betwixt God and his people is there repreſented by a marriage-covenant betwixt huſband and wife, Hoſ. ii. 19, 20. 2 Cor. xi. 2. And we know, it is neceſſary that the wife give expreſs and explicit conſent to the huſband, as well as the huſband to the wife. And therefore the Lord ſaith to his people, *Thou ſhalt call me Iſhi, i. e.* my Huſband, *and thou ſhalt not be for another, ſo alſo will I be for thee,* Hoſ. ii. 16. Hoſ. iii. 3. Such a conſent gave the ſpouſe, Cant. vi. 3. *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.* Likewiſe our joining ourſelves to the Lord in this covenant is called a *giving the hand to the Lord,* which imports a moſt poſitive and expreſs way of tranſacting, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Again he ſaith, *One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's, and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord,* Iſa. xliv. 5. Theſe and many other ſcriptures, that might be cited, import a moſt expreſs and formal conſent in this covenant, to be neceſſary and warrantable on our part, Jer. iii. 4, 19. Iſa. xlv. 24. Zech. xiii. 9. Which alſo we have exemplified, in the practices of Jacob, David, Hezekiah, Nehemiah, Thomas, and other ſaints, Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. Pſal. xvi. 2. 2 Chron. xxix. 10.

Neh. ix. 28. John xx. 38. Pſal. cxl. 6.

Q. *What are the proper ſeaſons for expreſs covenanting with God?*

A. 1. In time of youth, when the heart is moſt tender and melting: And eſpecially when perſons are firſt brought under convictions, and are about to renew their baptiſmal engagements, and approach to the Lord's table for receiving the ſecond ſeal of God's covenant, Pſal. lxxi. 5. 17. Jer. ii. 3. Jer. iii. 4.

2*dly*, This practice is to be renewed upon ſome ſpecial occaſions. As, 1. In time of great backſliding, and deep humiliation for the ſame, Neh. ix. 29. 2*dly*, In time of great ſtraits and imminent dangers, Gen. xxxii. 9. 26. Pſal. xxxi. 14. Pſal. lvii. 1. 2. 3*dly*, When perſons are undertaking ſome great and difficult work, as Joſhua when Iſrael was to ſettle in Canaan in the midſt of ſnares, Joſh. xxiv. 23. 24. 25. And Jacob when going to Padan-aram, Gen. xxviii. 20. 21. 4*thly*, When believers are under deſertion, and in the dark about their caſe, and through temptations brought to queſtion if ever they really covenanted with God: then it is proper to eſſay the matter of new, and do what we can to put it out of doubt, by ſaying expreſsly to God, *Thou art my God, and my portion*, Pſal. xxxi. 14. Pſal cxlii. 5. So the Spouſe when deſerted, profeſſed and avowed Chriſt as her Beloved, Cant. v. 4. and vi. 3. 5*thly*, Some have repeated this practice with comfort at the beginning of every year. I grant indeed there is hazard leſt people by frequent expreſs covenanting with God, turn too formal in it: And therefore, it may be as fit on ſome occaſions, to declare in the ſight of God, our adherence to the covenant formerly made. Formality and overlineſs in this work, ſhould be eſpecially guarded againſt; for our expreſs verbal covenanting is of no worth, unleſs heart-covenanting be joined with it. It is a mocking of God, to draw nigh to him with the lips, when the heart is away.

Q. *What ſhall we think of theſe, who apprehend that they once covenanted with God in Chriſt: but by their ſins they have broke their engagements, and ſo are no more to be reckoned God's covenanted people?*

A. 1. All ſuch have cauſe to be humbled deeply for their ſins, whereby they have broken covenant with God: And if they be not humbled on this account, they have indeed ground to ſuſpect themſelves, that they were never truly God's covenanted people.

2*dly*, We ought to remember that the covenant of works and the covenant of grace differ vaſtly in their nature: For the firſt could be violated by the leaſt ſin, but the ſecond cannot be diſſolved by any ſin of the covenanted. For tho' we break the engagement we come under when we enter into this covenant; yet God will not break the promiſes he makes on his part. God's gracious covenant with his people ſtands firm and undiſſolved, notwithſtanding of many breaches and failures on their part; becauſe there is a Surety in this covenant, from whom he receives ſatisfaction for the ſins of the covenanted; and upon this account, it is provided as a ſpecial article of this covenant that God will forgive the ſins and breaches of his covenanted people, when they confeſs them, and ſue for pardon for their Surety's ſake: And hence it is, that the covenant of grace is perpetual and indiſſolvable, and theſe who are once in covenant with God, are ſtill in it, Jer. xxxi. 33. 34. Pſalm lxxxix. 31. 34. Iſa. liv. 8. 1 John i. 9. 1 John ii. 1.

3*dly*, All ſenſible backſliders, covenant-breakers, and treacherous dealers of any ſort, are graciouſly invited and encouraged by God to return to him, and renew their covenant again, Jer. iii. 1. 12. 23. 14. 16. 20. 21. 22 Hoſ. xiv. 1. 2. 3. 4.

Q. *But what if we ſhould juſt break over again: Is it not better not to engage, than come under new obligations, which would but aggravate our guilt?*

A. 1. It would be a fearful aggravation of ſin indeed to come under new engagements to God, without having a ſincere deſign of keeping them.

2*dly*, We are peremptorily obliged by God's command to renew covenant with him, and not left to our freedom to come under new engagements or not as we think fit.

3*dly* It is good to be jealous of ourſelves in taking on new engagements; for the weaker we be in our own eyes, and the more we diſtruſt our own ſtrength, the ſtronger and ſafer we really are, 2 Cor. xii. 10.

4*thly*, If we covenant honeſtly with God through Chriſt our Surety, we may expect ſufficient covenanted grace and ſtrength, for breaking the power of ſin in us, and enabling us to wreſtle againſt it. And likewiſe we will have our Surety engaged to anſwer for all our failures; and tho' we be weak, to be ſure he is ſufficiently able and ſponſible for us.

Q. *Is not this dorctrine concerning the perpetuity of the covenant, and Chriſt's ſuretyſhip for us, an encouragement to people to turn licentious in their walks?*

A. Not at all; for, on the contrary, believers are hereby laid under the ſtricter obligations to love God and Chriſt, which love will ſurely and ſweetly conſtrain them to an holy and obedient walk. And whoever they be that improve this doctrine as an encouragement to ſin, they are none of God's covenanted people; for it is the character of the ungodly, *To turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs*: And tho' they ſhould do ſo, yet the foreſaid doctrine is true, and neceſſary to be publiſhed, to prevent dejected ſouls being ſunk with diſcouragement, or driven into deſpair, Rom. vi. 1. 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. Gal. vi. 1. Jude ver. 4.

Q. *But what ſhall be ſaid to thoſe, who are ſo diſcouraged with a ſenſe of their own unworthineſs to enter into covenant with God, that they ſuſpect God is not willing to accept of them?*

A. 1. God never refuſed to enter into covenant with any upon the account of unworthineſs. Who more vile than Manaſſeh, and yet God excluded him not upon his humble application? Who more unworthy than the Prodigal, that forſook his father, and took on to ſerve the devil and his ſwiniſh luſts, and yet upon his return, the father, takes him in his arms, rejoices in him as his dear child, and calls heaven and earth to rejoice with him too, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 13. Luke xv. 13. 15.

2*dly*, God never took any into covenant with him but the unworthy; for God's covenanting with any of the ſinful poſterity of Adam (who are all of them utterly unworthy of this privilege) is an act of pure grace, and free condeſcending love, which all his people will have reaſon to admire and glorify to all the ages of eternity.

3*dly*, The more ſenſible we are of our unworthineſs, and humbled for it, the more fit we are for covenanting with God; for it is ſuch he hath promiſed to accept, Pſalm x. 17. Iſa. lxvi. 2. Mat. v. 3.

4*thly*, Tho' we be altogether unworthy, in ourſelves, of being taken into covenant with God ; yet worthy is the Lamb our Surety, who hath merited this privilege to unworthy ſinners, and it is only his worthineſs that we muſt plead.

5*thly*, We have the plaineſt calls, and moſt preſſing invitations from God to the unworthieſt of ſinners to come and enter into covenant with him, and many arguments made uſe of to engage them to it, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Iſa. li. 4. Iſa. lv. 3. 7. Ezek. xviii. 30. 23. 2 Cor. v. 20. Now for any to doubt in God's willingneſs to enter into covenant with him, after theſe plain proofs which he has given us of it, is no leſs than to ſuſpect God's ſincerity and ingenuity in his offers and declarations ; which muſt be no ſmall crime.

Q. *But what ſhall be ſaid of theſe, who have many times refuſed God's gracious offers, and hence are afraid that he will not accept of them now ?*

A. 1. They ought to be deeply humbled for the former refuſals they have given. 2*dly*, Bleſs God that the treaty is not yet broke off, and that his gracious offers are ſtill ſounding in their ears. 3*dly*, The longer they have formerly refuſed, the more haſte ought they now to make to come and take hold of God's covenant that they may not provoke him by refuſing or delaying any longer.

Q. *But have we ſtrength of ourſelves to take hold of this covenant and tranſact with God ?*

A. 1. I grant we have not, but yet it is not here that the bargain ſticks : It is not ſo much for want of power, as want of will, that this tranſaction is not made ; for if once we were willing, ſtrength would not be wanting : Yea it is our unwillingneſs that ruins us, John v. 40. 2*dly*, We ought to be deeply humbled, under a ſenſe of our impotency before God, ly groaning in his way, plead earneſtly for pity, and flee to God's power, Chriſt's grace and the Spirit's aſſiſtance, to enable us for this work, begging importunately, that according to his promiſe, for Chriſt's ſake, he would put a principle of life and activity in us, that we may covenant with God, and cloſe a bargain with him through Chriſt. 3*dly*, As we ought to be looking and ſeeking for this principle of activity from God ; ſo we muſt not lay aſide our own endeavours and efforts (weak as they are) till we know that we have this principle of the Spirit's concurrence with us, for commonly the Spirit's work in the ſoul is not diſcernible at firſt : But (ſeeing the duty is ours, tho' the work be the Spirit's) we ought in a humble dependence on Chriſt and his Spirit for ſtrength, to be aiming and minting to cloſe with God in Chriſt, take hold of his covenant, and conſent to the goſpel method of ſalvation, as we can : And if by any means we can get a grip of this covenant, let us take it, and ſay, with our ſouls to the Lord, Thou art my God. For it pleaſeth God to ſee us minting our duty, and he uſeth to join weak endeavours, and work in and by our own activity and weak mints, gradually influencing and inclining our hearts and wills to ſpiritual things, and holy duties, Luke xi. 13. Iſa. lxiv. 5. Jer. xxx. 21, 22. Jer. xxxi. 18. Hoſ. xiv. 2, 3, 4. Faith ordinarily comes at firſt to Chriſt, with a weak and trembling hand, minting to take hold of God's covenant, and the offers of grace, but knows not if theſe mints ſhall be any way available : Faith even adventures on *a may be, It may be the Lord will be gracious : Who knows but he will return.* Amos v. 15. Joel. ii. 14.

Q. *What ſhall we ſay of thoſe who refuſe to enter into covenant with God, becauſe they ſuſpect they are none of God's elect, and ſo have no right to God's covenant ?*

A. We are to look on this ſuſpicion as a temptation of Satan, deſigned by him to hinder ſinners from Chriſt, or to drive them to deſperation, and therefore ought to be reſiſted, For, 1. It is great madneſs to open our ears to the ſuggeſtions of the devil, who is a *liar and murderer from the beginning*, and ſtop them from hearing the voice of the God of mercy and truth ſpeaking to us in the ſcripture, and calling us to take hold of his covenant.

2*dly*, It is high preſumption to intrude ourſelves into the ſecret decrees of God, which he hath forbid us to pry into, and to reject theſe plain duties which he hath commanded : For *ſecret things belong unto God, but revealed things unto us*, Deut. xxix 29.

3*dly*, The way to know our election is to make ſure our effectual calling, which muſt be by entering into covenant with God through Jeſus Chriſt, and turning our back upon ſin ; which if our hearts be determined to do, we may ſurely conclude we are elect veſſels ; for turning to God in Chriſt is a fruit and certain proof of election, 2 Pet. i. 10.

4*thly*, This way of acting in ſoul matters muſt be altogether againſt reaſon, ſeeing it is ſo in things reſpecting the body. We would reckon him a ſelf murderer, that would take no food, nor uſe any means for preſerving his natural life, becauſe of an apprehenſion he hath, that he is appointed to die in a ſhort time. So they murder their ſouls, who will not uſe the means of ſpiritual life, becauſe they fear they are not elected. Again, if we have but a probability of gaining ſome temporal advantage, tho' not a certainty, we will venture and run ſome hazard for it : And do we think heaven and eternal glory ſuch ſmall things, that we will not venture and eſſay to take hold of God's covenant in order to obtain them ?

Q. *What ſhall we ſay of thoſe, who fear it is now out of time for them to attempt this, becauſe they ſuſpect their day of grace is paſt, and the door is ſhut ?*

A. 1. I grant there are not a few who provoke God to ſhut the door and give up with them, becauſe of their long grieving and quenching the Spirit of God, and living ſecurely in known wickedneſs, under the moſt ſearching and lively ſermons ; upon which account he withdraws his Spirit, and plagues many with judicial obduration, ſo that no means can do them any good. Wherefore if we in any meaſure be guilty of the forſaid ſins, it ſhould be matter of great mourning and humiliation to us.

2*dly*, Cloſing with Chriſt, in the goſpel offers, can never be too late, nor out of time : For God hath ſaid, *Whoſoever believeth in Chriſt ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life ;* But ſaith not, if they do not believe againſt ſuch a time, they ſhall be excluded ! No, the offer is made to all ſinners whatſoever, and late believers or repenters are not excepted from the benefit of it more than others.

3*dly*, They that can ſay, they ſincerely deſire God's favour, and heart-holineſs, the death of ſin, and true love to God, more than all the glory of the world : or, that they ſigh and groan after Chriſt, and would fain have him for their Lord and Saviour: it is a ſign their day of grace is not over, for theſe very deſires are ſome degrees of grace, and a certain evidence that God ſtill continues to deal with their hearts.

Q. *What are the marks of thoſe, who are truly God's covenanted people?*

A. They are a willing people, a humble and ſelf-denying people: They are an holy people, zealous of good works: they are thankful and God exalting people. Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator and Surety of the covenant, is very precious to them. The free grace of the covenant is the matter of their wonder and admiration. They are inclined to perform covenant duties, and that in a covenant way, relying on covenant-ſtrength, from a principle of love and gratitude to their covenanted God, and with an eye to glorify his name, Pſal. 110. 3. Ezek. xvi. 62. 63. Tit. ii. 14. Iſa. lv. 1. Pſal. cxv. 1. Iſa. xxiv. 24. Iſa. lvi. 4, 5, 6.

Q. *Are all theſe, that are truly in covenant with God, acquainted with the new birth and a work of regeneration?*

A. Yes; for theſe two, being in covenant with God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and being renewed or born again, are inſeparably connected, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 28. 1 Cor. v. 17.

Q. *What is it that you underſtand by the new birth, or a work of regeneration?*

A. Theſe words, the new birth, new creature, regeneration, renovation, converſion, and effectual calling, are commonly uſed to denote the ſame things: And they ſignify, that gracious and ſaving change which is wrought upon the whole man, both inwardly and outwardly by the almighty power and grace of the Spirit of God, by the means of his word; whereby the ſoul being awakened to ſee its miſery and danger in a natural ſtate, is humbled for ſin, and powerfully drawn and determined to come to Jeſus Chriſt for remedy, the mind is ſavingly enlightned, the will is made pliable, the heart is melted and made new, the ſeeds of grace are ſown therein, ſin's power is broken, the outward life is reformed, and the whole man is turned from ſin to Jeſus Chriſt and his ways, firmly reſolving through his ſtrength, to walk with him conſtantly in the practice of holineſs and duties of religion, Eph. i. 18. 19. Tit. 4. 5. Acts 26. 28. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 29. Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 24 1 John iii. 9.

Q. *What are the ſigns of a perſon that is unregenerate, and in a ſtate of nature?*

A. They are ſuch, 1. Who love the world and the things of it more than God, 1 John ii. 15. James iv 4.

2dly, Who againſt light live in the practice of ſecret wickedneſs, or regard iniquity in their hearts, Col. iii. 5. Iſa. i. 13. 14. 15. Jer. 44. 16.

3dly, Who believe not the report of the goſpel concerning Jeſus Chriſt, John iii. 36. John viii. 16.

4thly, Who go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, not ſubmitting to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, Rom. x. 3.

5thly, Who are haters of the people of God, 1 John ii. 9. John iii. 10.

Q. *Have ſuch, who upon ſelf examination find themſelves in that ſtate, any cauſe to deſpair of mercy?*

A. Tho' they may deſpair of help from themſelves, or of help from God while they reſolve to continue in ſin; yet they are to believe there is a door of mercy and hope opened to the greateſt ſinners in the goſpel through Chriſt, ſeeing he is willing to accept of all who are ſenſible of ſin and miſery, and come to him for help: And to deſpair of mercy in Chriſt is the greateſt ſlight and diſhonour that can be done to him and his moſt efficacious blood, Mat. xi. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 6. 10. 11. 1 John i. 7. Lam. iii. 26.

Q. *What courſe ſhall theſe ſinners take, who are convinced of their bad eſtate, in order to be brought out of it?*

A. 1. They ought to cheriſh convictions, and labour, for a deep and thorough ſenſe of ſin and miſery Mat. ix. 12. Luke iv. 18.

2dly, They are to be diligent in attending upon the word, and in the uſe of prayer and meditation, John v. 25. 1 Pet. i. 23. Acts ix. 11.

3dly, They are to believe, tho' neither faith nor repentance be in their power, yet they are both purchaſed by Chriſt, and graciouſly promiſed to ſinners in the goſpel, Phil. i. 29. Acts. 5. 31. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

4thly, They ought, in the firm perſwaſion of Chriſt's ability and willingneſs to help, to be looking to him for righteouſneſs and ſtrength; and in the painful uſe of all the ordinary means to be much in preſſing their own hearts to believe and cloſe with Chriſt in the goſpel offers; earneſtly crying to God with Ephraim, *Turn thou me and I ſhall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God*, Jer. xxxi. 18

Q. *But may we not delay this affair till afterwards?*

A. No; we muſt preſently ſet about it. For, 1. Our lives are moſt uncertain, and many thouſands go ſuddenly into eternity before they be aware; and none knoweth how ſhort while the days of God's patience, and the offers of grace may laſt, James iv. 14. Heb. iii. 15. Luke xii. 10.

2dly, A ſtate of ſin is ſo dangerous, that we ſhould not willingly adventure to live and ly down another night in it.

3dly, The longer we delay converſion-work, the more unwilling we will be to ſet about it, the heart will be the more hardned, and the habits of ſin be more ſtrengthened: Our guilt will be the more increaſed and our ſouls the more unwilling to be called to account.

4thly, There are many thouſands in hell already who have periſhed through delays.

5thly, If we refuſe to hearken to God in the time of youth and proſperity; he may juſtly refuſe to hearken to us in the time of our need, Prov. i. 26. 28. Zech. vii. 13.

Q. *By what marks may we know if the ſaving change by regeneration be wrought upon us, and that we are new born, and in a ſtate of grace?*

A. By theſe; 1. If we have got our eyes opened, and new diſcoveries of ſin, Chriſt and holineſs: If ſin appear to us moſt vile, Chriſt moſt neceſſary, and holineſs moſt beautiful, Acts xxvi. 18. Rom. vii. 12, 13.

2dly, If we have got new cares and concernments of ſoul, not about *what we ſhall eat, drink &c.* but *what we ſhall do to be ſaved*, get the favour of God, our intereſt in Chriſt ſecured, and our ſouls made meet for glory, Mat. vi. 31, 32, 33. Acts xvi. 30. Job xxiii. 3.

3dly, If we have got a new heart, and a new principle of ſpiritual life, and be endued with new reſolutions to ſtrive againſt ſin, and walk with God in newneſs of life, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Rom. vi. 4, 12. Gal. v. 16, 17.

4thly, If we have got new deſires after the word of God, and the means of ſpiritual nouriſhment, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

5thly, If we have earneſt deſires after God's preſence in ordinances, and particularly after converſe with God, in ſecret prayer, Pſal. lxiii. 1, 2. Pſal. lxiii. 58. Acts ix. 11.

6thly, If we hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs both imputed and inherent, Mat. v. 6.

7thly, If indwelling ſin, and remaining corruption, in our hearts be our greateſt grief and trouble, Rom. vii. 24.

8thly, If we have a ſincere love to all the people of God, 1 John iii. 14.

Laſtly, If we come to the light, and be willing to be ſearched, and have matters put to a trial, John iii. 20, 21. Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Q. *What are the marks and properties of a new heart?*

A. The new heart is a ſincere and ſingle heart, it is a ſoft and tender heart, trembleth at God's word, and is affected with frowns: It is grieved for inward ſins and heart-plagues; it is afraid of temptations to ſin and the appearances of evil; it is concerned for the honour of God, and affected with the diſhonours that are done to him: It deſires and delights to do the will of God, and chuſeth the things that pleaſe him, Ezek. 36. 26. Pſal. 18. 23. Iſa. lvi. 2. Pſal. 30. 7. Pſal. 139. 21. Gen. 39. 9. Rom. vii. 22. 24. Acts 13. 22. Iſa. lvi. 4.

Q. *What ſhall theſe poor exerciſed ſouls do, who after the moſt diligent ſearch, ſtill doubt of their being in a gracious ſtate: For when ſometimes they attempt to lay claim to ſome of the foreſaid marks, they are preſently beat off again, and all is darkned to them, ſo that they cannot ſay they have any true grace or faith at all?*

A. Theſe trembling and doubting ſouls, who are labouring by all means to attain to clearneſs about their ſouls condition, and yet cannot win at it, are very much to be pitied: For tho' they be ſtill uſing the means for light, yet they can get no ſolid ground to build any confidence upon: and hence they are often tempted to renounce their hope, and give over all further endeavours.

But ſuch ought to conſider, 1. That all ſeaſons, and particularly a deſerted condition, is not a very proper time for believers to examine and find out the marks of this gracious ſtate; for ordinarly, then, ſatan raiſes many fogs and miſts to obſcure their grace, and the ſaving change the Spirit of God hath wrought in their ſouls, that they cannot poſſibly diſcover it; ſo that they muſt wait a fitter opportunity for this work.

2dly, We ought not to overlook the loweſt mark of grace, but be thankful if we can at leaſt ſay, our ſouls deſire grace and an intereſt in Chriſt above all things: and that we are much troubled and caſt down for want of clear evidences thereof: And tho' we cannot ſay we have true love to Chriſt, yet it is our greateſt grief, that we cannot get our wretched hearts to love him: And tho' we cannot ſay we believe in Chriſt, yet we reſolve never to rely on our own righteouſneſs, nor ſeek another Saviour, but to caſt our ſouls down at his feet, and look up to him, and none other for help: And tho' we cannot ſay he will have mercy upon us; yet nothing in all the world would ſo pleaſe our hearts, as one ray or love-blink of his countenance. And tho' we cannot ſay we have true repentance, or any gracious change wrought in us; yet we reſolve never to give over duty, nor give way to any known ſin: We will find thirſt for Chriſt as our Saviour, and for heaven as our home. Then I ſay, we ought to be thankful. For theſe, tho' oft overlookt, are ſome degrees of faith, and evidences of the Spirit's work in the heart; for the leaſt degrees of grace, is grace, as well as that which is ſtronger: As the leaſt ſpark of a diamond, is truly a diamond, as well as bigger ſtones; and the leaſt drop of dew is water, as well as the river. We read of little faith, and of faith *like a grain of muſtard-ſeed*, which nevertheleſs is true faith, as well as that which is ſtronger; and we muſt not *deſpiſe the day of ſmall things*, Mat. viii. 26. Mat. xvii. 20. Zech. iv. 10. Mark viii. 24. Mark ix. 24. Job xiii. 15. Mat. v. 6. Mat. xii. 20.

3dly, If we cannot attain to clearneſs, by poring on the marks of a gracious change, or of ſaving faith in us (as indeed ſometimes believers cannot, ſince there is no mark can be given, but a ſcrupulous conſcience will find an evaſion or back-door) then let us try to act faith in a direct manner upon Jeſus Chriſt; for often believers come ſooner to clearneſs about their intereſt in him, by the direct acts of faith, than by the reflex acts. Therefore, let us flee to Chriſt for refuge, and lay hold upon the offer and promiſes of life through him, as if we had never done it before. Let us go and tranſact a covenant with God in Chriſt, as if we had never eſſayed any thing like it before: and poſſibly our fears will ſoon evaniſh, and light break in, Pſalm 97. 11.

Q. *But can we never conclude, that we are renewed and in a gracious ſtate, till we feel the pangs of the new birth, be acquaint with a law-work, and deep humiliation for ſin: Do not theſe neceſſarily go before our cloſing with Chriſt?*

A. 1. I grant indeed that the operation of the ſpirit of conviction by the law or the ſpirit of bondage, doth ordinarily go before the ſpirit of adoption, and the intimations of pardon by Chriſt: And that all who come to Chriſt muſt come in the due ſenſe of their ſins and miſery by nature: And that ſome have had a great meaſure of conviction, ſorrow and humiliation for ſin, Rom. viii. 15. Mat. ix. 12. Acts ii. 37. Pſal. lxxxviii. 11.

2dly, God is a ſovereign free agent, and is not tied to one way of working in theſe he brings home to himſelf. Some he brings in very early in their child-hood, ſo that they do not remember the working of God's Spirit in them, which they have truly felt: And theſe he brings in, in riper years, he deals variouſly with them: In ſome the work of humiliation is very great and diſcernible; but in others not, as in Zaccheus and Lydia: In ſome humiliation work is deep and ſhort as was in the jaylor, and the three thouſand converted by Peter's ſermon, who were convinced and pricked in their hearts, repented and cloſed with Chriſt by faith, were converted and baptized all in a few hours, Acts ii. 37. 41. Acts xvi. 30. 33. 34. In others again, this work is not ſo deep, but of longer continuance: Some God calls not home, till they have run a long race in a courſe of open ſin, and rebellion againſt God, and theſe he uſeth to humble more deeply, and for a longer time; ſo that they can better obſerve the ſteps of the Spirit's working in them, than others. Paul was three days under deep conviction and humiliation, Acts vi. Others again, are in the time of their youth reſtrained from groſs ſins, and have had always ſome liking to religion, and the people of God, yet without ſaving grace: when

God brings theſe in, uſually their humiliation is not ſo deep as others. Nay ſome are drawn to Chriſt by the ſweet cords of love, and ſcarce know any thing of theſe mount Sinai-thunderings, or the legal ſhakings and terrors that others are ſorely broken and exercised with. They are called in by the ſtill and calm voice of the goſpel, which convinces them in a kindly manner, melts their hearts for wounding of Chriſt, and warms their ſouls with the gracious diſcoveries of his free love and matchleſs excellencies, which makes them to ſtand and wonder, and readily to yield themſelves his captives. Zaccheus was ſoon ſurprized with the love-offers Chriſt made to his ſoul, ſo that he came down in haſte, and received him joyfully.

3dly, I grant, that theſe who are brought in without a diſcernable law-work, are ordinarily more in the dark afterwards about their ſouls eſtate than others; becauſe their change was not ſo remarkable. Satan oft makes more ſucceſsful attacks upon them to drive them to doubting and deſpondency, than on thoſe who are gained by the law-terrors; and hence they are frequently tempted to raze the foundation.

4thly, As God doth not limit himſelf to one way of working, ſo none can preſcribe what time or degree of humiliation is ſufficient or neceſſary for the ſouls converſion and cloſing with Chriſt. Only if we have as much of it as is neceſſary to let us ſee our need of Chriſt, and determine us to paſs through all difficulties to come at him for ſalvation; and cauſe us to loath ourſelves in duſt and aſhes, and to hate every ſin, and break off from it: I ſay, if this be obtained which is the true end of humiliation, we have no ground to deſpond for want of particular degrees and meaſures of it. Who can tell what meaſure of it Zaccheus, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, and others had, whoſe heart the Lord ſuddenly opened by his word, to Chriſt: They had ſo much as made them break through all oppoſitions to Chriſt, and willing to cloſe with him on his own terms, and to reckon him more lovely than heaven and earth, all their idols and enjoyments in a world, and ſay, None but Chriſt: Which if we can win to, we need not be troubled, tho' we have not been ſo long in the depths, and in the dark as others: For Chriſt did never put any away from him upon that account; he ſaith not, The man that comes to me convinced and humbled in ſuch a meaſure, I will receive: *But him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Our coming to Chriſt is a certain proof of our having ſeen our miſery, and the worth of Chriſt, which is the main thing required of us.

5thly, Our keeping off from Chriſt, till we attain ſuch a meaſure of ſorrow and humiliation, ſavours too much of the covenant of works (which all Adam's children naturally incline to be juſtified by) for herein we are prone to affect making ſome ſort of expiation or attonement for ſin of our own, or to ſeek a price to bring in our hands to Chriſt, whereby we might purchaſe his blood, or ſome way deſerve him and his righteouſneſs; which is a dangerous practical error.

6thly, Our not being humbled enough for ſin ſhould not make us linger in flying to Chriſt; but rather haſten our flight to him, who *is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Iſrael, as well as forgiveneſs of ſin.* Let us then be ſenſible of the hardneſs of our hearts, and humbled ſo much the more, that we are not humbled as we ought to be for offending God; and ſo let us run in to Chriſt, that he may give us a better meaſure of humiliation and repentance, Acts v. 31.

Q. *What ſhall we think of theſe exerciſed perſons, who doubt of their converſion, becauſe they know not the time when it was?*

A. There are ſeveral things ſaid upon the former queſtion, which may help to reſolve this.

To which I add, 1. That the converſion of ſome is ſo remarkable, that it is no hard matter for them to be particular as to the time of it; and it is very comfortable to ſuch as can be ſo.

But *2dly*, There are others, who are brought in by the calm goſpel way, in whom faith, repentance, and a holy life have been gradually wrought, and grown ſomewhat inſenſibly with the growing knowledge of the goſpel and the will of God revealed therein, of whom it may be truely ſaid, the *kingdom of God cometh not with obſervation;* ſo that they cannot particulariſe the time of their converſion, Mark vi. 26. 27. Luke xvii. 20.

3dly, We ought to look into our hearts and examine if Chriſt's Spirit be dwelling there, and if we find that he is, we need not trouble ourſelves tho' we know not the particular time and manner of his enterance, let us try if we value Chriſt above the world and deſire nearneſs to him, rather than the beſt things in the world; if we would rather diſpleaſe all the world than diſpleaſe him. And alſo, if we be acquaint with the illuminating work of his Spirit, making new diſcoveries of things to us, which we had not before; and tho' we cannot tell exactly the time, manner, and ſteps of the change, yet if we can ſay with that blind man, John ix. 25. *One thing I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I ſee.* Once I ſaw little evil in ſin, but now I ſee it exceeding ſinful and damnable: Once I ſaw little evil in my nature, but now I ſee my nature corrupt, and my heart deceitful and deſperately wicked, ſwarming full of vile luſts. Once I thought ſomething of my performances, but now I ſee them all to be loſs and dung. Once I ſaw little need of Chriſt, but now I ſee him to be more neceſſary to my ſoul, than food to my body. Once I thought I might perform duty well enough in my own ſtrength, but now I ſee I can do nothing without Chriſt. Once I ſaw little beauty in Chriſt, but now I ſee he is the roſe of Sharon, and the chiefeſt among ten thouſand; Nay, among all the thouſands in heaven and earth. Well, if this be our caſe, we need not be anxious to know what day, month or year, the holy Spirit wrought theſe things in us; for to be ſure, the happy change is wrought, for tho' once *we were in darkneſs yet now we are light in the Lord,* Eph. v. 8. Phil. iii. 3, 8, 9. Cant. v. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

Q. *But what ſhall exerciſed ſouls do, who, after all pains and ſearchings, ſtill doubt of their being in covenant with God, and in a gracious ſtate? can ſuch doubting ſouls adventure to the Lord's table?*

A. There are many exerciſed perſons, who doubt much of their being in a gracious ſtate, and yet are really in it tho' they cannot attain the aſſurance of it. Many have great fears and perplexities becauſe of the weakneſs of their faith, and yet their weak faith is truly faith. Wherefore, if ſuch doubting ſouls be truly concerned and affected for the weakneſs of faith and want of ſuitable preparation for covenanting with God, and if they can ſay they have unfeigned deſires to be found in Chriſt, and to be in covenant with God, and to part with every known ſin, and alſo willing to be at all pains to prepare for this ordinance, in the uſe of the means of God's appointment, then they may adventure to come to it: For ſincere deſires to believe and cloſe with Chriſt, are ſome degrees of faith; and this ſacrament is appointed for the relief, ſtrengthning and eſtabliſhment of weak doubting believers, who bewail their unbelief, and look to Chriſt for help, Iſa. l. 10. Iſa. xl. 11. 29. 31. Mark ix. 24, 25. Pſal. x. 17. Pſal. lxiii. 2, 5. Mat. xi. 28. Mat. xii. 29.

Q. *What then is the meaning of that ſcripture,* Rom. xiv 23. He that doubteth is damned if he eat?

A. The apoſtle there, is diſſwading from eating of fleſh that was ſacrificed or dedicate to idols, for fear of giving offence: And his meaning is he that doubts of that meat, whether it be lawful or not, and yet ventures on that, whereof he is not perſwaded of its lawfulneſs, he wrongs his own conſcience and offends God; which indeed is damnable in itſelf, as being againſt his light. The apoſtle is not ſpeaking there of the Lord's ſupper, which is in itſelf plainly a commanded duty, and the neglect whereof is infallibly ſinful: But of eating fleſh that had been dedicate to idols, which was doubtful in itſelf, and became plainly ſinful, as it gave offence to weak brethren.

Concerning the Examination of our SINS.

Queſt. S*EEING the next thing to be examined after our ſtate, is our ſins and ſhort comings; How are we to examine theſe, before our coming to the Lord's table?*

A. We ought to ſet time apart, and conveen our ſouls before God and conſcience, and compare our hearts and lives with the rule of God's commandments. And for this end, we muſt pray for the light and aſſiſtance of God's Spirit, look into our hearts, look back to our former ways, and take a full and particular view of all our ſins, ſo far as we can remember, ſins both original and actual, ſins of youth and riper age, ſins of heart and of life, ſins of purpoſe and of practice, ſins of omiſſion and of commiſſion, ſins ſecret and open, ſins in thoughts, words and deeds. We are to conſider our ſins both againſt the firſt and ſecond table of the law, how we have injured God, our neighbours, ourſelves, with all the heinous circumſtances and aggravations of our ſins. And in order to get a full diſcovery of our manifold tranſgreſſions and ſins againſt every one of God's commandments, let us ſeriouſly read over the queſtions in our Larger Catechiſm, concerning the duties required, and the ſins forbidden in each of the ten commandments, and alſo concerning thoſe aggravations, (therein mentioned) which make ſome ſins more heinous than others, with the ſcriptures there adduced for proving theſe things: And there we may get (through the bleſſing of God) a moſt ſurpriſing and humbling ſight of our guilt and innumberable tranſgreſſions before God, both of omiſſion and commiſſion, of heart and life, ſecret and open, that may cauſe us, with bitter lamentation, cry out with the Pſalmiſt, in prayer to God, Pſal. xix. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors, cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults?* And in a ſpecial manner, we ought to ſearch for our predominant ſins and idols, and particularly to examine into theſe defilements, and that guilt, which we have contracted, whether by the luſts of our hearts or the out breakings of our lives, ſince the laſt approach we made to the Lord's table.

Q. *What are theſe luſts and plagues of the heart that we ſhould be moſt concerned about, in ſelf examination?*

A. They can ſcarcely be numbered, and therefore, referring to the Larger Catechiſm, as a fore-cited, for a more particular view of them, I only add this word that we ought with deep concernment of ſoul to enquire into theſe grievous heart-pleagues, *viz.* our atheiſm, unbelief, worldly-mindedneſs, pride, impenitency, forgetfulneſs of God, ſlighting of Chriſt offered in the goſpel, our averſion to duty, ingratitude for mercies, ſecurity and formality, unmindfulneſs of death and eternity; our heart-backſlidings, wanderings and wearying in duty, reſting upon duties, forgetfulneſs of ſolemn vows, or malice, paſſion, envy, diſcontent, &c.

Q. *What ſhall we think or ſay of theſe, who, upon examination, complain that they find theſe heart plagues upon the growing hand in them, and hence are ready to conclude themſelves hypocrites or unbelievers?*

A. 1. If theſe heart evils be ſtrong or prevailing in them, and they not concerned or exerciſed upon that account, it is a very bad ſign indeed. But if they be truly concerned, they ought to remember that the beſt of God's people have alſo complained of prevailing ſins and heart-plagues, Pſalm lxv. 3. Rom. vii. 21, 23, 24.

2*dly*, Let us examine whether the power and prevalency of ſin in us be ſuch, as may be conſiſtent with a gracious ſtate, or not, 1. Are theſe luſts and heart plagues our daily grief and burden? Are they matter of exerciſe and trouble to us? Do we groan under them, pray and ſtrive againſt them? Would we reckon it the greateſt happineſs in the world to be freed from them? And do the hopes of being delivered from them at laſt, ſweeten the thoughts of death and heaven to us? Then it is a good ſign, Pſalm lxvi. 18. Rom. vii. 24. Phil. i. 23. 2*dly*, Do we carefully ſet ourſelves to oppoſe and watch againſt the out-breakings of theſe luſts, whether in words or deeds: and ſincerely deſire, and breathe after univerſal holineſs? Then it is a good mark, Pſalm xviii. 23. Pſalm cxix. 5, 6.

3*dly*, When any ſin prevails or breaks out, are we humbled for it? Do we lay the whole blame on ourſelves, and heartily approve God's law? ſaying with Paul, *The law is ſpiritual;* Yea, it is *holy, juſt and good, but I* (wretched I) *am carnal and ſold under ſin:* O for an entire conformity to that holy and excellent law! Rom. vii. 13, 14, 22.

4*thly*, Are we reſtleſs till we flee to the blood of Chriſt for pardon of, and cleanſing from any ſuch prevailing ſin? And never in our element till we get the upper hand of it, and be in God's way again? Rom. vii. 24, 25.

5*thly*, Are we reſolved in Chriſt's ſtrength never to ſubmit to, or to make peace with our luſts, but all our days to wage war againſt them, and cleave cloſe to the Captain of our ſalvation, looking to him for ſanctifying grace, furniture and ſpiritual weapons for this warfare? Then it is a ſign we are no hypocrites, but grace is in the heart, and faith will have the day at laſt, Acts xv. 9. Heb. xi. 33, 34. 1 John v. 4.

Q. *But what ſhall be ſaid of thoſe, who after ſearch, do find the woful prevalency of the ſad heart-plague of* *backwardneſs and unwillingneſs to duty, and eſpecially ſecret duties; Is there any comfort for ſuch?*

A. 1. Where this is found, and the heart is backward particularly to ſecret prayer, it appears that corruption is in ſome ſtrength, and gives ground for great ſearchings and thoughts of heart, and ſhould be matter of deep humiliation in the ſight of God.

2dly, We ought not hence to deſpair if we conſider that in the beſt of God's people, there is a mixture of willingneſs and unwillingneſs, they are compoſed of ſpirit and fleſh, which act contrary to one another; ſo that many times, *they cannot do the good which they would,* Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 19. And hence it was that Chriſt made apology for his diſciples, when they omitted watching and prayer, and fell aſleep again and again, after warning and excitation thereto, *The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak;* there was a weakneſs, wearineſs, and unwillingneſs in their fleſh, tho' there was ſtill a willingneſs in their ſpirit, and renewed part, Mat. xxvi. 41.

3dly, Let us examine, if we can ſay, that our wearineſs and unwillingneſs is our greateſt burden and affliction; that we are weary of it, reſolve never to give way to it, but always to ſtruggle againſt it, and keep up duty as we can. Then there is ground of hope, ſeeing our unwillingneſs is not yielded to, for if that were the caſe, we would turn our back on duty altogether. Let us not in this caſe, wholly caſt away our confidence, but wait and pray in hope, for a time of reviving, and a day of the Mediator's power.

Q. *What ſhall theſe do, who upon trial find themſelves guilty of great unthankfulneſs for mercies, yea, of backſlidings and breach of ſolemn vows made at ſacrament occaſions? How can ſuch adventure to approach again to the Lord's table?*

A. 1. Theſe things ſhould be matter of great ſadneſs and ſorrow of heart to us; as certainly they will be to every ſincere ſoul.

2dly, We ought not to ſorrow as thoſe who have no hope, but in a humbling ſenſe of theſe God-provoking evils, return to him, whom we have grieved, with ſhame and bluſhing of face; and rightly *conſider what an evil and bitter thing it is to forſake the Lord,* Ezra ix. 5, 6. Jer. ii. 19.

3dly, Let us do all this with expedition, for not to be ſpeedy in our return is, upon the matter, to approve and vindicate our former backſliding; which will ſtill be more provoking.

4thly, We ought to conſider and believe that in our covenanted Redeemer, there is ſufficient fund for ſtocking and ſetting up poor bankrupt ſinners of new; *for in him dwells all fulneſs* for his peoples emptineſs, and may be had too, at a very cheap rate, Col. 1. 19. Iſa. lv. 1.

5thly, For our encouragement let us take a view of his kindly and engaging invitations to bankrupt and backſliding ſouls to return to him again, with his free promiſes of pardoning mercy and ſanctifying grace to them upon their ſo doing, Jer. iii. 1, 12, 13, 14, 22. Hoſ. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. One would think a ſerious conſideration of theſe many charming and alluring calls might overcome and melt the moſt backſliding heart in the world. Can we but wonder, and ſay! *Certainly a merciful God is moſt earneſt with us to return, when he doubles and triples his invitation in the ſame chapter,* Return, return, return, O backſliding children; and when he ſaith ſo to theſe, who have moſt deeply revolted; Iſa. xxxi. 6. Surely an ingenuous heart will melt into tears, and cry out, as Saul to David, though he was a man of a very hard heart and rugged nature, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. Yet he wept and lift up his voice, *Thou art more righteous than I, thou haſt rewarded me good,* &c. It affects the moſt hard-hearted perſon, and makes a very rugged nature to relent, to think we have been injurious to the moſt kind and obliging friend. But much more it will affect a believer's heart to think, "Have I done all this, againſt a gracious Father that ſtill pities and provides for me? All this againſt the gracious offers of his love, and the precious blood of his dear Son? All this againſt the yearning bowels of his mercy, and yet my heart ſo little moved?" *Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven and before thee: I am no more worthy to be called thy ſon; make me as one of thy hired ſervants.* Let us take this courſe, and we may expect our father's heart will melt, the fatted calf will be killed, and the beſt robe brought out, and unworthy we made welcome again to his table.

Q. *But how ſhall theſe return, or have any confidence to come to this table again, who have ſinned againſt light and conſcience, relapſed into the ſame ſins after vows, ſinned with deliberation,* &c. *Surely theſe are not the ſpots of God's children?*

A. 1. Theſe indeed are very heinous aggravations of ſin, and call for great mourning and humiliation before God.

2dly, I know no ſin that believers are abſolutely ſecured againſt falling into, except that which is unto death.

3dly, It is not a way to pay our debt; or get free of heinous ſins, to ſink and deſpond without caſting our eyes about us, and enquiring for a fund from whence they may be anſwered.

4thly, We are aſſured by the faithful word of God, that there is a remedy provided for all ſin, the greateſt as well as the ſmalleſt; and that never any was put back, that came to it for relief, 1 John i. 7. Iſa. lv. 1. John vi. 37. Let us alſo view the forecited promiſes made to backſliders of all ſorts.

5thly, Let us ſee, if we can ſay, that our repentance, reſolutions, and carefulneſs do gradually increaſe; as our guilt is renewed or heightened. It is not ſo with unrenewed men, for as their ſin increaſeth, their conviction and repentance decreaſeth.

6thly, The greater our debts be, they lay greater obligation upon us to haſten to the rich treaſure of God's pardoning grace, and put a ſpecial argument in our mouths to plead for it, Pſal. xxv. 11. *Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.*

Q. *But is there any hope of pardon for wilful ſinning when it is expreſly ſaid,* Heb. x. 26. *If we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin?*

A. 1. That place is not to be underſtood of every wilful ſin; but of a total renouncing and rejecting Chriſt by infidelity and apoſtacy, after we have known his truth, and been convinced that he is the only Saviour; which wilful ſinning includes in it deſpight and malice againſt Chriſt, and is attended with final impenitency.

2dly, Tho' every degree of wilfulneſs, and croſſing of light, be a grievous aggravation of ſinning, and calls us to be humbled to the duſt: yet we ought not to deſpond as if there was no hope: For none ſin more againſt light, than ſometimes the godly have done, ſuch as David, Solomon and Peter, (who were clearly illuminated, and knew more of the evil of ſin, and more of the will of God than others about them) and yet they obtained pardon for their ſins ſo heinouſly aggravated: And the ſame may we firmly expect for ours, if we be humbled for them, and fly ſpeedily to the blood of ſprinkling, reſolving in Chriſt's ſtrength, againſt theſe and all other ſins for the future.

Q. *What is incumbent upon communicants, after they have diſcovered their ſins, with their ſeveral aggravations, by ſelf-examination?*

A. They ought to draw up a catalogue of them, as it were, and go humbly therewith to God in Chriſt, with ropes about their necks, ſorrow in their hearts, tears in their eyes, and confeſſions in their mouths, and ingenuouſly ſpread it out before him, crying for mercy and looking for pardon through the *blood of Chriſt that cleanſeth from all ſin.* They ought to lay hold on Chriſt and the promiſes by faith, renew covenant with God in him, and turn from all their ſins to the ways of holineſs, Iſa. lv. 7. Joel ii. 12. Mat. xi. 28. Iſa. lvi. 4.

Concerning the examination of our Wants and Necessities.

Queſt. H*OW are we to examine our wants and neceſſities, before our approaching to the Lord's table?*

A. We ought ſeriouſly to conſider and inquire into all the defects, and needs of our ſouls, and labour to have a lively and particular ſenſe of them upon our ſpirits, and come to Chriſt in this ordinance, as our head of influences, fountain of ſupplies, and treaſure of grace, for the ſupply of all our wants, the redreſs of all our grievances, and anſwering all our complaints.

Q. *What are theſe particular wants and needs of our ſouls, that we are eſpecially to enquire into, at ſuch a time?*

A. As they are many, ſo we muſt be at great pains to find them out, and therefore we are to inquire particularly into the maladies of our ſouls, and the defects of our graces; and what are the reinforcements and ſupplies we mainly ſtand in need of. Let us aſk ourſelves: Do we need more faith, wiſdom, ſincerity, ſelf-denial, meekneſs, patience, humility, and brokenneſs of heart? Do we need a reviving to our languiſhing repentance, declining love, weak faith, ſtaggering hope and faint deſires? Do we need food for our hungry ſouls, white raiment for our nakedneſs, eye-ſalve for our blindneſs, inlaregment for our ſtraitnings, looſing for our bonds, eaſe for our burdens, reſolving to our doubts, peace to our troubled conſcience, cordials for our faintings, comfort againſt our fears, ſtrength for our feeble knees to enable us for our ſpiritual journey, and plaiſters for our manifold ſores? Do we need cures for our darkneſs and ignorance, our hardneſs and impenitency, our unbelief and hypocriſy, our deadneſs and formality, our inconſtancy and backſlidings, our heart-wanderings and wearying in duty? Do we need a ſight of our intereſt in Chriſt, a ſeal of our pardon, clear evidences of grace, a view of the kings face, and of the promiſed land? Do we want returns to our prayers, ſupply of bodily neceſſities, relief under bodily diſtreſſes, ſupport under heavy afflictions, patience and ſubmiſſion under loſſes, ſtrength to reſiſt temptations, preparation for ſufferings and trials, grace to vanquiſh luſt, or deliverance from atheiſtical and blaſphemous thoughts? Theſe and many others of our wants, griefs and burdens, we ought particularly to examine and enquire into before we approach to the Lord's ſupper.

Q. *What is the neceſſity of our examining our wants and neceſſities ſo particularly, before ſuch an ordinance?*

A. Becauſe it is the duty and intereſt of communicants to come with all their grievances to Chriſt in this ordinance; ſeeing here they have freely offered and exhibited to them all needful and ſuitable ſupplies treaſured up in Chriſt's fulneſs. In this ordinance Chriſt ſets himſelf upon a throne of grace, with a ſceptre of mercy in his hand, and graciouſly waits to hear his peoples complaints and petitions, ſaying to the believer, as Ahaſuerus to Eſther at the banquet of wine, *What is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt? and it ſhall be granted to thee?* Eſth. v. 6. And as he ſaid to the blind men, *What will ye that I ſhould do unto you?* Mat. xx. 32. Now without a due ſenſe of our wants and neceſſities, we cannot make particular requeſts to Chriſt, nor can we look for any benefit from this feaſt, which is only provided for the hungry and ſenſible ſoul, Luke iv. 53. Pſalm ix. 18. Iſa. xliv. 3. Mat. ix. 12.

Concerning the Examination of our Ends and Designs.

Queſt. H*OW are we to examine our ends and deſigns, in approaching to the Lord's table?*

A. I have before ſhewed particularly, what are the ends and uſes of the Lord's ſupper; we ought then to conſider them before our approach, and aſk our conſciences in the ſight of God, if theſe indeed be the ends, which we purpoſe and ſet before us in this ſolemn work; and ſee if we can appeal to the ſearcher of hearts that it is not to pleaſe men, or to get ourſelves a name, or for any ſuch by-end, that we go to this holy table; but to obey the charge of our dying Saviour, to ſhew forth his death; renew and ſeal our covenant with God in him, get nearneſs and communion with him, nouriſhment to our ſouls, and ſupply to our manifold wants.

Q. *Why ſhould we ſo particularly examine our ends and deſigns, before we come to the Lord's table?*

A. 1. Becauſe an all ſeeing God looks eſpecially to our ends and deſigns in our ſpiritual performances and ſo muſt we. He noticeth peoples ends in faſting, Zech. vii. 5. *Did ye at all faſt unto me, even unto me?* Chriſt inquired into the peoples ends in going out to hear John, Mat. xi. 7. *What went ye out for to ſee?* And more eſpecially will he notice our ends in going to his holy table, about which he hath given us ſuch ſtrict charge, 1 Cor. xi. 28. 29.

2*dly*, Becauſe wrong ends will make the beſt actions abominable in the ſight of God. Hence it was that he abhorred Jehu's zeal, the Jews ſacrifice, and the Phariſees alms deeds, and good works, Hoſ. i. 4. Iſa. i. 13. Mat. xxiii. 5.

3dly, Becauſe right and pure ends in this ordinance will excite us to preparation for it, beget reverence in us when we attend it, and awaken deſires after the bleſſings which are here offered and exhibited.

Concerning the examination of our GRACES and QUALIFICATIONS.

Queſt. O*UGHT all, who come to the Lord's table to have ſaving grace, as neceſſary to qualify them for it?*

A. Yes; for without ſaving grace in the heart, we are incapable of holding communion with God, or of putting forth theſe acts of faith, love and repentance which are neceſſary in partaking of this ſacrament, Mat. vii. 16, 17. 18.

Q. *What is ſaving grace?*

A. It is a principle of ſpiritual life, purchaſed by Chriſt, and wrought in the ſouls of God's elect by the holy Spirit, and ordinarily by the miniſtry of the word: Whereby they are inclined and ſtrengthned ſincerely to think, act and to do theſe things which God requires, and are well pleaſing to him, Eph. xii. 28. Heb. xiii. 12. Rom. xv. 16. Heb. xii. 28.

Q. *By what evidences may we know if we have ſaving grace?*

A. By theſe formerly given, concerning a ſaving change and the new heart, which may briefly be ſummed up in theſe two, 1. Saving grace turns the heart not only from ſin, but againſt ſin: ſo that the ſoul doth ſincerely hate it and ſeek its deſtruction both in heart and life, Ezek. xviii. 30, 31. Pſal. cxix. 104. Gal. v. 41.

2dly, Saving grace turns the heart to God and godlineſs, and makes the ſoul willing and inclinable to do theſe things, that are acceptable to God, chearfully to obey the will of his precepts, and patiently to ſubmit to the will of his providences, Iſa. lv. 7. Pſal. cxix. 112. Iſa. lvi 4. Job i. 21. Acts xxi. 13, 14.

Q. *Can no hypocrites attain to ſaving grace?*

A. No: for though ſome hypocrites have reformed their lives and gone a great length in religious performances, and have attained to ſeveral qualifications which reſemble true grace; yet none but believers attain to real and ſaving grace.

Q. *How far may ſome hypocrites go in religion, and yet fall ſhort of grace?*

A. 1. They may attain to great gifts and knowledge in divine things; ſo did Balaam and Judas.

2dly, They may have a great profeſſion and outward ſhew of godlineſs; ſo had the fooliſh virgins, and the people of Sardis.

3dly, Their conſciences may be awakened for ſin, and they may tremble for fear of God's wrath; ſo was it with Judas and Felix.

4thly, They may confeſs ſin, and expreſs much ſorrow for it: ſo did Ahab, Judas, and many of the Iſraelites, Exod. xxxiii. 4. Numb. xiv. 39, 43. 1 Sam. vii. 3, 5.

5thly, They may leave off groſs ſins, and ſet about a great reformation of their lives; ſo did Herod and the Phariſees.

6thly, They may believe the truths and doctrine of Chriſt; ſo did Agrippa, and many of the Jews, John ir 33. Acts xxvi. 27.

7thly, They may ſhew much zeal for theſe truths, both by promoting them, and ſuffering for them; ſo did Judas and many others, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Phil. i. 15, 16, 18.

8thly, They may ſhew much love to miniſters, and the ordinances diſpenſed by them; ſo did Herod with reſpect to John, and the Jews with reſpect to Ezekiel, Mark vi. 20. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

Nay, there is no grace or quality in true believers, but hypocrites may attain to ſomething like it. They may have a ſort of faith, repentance, love, delight, joy, deſire, zeal, fear, mortification, contempt of the world, *&c.*

Q. *How may we diſtinguiſh betwixt true grace in believers, and the counterfeit grace that may be in hypocrites?*

A. 1. In believers, the nature and heart is renewed; but in hypocrites, nature is but refined, for the old heart ſtill remains.

2dly, True grace is ſituate mainly in the heart and affections; but the hypocrites goodneſs is mainly in their external actions and deportment.

3dly, True grace is an immortal principle that abides conſtantly in the ſoul; but the hypocrites goodneſs is like the *morning cloud and early dew, that evaniſheth away*.

4thly, True grace carries the believer a further length in religion, than the hypocrites goodneſs can do, even to renounce ſelf, love God above all things, and hate every thing that is contrary to him.

Q. *What are theſe attainments in graces and religion that hypocrites cannot arrive to?*

A. Whatever length they may go in religion, or change be made upon them; yet they can never attain to theſe things, that are peculiar to the truly gracious.

As, 1. Hypocrites can never attain to pure ends in their actings and performances; they never aim ſingly at God's glory, Chriſt's honour, and the good of ſouls: But ſtill they deſire to be ſeen of men. Their chief end is to get a reward either from God or man, or to evite trouble, either in their bodies or conſciences here or hereafter.

2dly, They can never apprehend Chriſt altogether lovely, and the only ſatisfying good in the world, and be willing to part with all for him. For there is ſtill ſomething with them that they love better, and prefer before Jeſus Chriſt.

3dly, Hypocrites can never win the length to be truly grieved for indwelling ſin, heart-plagues, and theſe ſecret evils that would never turn to their ſhame before the world.

4thly, They can never win to have an univerſal reſpect to all God's known commands, and to be as zealous for ſecret duties, as for theſe that are public.

5thly, They never attain to renounce all their own doings, as filthy rags, and go beyond all things in themſelves to Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, deſiring only to be found in him.

6thly, Hypocrites go not the length of being reſtleſs and unſatisfied, if they find not God's preſence, and communion with him in duties. They are eaſy, if they acquit themſelves therein to the approbation of men, or a natural conſcience, although they want the approbation and countenance of God.

Q. *Is it not an eſſential property of true grace, where it is, for to grow?*

A. Yes; becauſe, 1. Grace is the *Seed of God*, 1 John iii. 9. *And it is natural for ſeed to grow.*

2*dly*, Becauſe of the union of the gracious ſoul with Chriſt the head. All believers are branches ingrafted into this true vine, and therefore muſt grow, John xv. 5.

3*dly*, Becauſe God hath appointed it, that hereby believers by degrees may be made meet for heaven, and and ripened to be tranſplanted to the New Jeruſalem, Col. i. 12. Prov. iv. 18.

Q. *How may we know, whether we grow in grace or not?*

A. By theſe marks our growth may be diſcerned.

1. If we be growing downward in humility, and be ſtill more vile in our own eyes, 1 Pet. v. 5.

2*dly*, If we be growing upward in heavenly-mindedneſs, and the world ſtill have the leſs room in our hearts, Heb. xi. 13.

3*dly*, If our appetites after ſpiritual food be increaſing, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

4*thly*, If our conſciences be growing more tender and watchful againſt ſin; and if we notice the firſt riſing of ſin in the heart, and avoid all temptations to it, Gen. xxxix. 9, 10.

5*thly*, If we take more delight in ſpiritual exerciſes, prayer, praiſe and meditation: Or in theſe duties that are diſpleaſing to the fleſh, ſuch as mortification, ſelf-examination, mourning for ſin, ſelf-denial, *&c.*

6*thly*, If we be more concerned for the glory of God, the intereſt of Chriſt's kingdom, and the good of precious ſouls.

7*thly*, If we can truſt in God, when outward and viſible helps do fail, Heb. iii. 17, 18.

Q. *Shall we conclude theſe to have no true grace, who complain that grace is ſo far from growing in them, that they are ſenſible of a ſad decay in it?*

A. No; for, 1. Believers do not grow at all times, they have not only their ſpring-time, but alſo their winter ſeaſons, when their leaves do wither through ſome prevailing temptation, and they ſeem to be on the decaying hand: For we ſee the church of Epheſus is charged with *falling from her firſt love*, and yet a golden candleſtick ſtill, Rev. ii. 4, 5.

2*dly*, Believers may miſtake about their growth; they may judge their grace grown weaker, when really it is not, when only the ſenſe of their corruptions is grown ſtronger, their temptations increaſe, or comforts are withdrawn; and yet in the mean time grace may be in its vigour. Alſo the earneſt thirſtings of ſome after grace may occaſion them not to notice what they have.

3*dly*, It is with the growth of grace as with the motion of the ſun, or the growth of plants, which we perceive better a while afterwards, than in the mean time of it, Mark iv. 26, 27.

Q. *What are theſe ſacramental graces or qualifications, which we ſhould eſpecially enquire after, and examine into, before our partaking of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. There are theſe eight, *viz.* Knowledge, faith, repentance, fear, love, thankfulneſs, holy deſires, and new obedience; all of them neceſſary to fit us for a worthy partaking of this ordinance.

I. Concerning KNOWLEDGE.

Queſt. WHY *is knowledge ſo neceſſary for worthy partaking?*

A. 1. Becauſe without knowledge we cannot *diſcern the Lord's body*, which is abſolutely neceſſary to be done in order to eſcape God's judgments; which are denounced againſt theſe who do it not, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

2*dly*, Without knowledge, we are not capable to examine ourſelves, which is indiſpenſibly requiſite before partaking, 1 Cor. xi. 28.

3*dly*, Without it we cannot repent; for how can we repent of ſin, till we know the evil and dangerous conſequences of it?

4*thly*, Without knowledge, we cannot receive Chriſt in the ſacrament, for how can we cloſe with Chriſt, till we know our wants and our need of Chriſt, together with Chriſt's fulneſs and fitneſs for us?

5*thly*, This is a feaſt appointed for believers the friends of Chriſt, but ignorant perſons are unbelievers, and enemies to Chriſt; they are under the power of ſatan, and held by him in the chains of darkneſs; they are under the power of reigning ſin; for ignorance itſelf is a great ſin, and the root of many others, Eph. iv. 18. 19. Hoſ. iv. 1. 2. 1 Pet. i. 14.

Q. *What is to be underſtood by* diſcerning the Lord's body *in the ſacrament?*

A. 1. Our putting a difference betwixt the conſecrated elements, and common bread and wine: looking upon them as a ſacred repreſentation of Chriſt's body and blood, and a ſeal of the covenant of grace to all worthy partakers.

2*dly*, Our making a ſolemn difference betwixt the body and blood of Chriſt, and that of a mere man; for it is the body of the Lord, even of him who is Jehovah.

3*dly*, Our looking through the elements to a bleeding Saviour, as offering up himſelf a ſacrifice to atone divine juſtice for us: And diſcerning him as really preſent in the ſacrament, exhibiting, offering, and actually beſtowing himſelf with the benefits of his death, to worthy communicants.

4*thly*, Our having ſome diſtinct views of Chriſt's ſufferings, in the cauſe of them, the greatneſs of them, the neceſſity, value and ſufficiency of them; together with their great and glorious effects.

5*thly*, Our beholding a dying Saviour with ſuitable affections. We muſt diſcern him in the ſacrament, ſo as to prize and eſteem him highly: We muſt diſcern him, ſo as to wonder at his free love, and admire his condeſcendency. We muſt diſcern him, ſo as to look to him only for pardon and ſalvation, yield our hearts to him, hate and abandon ſin that pierced him, and follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

Q. *What is that knowledge, which is needful and competent for worthy communicants?*

A. 1. We muſt know God in his nature and eſſential perfections and eſpecially theſe attributes that ſhine moſt brightly in the ſufferings of Chriſt, ſuch as, the wiſdom, goodneſs, holineſs and juſtice of God. Alſo we muſt know God in his perſons, that there is one God in three diſtinct perſons, the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt; and theſe three are one, and the ſame in eſſence. And that this God created the world by his power, and ruleth it by his providence.

2*dly*, We muſt know the fall of Adam, with the ſad fruits of it on all his poſterity. We muſt know what an happy ſtate man was in before the fall, and what a ſinful and miſerable condition he is in now, of which I ſpoke of before.

3*dly*, We muſt know where our help and remedy is to be found, *viz.* in Jeſus Chriſt, our only Saviour. We muſt know what Chriſt is, in his two natures God and man: In his three offices of Prophet, Prieſt, and King. We muſt know Chriſt in his commiſſion that he was ſent of God: in his deſign in coming to the world, which was to redeem the elect: In the manner of his effecting our redemption, by his obedience and ſufferings; the manner of applying it, by his interceſſion in heaven, and his Spirit on earth. We muſt know the nature and neceſſity of faith in order to our getting an intereſt in what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered: And the neceſſity of regeneration, and a ſaving change in order to our being happy. We muſt know the value and merits of Chriſt's ſufferings, and the efficacy of his blood; that there is no juſtification but by his righteouſneſs, and no ſanctification but by his Spirit.

4*thly*, We muſt know the nature, ends, and uſes of the Lord's ſupper, what is repreſented by the bread and wine, and what we are to do at the communion table.

Q. *What kind of knowledge is it, that communicants ought to have of theſe things?*

A. 1. Not a literal or head knowledge only, not ſuch a knowledge as a parrot hath, that may be taught to repeat the creed, without reaſon or ſenſe to underſtand or believe one word it ſpeaketh. But 2*dly*, It muſt be a rational, heart-affecting, and ſaving knowledge, that we muſt have of divine truths.

Q. *What are the marks of this ſaving knowledge?*

A. The ſaving knowledge, which believers have, and no hypocrites nor natural men can attain to have theſe characters;

1. It is a convincing and experimental knowledge; the ſoul firmly aſſents to, and feels the truth of what it knoweth, and ſaith of our Saviour's coming, with Paul, *this is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation,* &c. 1 Tim. i. 15. There is as great a difference betwixt a natural man's and a believer's knowledge, as betwixt the knowledge in a naturaliſt and an Iſraelite concerning Manna: The one, by reading and ſtudy, knows more of the nature and effects of it; but the other, by taſting and feeding on it, knew it more feelingly and ſatisfyingly. So believers know Chriſt and his truths, convincingly and experimentally, Pſal. xxxiv. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 3.

2*dly*, It is a Chriſt-exalting and ſelf-abaſing knowledge, it makes the ſoul to value Chriſt at a high rate, and count all the glory of the world as loſs and dung beſides him. It lets us ſee that Chriſt is glorious, but we are vile: That Chriſt is full, but we are empty: That he is rich, but we are poor and naked, Phil. iii. 8. 6.

3*dly*, It is a fiducial knowledge, it induceth the heart to truſt in God's mercy and power, and to accept of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, as the only way to the Father, Pſal. ix. 10. John vi. 40. 45.

4*thly*, It is a quickning and efficacious knowledge, warms the heart, transforms the ſoul, and reforms the life. As light and heat are inſeparable, ſo divine light in the mind, conveys a heat into the affections. It inflames the heart with love to Chriſt, and a deſire to be like him; it determines the will to comply with duty, to avoid ſin; it ſpurs on the ſoul to live up to it's light, to be active in God's ſervice, and run the ways of his commands, 2 Cor. iii. 18. James iii. 17.

Q. *Whence is it that believers get this ſaving knowledge?*

A. From Jeſus Chriſt, the great Prophet and teacher of his church, who inſtructs them by his Spirit, as well as by his word: There is *none that teacheth like him,* for he both gives light, and eyes to ſee the light; he not only opens the ſcriptures to his people, but he alſo opens their underſtandings to receive the truths, Job xxxvi. 22. Iſa. xlii. 6. 7. Luke xxiv. 22. Jer. xxiv. 7.

Q. *Have not communicants who are taught this ſaving knowledge, other thoughts and uptakings of divine things than natural men have?*

A. Yes; their thoughts and uptakings of thoſe things are far different, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

Q. *What thoughts and uptakings have they of the covenant of grace, which is ſealed in this ſacrament?*

A. That it is everlaſting, well ordered in all things, and ſure; and therefore they do chearfully conſent to it, and venture their ſouls upon it, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Q. *What do they think of Chriſt crucified, who is here ſet before their eyes?*

A. That he is a moſt glorious, well qualified, and all ſufficient Saviour, *able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him,* Heb. vii. 25.

Q. *What thoughts have they of ſin that pierced him?*

A. That it is the murderer of Chriſt, and the worſt of evils, which therefore they will conſtantly abhor, Zech. xii. 10. Rom. xii. 9.

Q. *What do they think of Chriſt's way,* viz. Holineſs?

A. That it is both pleaſant and advantageous, and therefore they will love it, and walk in it, Prov. iii. 27. Pſalm xix. 11. Pſalm cxix. 47, 48.

Q. *What thoughts have they of Chriſt's people?*

A. That they are the *excellent ones of the earth,* and the moſt deſirable company in it, however they be diſpiſed by the world, Pſalm xvi. 3. Pſalm cxix. 63.

Q. *What do they think of Chriſt's day?*

A. That it is the choiceſt day of the week, holy, honourable, bleſſed and enriching, being Chriſt's weekly market-day for our ſouls, Iſa. lviii. 13, 14.

Q. *What do they think of his word and ordinances?*

A. That they are food to their ſouls, cordials to their hearts, a lamp to their feet, and a light to their paths, Pſalm cxix. 50, 103, 105.

Q. *What do they think of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. That it is Chriſt's banqueting-houſe, and a rare feaſt for the ſoul, which he hath in love provided for his people in the wilderneſs, Cant. ii. 4. Iſa. xxv. 6. 1 Cor. v. 8.

Q. *What do they think of this world?*

A. That it is a ſtrange country, the place of their pilgrimage, and that all in it, is vanity, and vexation of ſpirit, Heb. xi. 23. Pſalm cxix. 54. Eccleſ. i. 14.

Q. *What do they think of the other world above?*

A. That it is their country and their home, and the things of it are real, great, eternal, and very near, Heb. xi. 16. 2 Cor. v. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

II. Concerning FAITH.

Queſt. W*HAT ſort of faith is it, that worthy communicants ought to have?*

A. Not a temporary faith, or a faith of miracles, nor a hiſtorical faith only, but a ſaving and juſtifying faith.

Q. What is the hiſtorical faith?

A. It is the aſſent of the underſtanding upon the truths of Chriſt revealed in the goſpel, whereby a man believes and gives credit to theſe truths as certain and true. This is not ſaving faith itſelf, but it is abſolutly neceſſary to it, as the foundation to the ſuperſtructure, and an excellent help to promote it; for the ſtronger our aſſent is to divine truth, the more lievly will our ſaving faith be. The more ſtrongly we believe in Chriſt's ability and ſufficiency for the office of Mediator, the more are we helped to rely on him as our Mediator. Now tho' ſaving faith can never be without this aſſent or hiſtorical faith; yet hiſtorical faith may be, where ſaving faith is not, as is plain from John ii. 23. Acts viii. 13. James ii. 19.

Q. What is ſaving faith?

A. It is a grace, or ſpecial gift of God to his elect, wrought in their hearts by the Spirit and word of God; whereby they, being convinced of ſin and miſery, and of their own inability to recover themſelves out of their loſt eſtate, do not only aſſent to the truth of God's records concerning Chriſt in his word, but alſo receive, and reſt upon Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, for pardon of ſin, and ſalvation, according as he is offered in the goſpel. Eph. i. 19. Eph. ii. 8. Acts xvi. 30. 1 John v. 10, 11. John i. 12. Eph. i. 12, 13. Acts x. 43. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. What is the particular act of faith, that is the mean of our juſtification before God?

A. It is not our knowledge, nor the mere aſſent of the underſtanding to ſcripture truths, that juſtifies us; but it is the receiving and reſting upon Chriſt, as a prieſt, offering up himſelf a ſacrifice to juſtice and making ſatisfaction for our ſins.

Q. What are the words and phraſes, whereby the holy Ghoſt in ſcripture doth expreſs juſtifying faith?

A. It is ſometimes expreſt, 1. By coming unto Chriſt, John vi. 35.

2dly, By flying to Chriſt for refuge, Heb. vi. 18.

3dly, By caſting our burdens on him, Pſalm lv. 23.

4thly, By leaning on him, Cant. viii. 5

5thly, By ſtaying ourſelves on him, Iſa. l. 10.

6thly, By looking unto Chriſt, Iſa. xiv 22.

7thly, By taking hold of Chriſt, Iſa. xxvii. 5.

8thly, By receiving of Chriſt, John i. 12.

9thly, By cleaving to him, Acts xi. 23.

10thly, By putting on Chriſt, Rom. xiii. 14.

11thly, By hungring and thirſting after him, Mat. v. 6.

12thly, By eating and drinking, John vi. 53.

13thly, By embracing the promiſes, Heb. xi. 13.

14thly, By truſting in Chriſt, Eph. i. 12, 13.

15thly, By ſeeking of Chriſt, Iſa. lv. 6.

16thly, By running after Chriſt, Cant. i. 4. and running to Chriſt, Iſa. lv. 5.

Q. Why is faith ſo neceſſary to worthy communicating?

A. It is impoſſible to pleaſe God in any duty without faith, and far leſs in this, where it is ſo highly neceſſary, and ſo much to be exerciſed. What can we do at the Lord's table without faith? ſeeing faith is the ſoul's eye that ſees Chriſt in this ordinance. It is the hand that takes hold of Chriſt and the arm that embraces him. It is the ſpiritual mouth and ſtomach that feeds on Chriſt. It is the bond of our union with Chriſt; it brings us into Chriſt's family, and makes us his children. And laſtly, it is the ſpring that moves all the other graces, and ſets them on work: And therefore it is highly neceſſary at this ordinance, Heb. xi. 6. John xvi. 31. Heb. x. 22.

Q. What is implied in that ſaving act of faith, the ſoul's receiving and reſting on Chriſt as exhibited in the ſacrament?

A. It imports theſe things, 1. A lively ſenſe of the ſoul's miſery and danger without Chriſt.

2dly, A rejecting all other dependencies and ſupports beſides Chriſt, Hoſ. xv. 3.

3dly, A fixed reſolution to look ſtill to Chriſt, wait on him, and humbly ſubmit to any thing for mercy: like Job, and the woman of Canaan, Job xiii. 15. Mat. xv. 23, 25, 27.

4thly, A hearty conſent of the ſoul to the covenant of grace, and God's offer of ſalvation through Chriſt, with a cordial approbation of the goſpel way of ſalvation and the ſoul's acquieſcing in it, as moſt excellent and ſuitable.

5thly, Our actual adventuring ourſelves and our ſalvation upon a crucified Chriſt and his righteouſneſs: Caſting our periſhing ſouls into the bleeding arms of our High-prieſt and Surety, for ſhelter and mercy; ſaying, *Lord what wouldſt thou have me to do?* I am well content with thy perſon and thy offices, with thy righteouſneſs and purchaſe, prieſthood and kingdom, laws and love, croſs and crown. Though the receiving of Chriſt as a King, be not the firſt and primary act of faith, yet it is conſequential to it, and inſeparable from it. The believer muſt chearfully accept of Chriſt as a Prince on the throne, as a Prieſt upon the croſs, Zech. vi. 13. John i. 12. Heb. ii. 17. Iſa. lv. 4, 5. Iſa. xxxiii. 22. Acts v. 31. Mat. xi. 18, 29.

Q. Why is faith ſo acceptable and well pleaſing to God, particularly in the act of communicating?

A. 1. Becauſe it is a grace that humbleth the creature, ſtrips it off its own worth, and excludes all boaſting in the buſineſs of our ſalvation, Rom. iii. 27.

2dly, It doth highly exalt free grace, and ſend us out of ourſelves to look for all our comfort and happineſs in the mercy of God through a Mediator, Rom. iv. 16. Eph. iii. 7 8.

3dly, It puts the higheſt honour on God's beloved Son, approves his glorious undertaking, free love, and excellent offices. It makes Chriſt the alone ground of our juſtification and acceptance with God, and gives him all the glory of our ſalvation: which is moſt acceptable to God, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Mat. xvii. 5. 1 John iii. 23.

4thly, It is the grace that unites the ſoul to Chriſt, makes it one with him, and clothes it with the white robe of his righteouſneſs; upon which account God delights in believers, and ſees no iniquity in them, Phil. iii. 9. John xvi. 27. Num. xxii. 21.

5thly, Faith is the ſpring and *primum mobile* of all the reſt of the ſacramental graces, love, repentance, thankfulneſs, holy deſires, and new obedience. It doth excite them, afford matter to them, and ſet them all a-work, Lam. v. 2, 3, 4. 2 Pet. i. 5.

Q. How is ſaving faith wrought in the ſoul?

A. By the Spirit of God, who doth it by theſe two means;

1ſt, He prepares the ſoul for faith, by the miniſtry of the law, for thereby he diſcovers the evil and guilt of ſin, and the dreadful wrath that is due for it. He humbles the ſoul for ſin, makes it deſpair of relief, from the creature, and convinceth it of its need of a Mediator, John xvi. 8. Rom. iii. 20. Acts iv. 12. Mat. ix. 12.

2dly, The holy Spirit works faith in the ſoul by the miniſtry of the goſpel. For thereby he diſcovers the ability and fulneſs of an offered Saviour, and the neceſſity and excellency of faith. He begets in the ſoul an high eſteem of Chriſt, thirſting deſires for him and ſome hope of relief by him. He takes the ſoul wholly off from depending on its own righteouſneſs, and makes it reſolve to uſe all means to find Chriſt, fall down at his feet, and lay the whole ſtreſs of its ſalvation upon him alone, 1 Tim. i. 15. John iii. 16. 1 John iii. 23. Cant. iii. 2. Cant. v. 10. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. By what marks may we examine ourſelves if we have true ſaving faith?

A. By the deſcription, which is given before, of its nature, and the manner how it is wrought. Beſides which, we may take theſe other marks;

1. True faith makes Chriſt exceeding precious to the ſoul in all his offices as a Prophet, Prieſt, and King, and determines the ſoul to embrace him wholly and undividedly, and ſet him up as an abſolute Lord over all its intereſts and concerns whatſomever, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Iſa. lv. 4, 5.

2dly, It is attended with true repentance, for it ſoftens the heart, and makes it bleed for ſin that pierced Chriſt: And engages the ſoul to crucify ſin, purſue it as Chriſt's enemy, and part with every beloved luſt, Acts xx. 21. Mark i. 15. Zech. xii. 10. Iſa. liii. 5, 6.

3dly, It makes a man very humble, and denied to his own will, wiſdom, credit, eaſe, and worldly enjoyments, and eſpecially to ſelf-righteouſneſs. It makes the ſoul content and willing to be ſaved by Chriſt in his own way, without joining any thing with him to rob him of the glory of its ſalvation, Mat. xvi. 24. Phil. iii. 9. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

4thly, It inclines us to aim at Chriſt's honour in all our actions, whether we pray, read, hear, or communicate; yea, even when we eat, drink, buy, or ſell, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 Cor. x. 31.

5thly, It is attended with obedience to the will of God, and fruitfulneſs in good works, and makes the ſoul willing to ſerve Chriſt, as well as to be ſaved by him, Rom. xvi. 26. James ii. 17. 18. Col. iii. 24.

6thly, It works by love, and makes the believer do all duties from a principle of love, and carries out the heart to love God for ſending Chriſt into the world and to love every thing that bears Chriſt's image. And ſo ſincere is his love, that it prompts him to duty and keeps him back from ſin, much more than the law, or fear of hell, doth, Gal. v. 6.

7thly, It not only reforms the life from the practice of ſin, but purifies the heart from the love of ſin, by arguing againſt it from the world, and applying the blood of Chriſt to the ſoul, Acts xv. 9. John xvii. 17. Zech. xiii. 1.

8thly, True faith inclines and encourages the ſoul to draw near unto God in prayer, for the accompliſhment of theſe things it relies on Chriſt for, Heb. iv. 6. Rom. x. 12. 13. 14. Pſal. cxviii. 23. 6.

Q. *What ſhall theſe poor diſcouraged ſouls do, who have been examining their faith, but are not able to lay claim to theſe marks, and ſtill fear they have no true faith; can ſuch adventure to come to this ordinance, where faith is ſo abſolutely neceſſary?*

A. 1. Faith indeed is abſolutely neceſſary at the Lord's table, but it is not abſolutely neceſſary that we ſhould know it. Aſſurance is not eſſential to faith, for there may be true faith wrought in the ſouls of ſome, who yet do not perceive it. The miſts of guilt, ſatan's temptations, and their own fear, may ſo riſe up and obſcure their knowng faculty, that they cannot ſee *the things that are freely given to them of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 12.

II. There is ſome faith ſo weak and ſmall, that it can ſcarcely be diſcerned by us, which yet may be real, ſincere, and acceptable before God. And this is expreſſed in the leſſer degrees and workings of faith, which yet are true faith; ſuch as theſe,

1. A total renouncing of our own righteouſneſs, with a reſolution never to depend upon any thing in ourſelves, or any other, beſides Chriſt, Hoſ. xiv. 3.

2dly, A good opinion, and eſteem of Chriſt, with a perſwaſion of his power, fulneſs and ſuitableneſs to our miſerable circumſtances. This was all that the leper, and woman with the bloody iſſue had, when they firſt came to Chriſt, Mat. viii. 2. Mat. ix. 21.

3dly, An earneſt deſire, or a hunger and thirſt after Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, Pſalm xliii. 1. Mat. v. 6.

4thly, A willingneſs to be the Lord's, and wholly reſigned to him, to be managed and diſpoſed of, as he pleaſeth, Pſalm cxix. 94.

5thly, A deep and heart-affecting ſenſe of that grievous clog, unbelief, that hinders the ſoul's motion towards Chriſt, Mark ix. 24.

6thly, A ſerious reſolve and mint of the ſoul to go out to Chriſt, throw itſelf at his feet, and die at his door, tho' he ſhould not have mercy. Now theſe deſires, motions and workings of the heart, in a ſenſible ſinner, are ſome degrees of true faith which God will not deſpiſe, Neh. i. 11. Mark ix. 24. 25. John xiii. 15. Mat. xii. 20.

III. Seeing Chriſt is a moſt tender hearted and compaſſionate Saviour, that will not *break the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoaking flax*; but is content to accept of thoſe that come to him with a weak and trembling hand; ſuch weak and doubting believers ought certainly to come to Chriſt in the ſacrament, where he ſeats himſelf on a throne of mercy to wait for needy ſinners and hath graciouſly appointed this ordinance, for ſtrengthning and increaſing faith.

IV. Such weak and diſcouraged ſouls ſhould narrowly watch the ſeaſons of God's near approaches in the ordinances, and theſe ſpecial golden minutes, when the Spirit ſtrives, the Father draws, bowels of mercy yearn, and heaven's gales do blow; and preſently take hold of, ſtrike in with, and improve them: as Benhadad's ſervants watched for the word brother from the king of Iſrael's mouth, and haſtily catched it, 1 Kings xx. 33.

Q. *Are we not utterly unworthy to receive ſuch a glorious Saviour in the arms of faith? How can we ex-*

pect that he will match with ſuch vile wretches, as we are?

A. I anſwered this objection before, when treating of covenanting with God, to which the reader is referred. I only add theſe things,

1. That ſeeing this glorious Redeemer freely offers himſelf to the moſt unworthy, he ought readily, and without heſitation to be entertained by us: For tho' we be moſt unworthy of receiving Chriſt, yet he is moſt worthy of our acceptation, 1 Tim. i. 15.

2dly, This exalted Saviour thinks it no diſparagement to ſuit his wothineſs to our unworthineſs, his riches to our poverty, his eye-ſalve to our blindneſs, his white-raiment to our nakedneſs, and his fullneſs to our emptineſs: For he ſaith to the unworthieſt ſinner that comes to him, *All thy wants be on me;* and tho' thou haſt no beauty of thine own, yet I *will make thy beauty perfect through my comlineſs put upon thee; and ſo the king will greatly deſire thy beauty*, Ezek. xvi. 14. Pſalm xlv. 10. 11.

3dly, Tho' there be a great ſhew of humility in this objection, yet there is oft no ſmall pride at the root of it. For if there be ground of objecting againſt us upon the ſcore of unworthineſs, it becomes us to let it come from Chriſt's ſide; but ſo wedded are we to the old covenant of works, that we would be at giving as good as we get, or at leaſt ſomething in lieu of it: But our money and qualifications will periſh with us, if we think to buy ſuch a prize as glorious Chriſt. If we be not content to accept of Chriſt on the ſcore of infinite free grace and matchleſs condeſcending love, we can never expect to enjoy him, Iſa. lv. 1. 9. Rom. xi. 33. Eph. iii. 18. 19. Free grace is an ocean of ſuch a depth and breadth, that it never yet hath been ſounded or meaſured, by men or angels: Nay, to all eternity, it will be acknowledged, it hath neither bank nor bottom.

III. Concerning REPENTANCE.

Queſt. SEEING *repentance is another ſacramental grace, which we muſt neceſſarily examine ourſelves about; what is the repentance, which worthy partakers muſt have?*

A. True repentance, or repentance unto life, is a ſaving grace, or a ſpecial gift of God to elect ſinners, wrought in their hearts by his Spirit, and word, whereby upon a due ſight and ſenſe of the danger, guilt, and odiouſneſs of their ſins; and upon a diſcovery and belief of the mercy of God in Chriſt to ſuch as are penitent: They mourn for, and hate their ſins, confeſſing them to God with ſhame and grief, and turn from them all to God, and the ways of holineſs, both in heart and life, Zech. xii. 10. Acts xi. 18. 21. Ezek. xviii. 30. Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Joel ii. 12. 13. Jer. xxxi. 18. 19. 2 Cor. vii. 11. Prov. xxvii. 13. 2 Kings xxiii. 25.

Q. *What are the parts of true repentance?*

A. There are theſe parts in it; 1. Conviction. 2. diſcovery of God's mercy in Chriſt. 3. Humiliation. 4. Confeſſion. 5. Hatred of ſin. 6. Turning from ſin. 7. Turning to God and his ways.

Q. *Wherein conſiſts true conviction of ſin?*

A. In a right uptaking of the nature and evil of ſin, and a ſenſe of the wrath of God, that is due to it.

Q. *What is it in ſin, that the ſoul muſt be convinced of?*

A. We muſt be convinced of ſin; 1. In reſpect of its ſource and fountain, from whence all our actual ſins do proceed, and that is, corrupt nature and wicked heart, Pſalm li. 5. Jer. xvii. 9. Mat. xv. 18, 19.

2dly, In reſpect of its intrinſick evil and malignity, that it is enmity and rebellion againſt God, Rom. viii. 5.

3dly, In reſpect of its pollution and deformity, that it renders us vile and loathſome in the ſight of God, Zech. xi. 8.

4thly, In reſpect of the number of our ſins, that they are more than our hairs, Pſalm xi. 12.

5thly, In reſpect of the aggravation from the heinous circumſtances attending the commiſſion of them.

6thly, In reſpect of the guilt and demerit of them, that we have thereby forfeited all our mercies, and do deſerve everlaſting wrath.

Q. *What is the difference betwixt the convictions of natural men, and thoſe of true penitents?*

A. 1. Natural mens convictions proceed only from a natural conſcience, awakned upon ſome occaſion: But thoſe of a true penitent are the ſpecial work of the Spirit of God, Exod. ix. 27. John xvi. 8.

2dly, Natural mens convictions are moſt unwelcome and burdenſome to them: but the true penitent is deſirous of them, Acts xxiv. 25. Job. xiii. 23. Job xxxiv. 32.

3dly, The natural mens convictions are mainly for groſs ſins, and the out-breakings of the life; but the true penitent is alſo ſenſible of the corruption of the nature, plague of the heart, and ſins moſt ſecret, Mat. xxvii. 4. Pſalm li. 5. Rom. viii. 24. Pſalm xix. 12.

4thly, Natural mens convictions proceed from the fear of hell, or temporal judgments; but theſe of the true penitent ariſe mainly from a view of ſin's evil, God's goodneſs, his patience, or Chriſt's ſufferings, Pſalm xxviii. 34. Luke xv. 18. Zech. xii. 10.

5thly, The one is only of ſhort continuance, but the other is abiding and durable, Hoſ. vi. 4. Pſalm. li. 3.

6thly, The one is cured by natural means, but the other only by the blood of Chriſt, Acts xvi. 20, 31.

Q. *Why is the diſcovery of God's mercy in Chriſt a neceſſary ingredient to true repentance?*

A. 1. Becauſe God out of Chriſt is a conſuming fire and ſo without a ſight of his mercy in Chriſt, we would never turn from ſin to him, but would be ready to ſink with Judas, under tormenting deſpair, Heb. x. 31. Heb. xii. 19.

2dly, Becauſe the apprehenſion of the mercy of God in Chriſt, is a great encouragement to us to leave ſin, and a mean to affect our heart with kindly grief and godly ſorrow for ſin, Pſalm cxxx. 4. Rom. ii. 4.

Q. *Wherein conſiſts true humiliation for ſin?*

A. In theſe things; 1. In a real inward ſorrow and bleeding of heart for ſin, and the diſhonour done thereby to God, Pſalm li. 3, 4. Zech. xii. 10.

2dly, In a holy ſhame and bluſhing of ſoul for ſin in the ſight of God, Ezra ix. 6.

3dly, In the ſoul's loathing and abhorring itſelf for its unworthy carriage towards ſo gracious a God, Job xlii. 6.

4thly, In outward mourning for ſin, and bewailing it before the Lord, Pſalm xxxviii. 18.

Q. *What is the difference betwixt the humiliaton of a natural man, ſuch as* Ahab, *and that of a true penitent?*

A. There is ſuch a difference, as betwixt the convictions of natural men, and true penitents, of which I ſpoke before. I only add this; that a natural or unrenewed man's ſorrow and humiliation for ſin, is not ſo much for ſin itſelf, as for the effects and conſequences of it, as it expoſes him to temporal or eternal judgments, as it deprives him of outward mercies, blaſts his reputation, breaks his employment, brings on corporal puniſhment here, or makes him obnoxious to hell-fire hereafter. But the true penitent mourns for ſin, as it diſpleaſes and diſhonours God, wounds Chriſt, grieves his Spirit, and gratifies the devil. Alſo he grieves for it, as it defiles the ſoul, indiſpoſes for holy duties, and debars from communion with Chriſt.

Q. *What ſort of confeſſion of ſin is requiſite to true repentance?*

A 1. It muſt be cordial and ſincere: not ſuperficial and overly, Job xlii 6.

2*dly*, It muſt be free and voluntary, and not extorted by judgments or the fear of hell, Mat. xxvii. 4. Luke xv. 18.

3*dly*, It muſt be particular and diſtinct, ſo far as we can remember our bypaſt ſins; and not reſt in generals, Judg. x. 10. Pſalm li. 4. 14. 1 Tim. i. 13.

4*thly*, It muſt be humble and mournful, and attended with holy ſhame and ſelf condemnation, Dan. 9. 8. Luke 18. 13. Pſalm 34. 4, 18.

5*thly*, It muſt be attended with preſent forſaking of ſin, Prov. xxviii. 13.

Q. *What ſort of hatred of ſin is it, that is an ingredient of true repentance?*

A. It hath theſe properties; 1. It is a ſincere and well grounded hatered: Unrenewed men may hate ſin becauſe of its effects; but a true penitent hates it, becauſe it is vile and loathſome in the eyes of God, the murderer of Chriſt, and an enemy to his own ſoul.

2*dly*, It is a deep and implacable hatred; a natural man can have no ſuch hatred of ſin; it is only a ſlight or tranſient quarrel he may have with ſin upon ſome particular occaſion, and hence he may proceed to lop off ſome of the branches of ſin, but he ſtrikes not at the root, the corruption of the heart; he ſeeks not to put the old man to death: But the true penitent hates ſin implacably; he ſeeks its ruin, aims at its life, and would have it utterly extirpated; and longs for the time when he ſhall be wholly delivered from it, Rom. vii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 4.

3*dly*, It is an univerſal hatred: A natural man may hate ſome odious groſs ſins, or ſins that are neither pleaſant nor profitable to him: But the true penitent hates ſin, as ſin, and ſo hates every ſin, whether ſecret or open, pleaſant or profitable, in himſelf or in others, Pſalm cxix. 128.

Q. *What ſort of turning from ſin, is requiſite to true repentance?*

A. 1. A turning that proceeds from right principles, not from the dictates of a natural conſcience only, or reſpect to human laws, or from fear of God's judgment: But from a ſenſe of the intrinſick evil of ſin, the holineſs and goodneſs of God, or a view of Chriſt's ſufferings.

2*dly*, It muſt be a preſent turning from ſin, without delaying one moment longer, Pſalm cxix. 59. 6.

3*dly*, A final and everlaſting turning, without ever looking back to Sodom again, or entertaining a favourable thought of ſin, that killed the *Lord of life*, Hoſea xiv. 8.

4*thly*, An univerſal turning from all ſin, both in heart and life; no Agag muſt be ſpared, nor any darling luſt reſerved, Iſa. lv. 5. Ezek. xviii. 30, 31.

5*thly*, It muſt be attended with turning to God, and all commanded duties; for we muſt not only ceaſe to do evil, but learn to do well, Iſa. i. 16, 17. Iſa. lv. 7.

6*thly*, This turning ought to be with all the heart, and with faſting, weeping and mourning, Joel ii. 13.

Q. *What is this turning to God, which is included in true repentance?*

A. It implies theſe things, 1. A ſight and ſenſe of our undone condition, while we live and continue at a diſtance from God; and the great happineſs of nearneſs in him, Pſalm lxxiii. 27, 28.

2*dly*, The outgoings of the ſoul to God in ſpiritual breathings and deſires, Iſa. xxvi. 8. Job xxiii. 3.

3*dly*, The humble application of the ſoul to God in Chriſt, for mercy and pardon, Pſalm li. 1.

4*thly*, The ſoul's making choice of God, for its God and portion, Jer. iii. 22

5*thly*, Our reſigning and giving up both inward and outward man, to God's ſervice and obedience. We muſt turn both our hearts and feet to God's teſtimonies, Pſalm cxix 57, 58, 59.

Q. *Why is faſting neceſſary to be joined with our repentance and turning unto God?*

A. Becauſe God hath enjoined it as a good mean to wean the heart from the world, quicken prayer, and kindle zeal. And it carries in it ſomewhat of a holy revenge upon the fleſh or body for its former exceſſes, which is very acceptable to God; tho' it cannot in the leaſt make ſatisfaction to juſtice for ſin, 2 Cor, vii. 11.

Q. *Are tears abſolutely neceſſary to true repentance?*

A. They are very deſirable expreſſions of our grief for ſin, God noticeth the tears of true penitents, and puts them up in a bottle, Pſalm lvi. 8. Yet ſometimes there may be a tender heart, where are few tears to be ſeen, becauſe the bodily conſtitution may be dry, and not qualified for producing tears. But if we can command tears, for other things, ſuch as worldly loſſes and croſſes and can find none to ſhed for ſin, there is too much ground to ſuſpect that our repentance is not true.

Q. *But what ſhall theſe do, who find their hearts ſo hard, that they can neither get tears, nor any true grief for ſin?*

A. 1. This has been the complaint of many of God's people, that their hearts are hardned from God's fear, Iſa. lxiii. 17.

2*dly*, Let us conſider if our heart-hardneſs be our great burden and trouble. Can we ſay, That it is our daily complaint to God, and that we would give all we have in the world to have our hearts brought to tenderneſs, and even live beggars upon this condition; then, ſurely there is ſome life and tenderneſs in the ſoul.

3*dly*, Let us go to Chriſt, and plead for the bleſſed Spirit of grace, which he hath both purchaſed and promiſed, to take off the vail of darkneſs from our hearts, and the ſcales of blindneſs from our eyes; that we may ſee ſin in its darkneſs and deformity; Let us cry to him with Job, Job iii. 23. *Make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my ſin.* And let us plead his free promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

4thly, Let us oft be aiming to apply the ſoftning blood of Chriſt to our hard hearts. And oft be viewing ſin in the bright looking-glaſs of his ſufferings. Oh! can we ſee our ſins binding a heavy croſs on Chriſt's back, driving big nails into the moſt ſenſible parts of his body, and piercing his heart with ſorrow, and yet our hearts remain unpierced? Shall the rocks rent, and the earth ſhake, the ſun draw in its light, and the heavens mourn in black, when Chriſt ſuffered for our ſins, and yet we ſtand unconcerned! Surely there is not ſuch a heart-affecting ſight either in earth or hell, as the death of our innocent Redeemer.

Q. *Why is repentance and ſorrow for ſin ſo neceſſary to right communicating?*

A. 1. Becauſe it is neceſſary for our acceſs to, and communion with God in any duty. It is to ſuch that God hath promiſed to look, and with ſuch that he is pleaſed to dwell. It is only humble and penitent addreſſes that he will accept; and thence he preferred a broken heart to all ſacrifices, Pſalm li. 16. 17. Pſalm x. 17. Pſalm xxxiv. 18. Iſa. lvii. 15. Iſa. lxvi. 1. But impenitent perſons are hateful to God, and can have no communion with him, Pſalm v. 5. Pſalm lxvii. 11.

2dly, Becauſe in this ſacrament, we enter into, and renew covenant with God; and penitent mourning for long diſtance and eſtrangement, to many ſins and backſlidings, is previouſly requiſite thereunto, Jer. l. 4. 5.

3dly, Becauſe here we are to receive the ſeal of the pardon of our ſins, and it is only a ſoft heart that can receive the impreſſion of this ſeal, Luke vii. 44. 48. Luke xxiv. 47.

4thly, Becauſe nothing ſuits a broken Chriſt, ſo well as a broken heart. In this ordinance we behold God puniſhing his Son for ſin, and Chriſt breathing out his dying groans for it; and ſurely it is moſt fit that our hearts ſhould bleed for it; if Chriſt waſh our ſouls with his blood, in gratitude we ſhould waſh his feet with our tears, Zech. xii. 10. Luke vii. 38. 47.

5thly, Becauſe, without repentance we cannot prize the great bleſſings and comforts exhibited to us in this ordinance. None but the ſenſible ſinner and humble penitent will value the blood of Chriſt, the pardon of ſin, and favour of God which are here offered, Mat. ix. 12. Luke i. 52. Prov. xxvii. 7.

6thly, Becauſe repentence is abſolutely neceſſary for killing of ſin, and reforming the life which is one great end in this ordinance. As God here lets us ſee his love to Chriſt, ſo he diſcovers the bitterneſs of ſin, that we may hate and forſake it; now it is by repentance, that we taſte of ſin's bitterneſs: And the neceſſity hereof at this ordinance was prefigured by the bitter herbs with which the children of Iſrael were appointed to eat the paſſover, Exod. xii. 8.

Q. *Hath not repentance many counterfeits?*

A. Yes; for, 1. Some confeſs their ſin, who never forſake it; as theſe, Numb. xiv. 40. 1 Sam. xv. 24. That was but a counterfeit repentance.

2dly, Some may have ſlight, ſuperficial ſorrow, and outward expreſſions of mourning, where the heart is not touched for ſin, 1 Kings xxi. 27.

3dly, Some may have the heart rent with legal convictions and terrors, as Judas and Felix had, and yet, never broken or melted for ſin.

4thly, Some may have a natural ſoftneſs and tenderneſs of ſpirit, whereby they are apt to relent and ſhed tears at the hearing of any tragical ſtory, or ſeeing any moving object, and yet, never truly weep, to ſee their own ſin. The ſtory of Joſeph in the pit will affect them aſſoon as that of Chriſt upon the croſs.

5thly, Some have ſeveral good motions, and pangs of ſorrow, at hearing of a ſermon, or when they are under the rod, which yet ſoon evaniſh, Hoſea vi. 4. Mark vi. 28.

6thly, Some come under expreſs vows and reſolutions againſt ſin in time of ſickneſs and diſtreſs, or when conſcience is awakned; who yet, are never true penitents for ſin, Numb. xxii. 17. Jer. ii. 20. 1 Sam. xxxvi. 21.

7thly, Some may not only leave off groſs ſins themſelves, but expreſs great zeal againſt the ſins of others, as Jehu did, againſt the worſhip of Baal, and Judas did, againſt prodigality, and yet be ſtrangers to true repentance, 2 Kings x. 16. 28. 29. Mat. xxvi. 8. compared with John xii. 4. 5. All theſe then are, but counterfeited repentance.

Q. *By what marks, then ſhall we examine our repentance, if it be true, and not counterfeited?*

A. By theſe already mentioned, in the parts and deſcription of repentance before given. To which I add theſe;

1. A true penitent is more grieved for the evil of ſin, than for the evil of affliction; and more troubled for abuſing the goodneſs of a father, than for drawing down the wrath of a judge, Luke xv. 18.

2dly, The true penitent lays the ax of repentance to the root of ſin, *viz.* the corrupt heart; he pants for deliverance from it, and for more heart purity and renovation, Pſalm li. 10. Rom. vii. 24.

3dly, The true penitent is highly concerned and careful to apply to the blood of Chriſt both for pardon from the guilt of ſin, and ſanctification from the pollution of ſin; for true repentance and ſaving faith are inſeparable, Pſalm li. 1. 7. Acts ii. 28. Acts xx. 21. Mark i. 15.

4thly, Let us examine our repentance, by theſe adjuncts and fruits of it, recorded in 2 Cor. vii. 11. If it works in us, 1. Carefulneſs, to avoid ſin and preſerve ourſelves from it. *2dly*, Clearing of ourſelves, by ſelf examination, and applying to Chriſt our ſurety. *3dly*, Indignation againſt ſin, as the enemy of God, the murderer of Chriſt, and deſtroyer of our ſouls. *4thly*, Fear, of being defiled again with ſin, which excites to watch againſt temptations and inlets to it. *5thly*, Vehement deſires, after a total deliverance from it, and after Chriſt our deliverer, and his righteouſneſs. *6thly*, Zeal, for God's honour, by new obedience, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. *7thly*, Revenge upon ſin, by mortification, becauſe it crucified Chriſt. *8thly*, There is a holy ſhame upon the remembrance of ſin; not that of a thief, becauſe of the puniſhment and diſgrace, but that of a ſon, becauſe of the ingratitude and loathſomneſs of ſin, Ezek. xvi. 63.

IV. Concerning HOLY FEAR.

Queſt. WHAT *is this fear that is requiſite to worthy communicating?*

A. It is a holy awe and reverence of God, wrought in the renewed heart by the holy Spirit, whereby the ſoul out of a deep ſenſe of God's majeſty and goodneſs, is inclined to draw nigh to God in Chriſt, ſtand in awe to offend him, avoid ſin as the greateſt evil, and ſtudy the things that are pleaſing to God, Jer. xxxii. 40. Jer. v. 22. Pſalm cxxx. 4. Heb. xi. Gen. xxxix. 9. Job i. 1. 7. Acts x. 35.

Q. *What is the neceſſity of this holy fear at the Lord's table?*

A. 1. Becauſe when we go to the Lord's table, we ſolemnly ſiſt ourſelves in the preſence of the great Jehovah, who is our judge, the ſearcher of our hearts, and the all-ſeeing obſerver of our actions; and a God that is very jealous of his honour, and *will be ſanctified in all that draw nigh to him*, Lev. v. 3. Heb. xii. 28. 29.

2*dly*, Becauſe at the Lord's table, we have a moſt awful diſcovery of the holineſs and juſtice of God in the ſufferings of Chriſt there repreſented. How vehemently did he hate ſin, that he would not ſpare his dear Son when he cried, nor abate one farthing of the debt he owed juſtice as our Surety, but exacted full ſatisfaction, and puniſhed ſin, to the uttermoſt? The heavens darkned, and the earth ſhook, when God puniſhed Chriſt for ſin, and ought not we, the guilty ſinners, to tremble and adore his juſtice, ſaying with the Bethſhemites, *Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord God?* 1 Sam. vi. 20.

3*dly*, Becauſe this holy fear is an excellent preſervative againſt wandering thoughts, a ſpur to mind our work, and excite the graces of livelineſs and do every thing as in the ſight of an all-ſeeing God, Pſalm lvi. 8. Gen. 39. 9. Neh. i. 11.

4*thly*, Becauſe of the importance of the work of communicating, and the danger of miſcarrying in it. We have ground to fear and be jealous of ourſelves leaſt we be found unwelcome gueſts, and want the wedding-garment, when the king comes in to ſee his gueſts. We have cauſe to fear, leſt we miſs Chriſt's preſence, and the ſeal of our pardon: Yea, leſt we be guilty of wounding Chriſt, and eating and drinking judgment to ourſelves, by unworthy communicating; but a holy fear is a good mean to prevent this hazard.

Q. *How may we know whether we be acted by a holy, or by a ſlaviſh fear, in this and other religious duties?*

A. 1. A holy filial fear of God, is always joined with love to him; but a ſlaviſh fear is attended with ſome degree of enmity and hatred againſt God, Hoſ. iii. 5. Rom. viii. 7.

2*dly*, Slaviſh fear dreads God, becauſe of his power and juſtice; but filial fear, alſo becauſe of his goodneſs and loving kindneſs, Hoſ. iii. 5.

3*dly*, Slaviſh fear is attended with a ſhyneſs of God's preſence; but filial fear puts the ſoul on to ſeek nearneſs with God, Gen. iii. 10. Pſalm lxxiii. 27. 28. Hoſ. iii. 5.

4*thly*, Slaviſh fear dreads nothing but hell and the puniſhment of ſin; but filial fear dreads ſin itſelf, as the greateſt evil of the two, Pſalm vi. 4. Acts xxiv. 25. Pſalm iv. 4.

5*thly*, Slaviſh fear makes men averſe from the light of the word and a faithful miniſtry; but filial fear makes us ſuſpicious of ourſelves, and willing to be tried, John iii. 20. 21. 1 Kings xxii. 8.

6*thly*, Slaviſh fear reſtrains only from the external acts of ſin, and puts men on to external performances in duty only; but godly fear makes a man guard even againſt inward and ſecret ſins, and ſtudy to pleaſe God inwardly as well as outwardly, and give him the heart as well as the life, Iſa. viii. 13.

V. Concerning Love.

Queſt. W*HAT is that love which a worthy communicant ought to have?*

A. There is a three-fold love neceſſary; 1. Love to God and godlineſs. 2. Love to the people of God, 3. Love to our enemies.

Q. *What is true love to God?*

A. It is a ſpecial affection, or ſaving grace wrought by God's Spirit in the hearts of his people, whereby, from a ſpecial diſcovery of the glory and excellency of God, their ſouls are determined to have a high and ſuperlative eſteem of him, their deſires are carried out after him, and their delights are centered on him, as their chief good and portion, Rom. v. 5. Pſalm lxxiii. 25. Pſalm xlii. 1, 2. Pſalm xvi. 5. 6.

Q. *Why is love to God and Chriſt, ſo neceſſary to worthy communicating?*

A. 1. Becauſe this ſacrament is a love-feaſt, appointed for expreſſing the mutual love and affection of Chriſt and his people to one another, and therefore, it is deſigned only for his friends and diſciples. Now how contrary is it to the nature of this ordinance, for people to approach to it without love? Or to ſit down to his love-feaſt with enmity in their hearts at the maſter of it? Cant. v. 1. Mat. xxvi. 27.

2*dly*, Becauſe we have here the higheſt repreſentation of divine love, that ever was given. Here we may ſee both the arms and heart of the Son of God open, on a croſs, to us, with his affections ſtreaming out to us in blood: And we may hear the dying groans of the Lamb of God, juſt expiring under the burden of wrath that was due to us. And what a monſtrous thing would it be for us to want love to him, at ſuch a time? Gal. ii. 20. Eph. v. 2. Rev. i. 5.

3*dly*, Becauſe other graces, which are to be exerciſed in this ordinance, do much depend upon love; without it we cannot be heavenly-minded in this duty, we cannot have high thoughts of Chriſt, we cannot delight in him, nor have any hungring deſires after him. Without love to Chriſt, we cannot hate ſin, nor be grieved for it; nay we may ſee the print of the nails, and put our fingers into his wounds without any remorſe for ſin, that made them. Mary's tears were moſt free, when her love was moſt hot, Luke vii. 37, 38. Iſaiah liii. 2, 3.

4*thly*, Without love to Chriſt, we can have no benefit by the ſacraments, for we can have no communion with God, nor any manifeſtations of his favour without it, ſeeing theſe are only promiſed to ſuch as love him, John 14. 21, 23.

5*thly*, Becauſe the want of this love, brings men under the ſevereſt curſe, 1 Cor. 16. 22.

Q. *Muſt not our love to God at the ſacrament, be directed to all the perſons of the glorious trinity?*

A. Yes; we muſt love God the Father, as our Father; God the Son as our Mediator and Redeemer; and God the Holy Ghoſt, as our Sanctifier and Comforter.

Q. *How may we know if we love God the Father, as our Father?*

A. By our filial reſpect and dutiful carriage to him; if we fear him, and ſtand in awe to offend him, if we be tender of his honour, troubled at his frowns, deſirous of his preſence, and careful to pleaſe him. If we depend on him, for what we want; love to addreſs him; imitate him in his holineſs, and obey his injunctions, Mal. i. 6. Pſal. cxxxix. 20, 21. Pſal. 30. 7. Iſa. lvi. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 15. 1 Pet. v. 7. Eph. v. 1. 1 Pet. i. 14, 15.

Q. *How may we know if we love God the Son, as our Mediator and Redeemer?*

A. By our accepting of him, and improving him in all his mediatory offices: Learning of him as our Prophet, relying on him as our Prieſt, and obeying him as our King: And by our renouncing of all other lords and ſaviours beſides him, Mat. xi. 28, 29. Iſa. xxvi. 13. Heb. v. 9. Eph. i. 12, 13.

Q. *How may we know if we love the Holy Ghoſt, as our Sanctifier and Comforter?*

A. By our hearkening to his calls, ſeeking his aſſiſtance in duties, laying ourſelves open to his influences, cheriſhing his motions, and delighting in theſe duties and ordinances where his operations are to be expected, and deſiring to be directed and guided by him in all our ways, Pſalm xxvii. 8. 1 Theſſ. v. 19. Eph. iii. 16. Pſalm lxiii. 2. Pſal. clxiii. 10. 11. Rom. viii. 14.

Q. *Seeing love to Chriſt, our crucified Saviour, is eſpecially requiſite at the Lord's table; by what marks may we examine our love to him, if it be true, and not counterfeit?*

A. By theſe, 1. Let us ſee if we can give any reaſon for our love to him; if we love him not only for what he hath done for elect ſinners in general, but for what he hath done for us in particular, in hearing our cry, and helping us when we were brought low under a burden of guilt and fears, Pſal. cxvi. 1, 6, 8.

2*dly*, If we love him alſo, becauſe of his own intrinſick beauty, matchleſs worth, and perſonal excellencies, that render him altogether lovely in himſelf, as well as a ſuitable Saviour to us, Cant. v. 10—16.

3*dly*, If our hearts and thoughts be frequently going out towards him, and our meditation of him be ſweet; for ſurely, if Chriſt be our treaſure, our hearts will be with him, Pſalm civ. 34. Mat. vi. 21.

4*thly*, If we be earneſtly deſirous of his gracious preſence in duties and ordinances, and languiſh for him when he withdraws, Pſalm lxxxiv. 1, 2. Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3. Cant. v. 8.

5*thly*, If we have common friends and common enemies; love what Chriſt loves and hate what he hates; if we rejoice when his name is great, and his intereſt flouriſheth, and grieve when any wrong or diſhonour is done to him, either by ourſelves or others, 1 John v. 1, 2. Pſalm cxxxix. 21, 22. Pſalm xcvii. 10. John xiv. 28. Pſalm cxxii. 9.

6*thly*, If we love Chriſt and his intereſt in all ſtates and conditions: own him under perſecution and reproach, and highly eſteem a crucified, as well as a glorified Chriſt, a condemned, as well as an adored Chriſt, Cant. viii. 6, 7.

7*thly*, If we love Chriſt wholly, and all that is in him; love him in all his offices, in his death as a ſacrifice, and in his life as a pattern; love him as a Prince on the throne, as well as a Prieſt on the croſs; love him for purity, as well as pardon; for ſanctification, as well as ſatisfaction. No lover of Chriſt will deſire a disjunction of Chriſt's Prieſtly and Princely offices, for he ſees them ſweetly linked together; and hence it is that Chriſt is ſtiled *a Prieſt upon a throne*, Zech. vi. 13. And therefore he will love his laws to obey them, his ordinances to attend them, his ſabbaths to ſanctify them, and his people to aſſociate with them, John xiv. 21. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 John v. 1, 2, 3. Pſalm cxix. 63.

8*thly*, If we love Chriſt above our relations, enjoyments, and deareſt things we have in the world, yea, even life itſelf, Mat. x. 37. Acts xxi. 13. Rev. xii. 11.

9*thly*, If we be breathing after freſh intimations of Chriſt's love to us, and ſeeking ſtill more aſſurance and evidences of it, Cant. i. 2, 3. Cant. viii. 6.

Q. *What ſhall theſe exerciſed ſouls do, that ſuſpect their love to Chriſt is not ſuperlative; that they love him not above their relations, and deareſt enjoyments in the world? By what marks do we know if we do?*

A. By theſe, 1. If no affection to any creature can draw us willingly or wittingly, to do that which is diſpleaſing to Chriſt.

2*dly*, If we value Chriſt's friendſhip and favour more than that of any creature, and would chuſe rather to diſpleaſe all the world than offend him.

3*dly*, If the loſs of Chriſt's countenance, or any injury done to him affect our hearts more than any worldly loſs or damage.

4*thly*, If it be our greateſt grief, that we cannot get more love to Chriſt. And if we can appeal to himſelf, who knoweth our hearts, with Peter, that we love him ſincerely, though not ſo much as we ought, John xxii. 17. Eph. vi. 24.

Q. *Are there not many who have left their firſt love, like theſe,* Rev. ii. 4. *How ſhall we know if it be ſo with us?*

A. If decay of love to Chriſt be our diſeaſe, it will have ſuch ſymptoms as theſe; 1. Chriſt will be leſs in our hearts and mouths than formerly.

2*dly*, We will be more ſlack in our obedience, and have leſs delight in duty than before.

3*dly*, It is a ſign of decaying love, when we loſe our tenderneſs of conſcience, and wonted abhorrence of ſin, Chriſt's enemy.

4*thly*, When we are more eaſy under Chriſt's abſence and withdrawings, and leſs anxious for his preſence.

5*thly*, When we loſe our wonted appetites for our ſpiritual food and nouriſhment from Chriſt, in the ordinances.

6*thly*, When we loſe our public ſpiritedneſs and concern for the intereſt of Chriſt's kingdom and glory in the world.

7*thly*, When we are little concerned to have heart-holineſs, which is Chriſt's image, drawn upon the ſoul.

8*thly*, When we have little deſire for Chriſt's ſecond coming, or for the enjoyment of him in heaven.

9*thly*, When earthly-mindedneſs, and love to the world is on the growing hand.

Q. *Is there not a love to worldly things, which is lawful and allowable? How may we know when we love the world too much?*

A. Our love to the world is unlawful and exceſſive: When, 1. Worldly things are firſt in our thoughts in the morning, or laſt at night.

2*dly*, When they juſtle out ſpiritual things from our minds, *3dly*, When we think on worldly affairs, with greater intenſeneſs of mind, than theſe things that are ſpiritual and heavenly.

4thly, When the impreſſions of worldly things laſt longer with us, than theſe things which immediately concern the glory of God, and our ſouls good.

5thly, When the ends we propoſe to ourſelves in worldly cares are chiefly, that we may ſatisfy our natural deſires, prevent poverty, or make ourſelves great; not that we may glorify God, and be more capable to ſerve him.

Q. *What ſhall we do, to get the decayed fire of love to Chriſt kindled and increaſed?*

A. 1. Let us labour to be deeply ſenſible of this evil of decay of love to Chriſt, and heavely bemoan the coldneſs of our hearts before God.

2dly, Let us humbly apply to Chriſt our phyſician, who can only cure this plague of a ſpiritual conſumption as well as our other ſoul-diſeaſes.

3dly, Let us earneſtly ſeek after further diſcoveries of Chriſt's excellency and lovelineſs; for if we once ſaw his beauty, our hearts would ſurely go out after him.

4thly, Let us meditate much on the love of a crucified Jeſus, in ſweating blood, and laying down his life for ſuch enemies as we are: Let us take a view of him, in his dying garments, as he is deſcribed, Iſa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3.

5thly, Let us carefully ſearch out the luſt or idol, the Delilah, or worldly enjoyment, that hath ſtollen our hearts from Chriſt; and when we have found it, let neither our eye pity nor ſpare it, but preſently caſt it out.

6thly, Let us ſeriouſly think, on the one hand, upon the heavy curſe and vengeance which abide thoſe that do not love Chriſt, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. And on the other hand, upon the unſpeakable reward laid up for all the true lovers of Chriſt, as recorded, 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

7thly, Let us conſider that loving of Chriſt, will be the eternal employment of Saints in heaven: This grace of love abides for ever, when all the reſt do fail.

8thly, Let us earneſtly pray for the breathings of his holy Spirit, theſe *north and ſouth winds to blow on our withered gardens*. And let us plead his gracious promiſes of ſtrengh and quickning which he makes to languiſhing and decaying ſouls, particularly theſe Iſa. xl. 29, 30, 31. Jer xxxiii. 6. Zech. xii 8. Hoſ. xiv 5, 6, 7. Let us often cry with David, *Quicken thou me according to thy word*, Pſalm cxix. 25, 107, 154, *&c.*

9thly, Let us, in this caſe, follow the advice and preſcription of Chriſt, our great phyſician, Rev. iii. 4, 5. *Thou haſt left thy firſt love, remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt works.*

The advice contains three directions; 1. *remember from whence thou art fallen, i. e.* compare thy former ſtate with thy preſent: Remember what a warm heart and lively affections you once had to Chriſt, and how cold and dead they are now.

2dly. Repent, i. e. mourn over your ſad backſlidings and decays, and acknowledge them before God.

3dly, Do thy firſt works, i. e. be as diligent in duty as formerly. When we find this holy fire decayed, we ought to caſt on more fewel, *i. e.* uſe all God's appointed means for rekindling the flame, be much in prayer, reading and hearing the word; delight much in the converſe and fellowſhip of warm and lively Chriſtians, and go frequently to that heart warming and love-inflaming ordinance of the Lord's ſupper, carefully guarding againſt formality in communicating, or ſlightneſs in preparing for it.

Q. *What way ſhould the lovers of Chriſt expreſs, or ſhew forth their love to him?*

A. 1. By ſtudying likeneſs and comformity to him. Holineſs is Chriſt's image: Let us imitate Chriſt herein, that we may in ſome meaſure be like him whom we love, in meekneſs, humility, ſelf-denial, diligence, and heavenly mindedneſs: In a word, let us be holy in our thoughts, affections, ſpeeches, actions, and in all manner of converſation: For ſo Chriſt was, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

2dly, Let us ſeek to converſe with him, and be much in his company; Let us walk with him in the galleries of ordinances and be much in ſecret prayer, and in all theſe duties where fellowſhip with him is to be obtained, Cant. i. 7. Cant. iii. 2. Cant. vii. 5. Cant. viii. 13.

3dly, Obſerve his injunctions and keep his commandments, John xiv. 15.

4thly, Be concerned for his intereſt, kingdom and glory upon earth, Pſalm cxxii. 9. Phil. ii. 21.

5thly, Let us place all relations, worldly intereſts and enjoyments, below him, Mat. x. 37.

6thly, Give ready audience to his ambaſſadors, and kindly entertainment to all his love motions, Pſalm xlv. 10. Cant. v. 2.

7thly, Avoid every thing that Chriſt hates, Pſalm cxvii. 10. Pſalm xlv. 7.

8thly, Love his people and whatever bears his image, 1 John v. 1.

Concerning Love to GOD's People.

Queſt. WHY *is love to our neighbours, and eſpecially to the people of God, ſo neceſſary for a worthy communicant?*

A. 1. Becauſe God requires us, in all our ſolemn approaches to him, to ſee that we be in a ſtate of amity and friendſhip with our brother; not harbouring any wrath or malice in our hearts, as we would be accepted of God, Mat. v. 23. 25. 1 Cor. v. 8. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

2dly, Becauſe it is one end of this ordinance to repreſent the union of believers, together into one myſtical body, as the bread is made up of many grains compacted together: And alſo to teſtify their communion and fellowſhip with one another as members of the ſame body: And how can this be done without mutual love? 1 Cor. x. 16. 17.

3dly, Becauſe brotherly love is inſeparable from faith, and given frequently as a mark of Chriſt's diſciples, for whom this ſacrament is appointed, John xiii. 35. 1 John iii. 4. 1 John iv. 7.

4thly, Becauſe without this love we can expect no benefit by this ordinance, nor any communion with Chriſt in it, 1 Pet. ii. 1. 2. 3. 1 John iii. 23. 24. 1 John iv. 12. 16. As the Spirit deſcended on the diſciples, when they met together in one houſe and were all of one mind and one heart, ſo he will not enter the houſe or heart where love and peace do not dwell, Acts ii. 1. 4. Acts vi. 31. 32. Jer. xxxii. 39. 40.

5thly, Becauſe as we are bound to remember Chriſt's death in the ſacrament, ſo we ought in receiving it to remember the dying charge and injunctions he gave his people, when he inſtituted and diſpenſed it; and particularly this of brotherly love, which he ſo earneſtly preſſed in his ſacramental diſcourſe and farewel ſermon, John xv. 12. 17. and alſo prayer for it, John xvii. 11. 12.

Q. *But if my neighbour hath offended me, or I him, and declineth to return to a ſtate of love and reconciliation to me; ſhould this hinder me from partaking of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. If we ſincerely uſe the means which God hath appointed, in order to a reconciliation with our offending and offended brother, and endeavour, ſo far as we have acceſs, to have the difference removed, and entertain no prejudice, hatred, or revenge in our hearts againſt him; tho' our endeavours of reconciliation ſhould not have the deſired effect, through our neighbour's obſtinacy or untractableneſs, we are not to abſtain from our duty, or deprive ourſelves of the benefit of this ordinance, becauſe of his fault Mat. v. 23 24.

Q. *By what marks may we know if our love to God's people be true and ſincere?*

A. By these, 1. If we love them upon ſpiritual grounds becauſe of their relation to God as his children, and to Chriſt as his members, and becauſe of their likeneſs to God and Chriſt in holineſs, 1 John v. 1. 2. 1 Pet. i. 22.

2dly, If we love them univerſally, whether they be rich or poor, relations or ſtrangers, and even tho' they differ from us in ſome leſſer things, Col. i. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 17.

3dly, If we love them fervently, and above all others, 1 Pet. i. 22. Pſalm xvi. 3.

4thly, If we love them conſtantly, in adverſity as well as proſperity, when they are deſpiſed, reproached and perſecuted by the world, as well as when honoured and eſteemed, John xiii. 2. 1 John iii. 16. 17. Heb. xiii. 1.

5thly, If we prefer their company, and delight in it above that of any others, Pſalm cxix. 63 Pſalm xvi 3.

6thly, If we ſympathize with them, both in their joys and ſorrows, Rom. xi. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26.

7thly, If we be ready to ſerve them, and ſupply their wants, 1 John iii. 18. 19. James ii. 15. 16.

8thly, If we can bear with injuries from them, and be ready to forgive them, and even to cover their faults from others, 1 Cor. xiii. 4 7. Eph. iv. 32. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

Concerning LOVE to our Enemies.

Queſt. *WHerefore ought we to love our enemies?*

A. 1. Becauſe God hath commanded it, Mat. v. 44. Rom. xii. 14.

2dly, Becauſe of the example of God in loving and forgiving us who are enemies to him, and of Chriſt in dying for us, Eph. iv 32. Col. iii. 13.

Q. *What ſort of love is it, that we ought to bear to our enemies?*

A. A love of benevolence and beneficence, tho' not a love of delight and complacency, Mat. v. 44. 45. Rom. xii. 20. 21.

Q. *How may we know if our love to our enemies be true?*

A. 1. If the example of Chriſt's loving and dying for his enemies, have influence upon us, Rom. v. 8. 10. Col. iii. 13.

2dly, If we incline to forgive them, and wiſh their good and welfare, Luke xi. 12. Prov. xi. 23.

3dly, If we rejoice not in their hurt, Prov. xxiv. 17. 18.

4thly, If we ſhun to revenge ourſelves upon them, Rom. xii. 17. 19.

5thly, If we pray for them, relieve their wants, and return them good for evil, Mat. v. 44. Rom. xii. 20. 21.

VI. Concerning THANKFULNESS.

Queſt. *WHY is thankfulneſs to God ſo neceſſary in partaking of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. 1 Becauſe in this ordinance we have the repreſentation of the greateſt love and goodneſs that ever God expreſſed to the world, in giving his dearly beloved Son to be a ſacrifice for ſin, and offering him to be a Saviour to us, John iii. 16. Gal. iii. 1.

2dly, Thankfulneſs to God is a ſpecial deſign of this ordinance; upon which account it is called the Euchariſt or thankſgiving; becauſe here we expreſs our thankful remembrance of redeeming love, and celebrate the praiſes of our loving Redeemer, Mark xiv. 26.

Q. *How may we know if our thankfulneſs be of the right ſtamp?*

A. 1. By our low thoughts of ourſelves, and our diſclaiming all worthineſs in us to receive the leaſt mercy, Gen. xxxii. 10.

2dly, By our having a high eſteem of God's mercies to us, and eſpecially ſpiritual bleſſings; reckoning Jeſus Chriſt to be the mercy of mercies, Luke i. 68. 72. 2 Cor. ix. 15.

3dly, By our dutiful rendering to God according to the mercies received from him, Pſalm cxvi. 12. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

Q. *What is it that a thankful communicant ſhould render unto the Lord?*

A. 1. Both ſoul and body, as a living ſacrifice and thank-offering, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Rom. xii. 1.

2dly, Sincere love and hearty affection, Luke vii. 27. 28. 47.

3dly, High praiſes and humble prayers, Pſalm cvi. 1. 2. Pſalm cxvi. 1. 2. 17. Pſalm ciii. 1. 2. 3. 1 Tim. i. 15. 17.

4thly, Paying our ſacramental vows by a holy walk, diligent ſervice, and zealous acting for God's glory, Pſalm cxi. 12. 14. Pſalm cxix. 106. 1 Cor. 15. Acts xxi. 13.

VII. Concerning HOLY DESIRES.

Queſt. *WHAT are thoſe holy deſires, which are neceſſary to worthy communicants?*

A. They are the ſoul's ſpiritual appetite, or its hunger and thirſt after Chriſt and his benefits, as its proper food and nouriſhment, Iſa. xxvi. 8. 9. Mat. v. 6.

Q. *Why is this holy deſire or ſpiritual appetite ſo neceſſary to worthy partaking?*

A 1. Becauſe it is neceſſary in all our duties and approaches to God, and much more in this which is ſo ſolemn, Pſalm lviii. 8.

2dly, This ordinance is a feaſt, and certainly an appetite is proper for that if we would profit by it. Without it we can taſte no ſpiritual ſweetneſs in this feaſt, get no nouriſhment by it, nor expect welcome to it, Mat. v. 6. Luke i. 53. Rev. xxii. 17.

3dly, The greater our appetite and longings be, the greater will be our ſatisfaction: When the deſire opens the heart wideſt, God opens the hand largeſt to fill it, Pſalm lxxxi. 19.

Q. *How may we know if our deſires or appetite be of the right ſort?*

A. By theſe marks; 1. True hunger is inſatiable without food: Bring a treaſure, a crown, or the greateſt preferments to a hungry man, all cannot ſatisfy him: So nothing can ſatisfy the hungry ſoul but Chriſt; not his ordinances or benefits only, but himſelf; not the ſupper or bread of the Lord, but the Lord of the ſupper and the Lord of the bread, Pſalm lxxiii. 15. Job xxiii. 3.

2dly, Hunger is inſupportable without meat; the man muſt die if he want it; ſo the truly hungry ſoul cannot live or ſubſiſt without Chriſt; he can bear the want of other things, but Chriſt he cannot want, Pſalm cxliii. 7. 9.

3dly, Hunger makes a man reſolute, active and induſtrious, he will ſpare neither coſt nor travel for food, it would even break through ſtone walls: So a hungry ſoul will venture through all difficulties to find Chriſt, Cant. iii. 2. 3.

4thly, Hunger makes a man very humble; he will make the coarſeſt bread, or meaneſt crumb very welcome: So the truly hungry will be content to have Chriſt upon any terms, though it were, even to be the meaneſt ſervant of his houſe, or ſet with his dogs, provided always, he may have a relation to his family, Luke xv. 10. Mat. xv. 27.

5thly, Hunger makes a man reſtleſs and impatient of delays till food be brought; ſo the hungry ſoul cries oft, *How long, Lord wilt thou forget me? How long wilt thou hide thy face? When ſhall I come and appear before God?* Pſalm xiii. 1. Pſalm xliii. 1, 2.

6thly, It makes a man prefer Chriſt and his ordinances to all his worldly intereſts, and willing to part with all things to obtain theſe, Luke v. 11.

7thly, It makes Chriſt and his ſpiritual benefits very ſweet and pleaſant to the ſoul, and likewiſe the ordinances that do convey them, Cant. ii. 3. Pſal. cxxxii. 1.

VIII. Concerning New Obedience.

Queſt. WHAT *is that new obedience which is required in worthy communicants?*

A. It is an unfeigned deſire and purpoſe of the ſoul, followed with ſuitable endeavours in the life, (through the ſtrength of Chriſt) to yield ſincere, conſtant and univerſal obedience to God's revealed will; being humbled for ſhort-comings and deſirous to be clothed with Chriſt's righteouſneſs and accepted of God, only, for the ſake of his perfect obedience, Pſalm cxix. 4. 5 6, 30, 31 32, 113. Phil. iv. 13. 1 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. *Why is it called new obedience?*

A. Becauſe it is only performed by theſe who are new creatures, and are acted by new principles, and enabled by new ſtrength, according to the tenor of the new covenant, 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. xii. 2. Phil. iv. 13

Q. *Why is this new obedience needful to worthy partaking?*

A. 1. Becauſe the new covenant, which is ſealed in this ordinance, doth bind us to it; for as here we take God for our God; ſo we give up ourſelves to be his people, which neceſſarily includes our obedience to him, Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10.

2dly, Becauſe without new obedience, and ſincere purpoſes of it, a man comes to the Lord's table in a ſtate of rebellion, and not in obedience to Chriſt, and ſo can have no communion with him: For his fair profeſſion is but diſſimulation, and his religious performances hypocritical and abominable to God, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. Amos iii. 3. Tit. i. 16.

3dly, Carefulneſs to maintain good works is poſitively required of all that cloſe with Chriſt by faith, and is an evidence of the reality of our faith, Tit. iii. 8. James ii. 18, 20.

4thly, There can be no true thankfulneſs for redeeming love without it, Rom. xii. 1. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

5thly, Without holineſs in heart and life, there is no ſeeing of God, Mat. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14.

Q. *How ſhall we examine the truth and reality of our new obedience?*

A. We ought to inquire into theſe five things; 1. If it ſpring from new principles. 2dly, If it be aided by a new rule. 3dly, If it be done in a new manner. 4thly, If it aim at new ends. 5thly, If it hath new properties.

Q. *What are the principles of goſpel obedience?*

A. The grace of God's Spirit planted in the heart, and eſpecially the graces of faith, love, and fear of God. Fear of hell, or love of reward may force the hypocrite to ſome ſort of obedience; but love to God, and a tender regard to his authority do chiefly influence the believer, Rom. xvi. 26. Heb. xi. 7, 8. 2 Cor. v. 14. Pſalm cxix 4, 5. Acts x. 35.

Q. *What is the rule of goſpel obedience?*

A. 1. The will and commands of God revealed and contained in the holy ſcriptures; and not the precepts and inventions of men, Iſa. viii. 20. 1 Theſſ iv. 3. Pſalm cxix. 4, 5. Gal. vi. 16.

2dly, The example of Jeſus Chriſt our pattern, 1 John ii 6.

Q. *What is the new manner in which goſpel obedience is performed?*

A. It is done in faith, *i. e.* depending on the ſtrength of Chriſt, for enabling us to it and on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for our acceptance in it, and leaning nothing upon any of our own performances, but relying intirely upon Chriſt, Col. iii. 17. Phil. iv. 3. Eph. i. 6. Luke xvii. 10. Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.

Q. *What are the ends which believers aim at, in their new obedience?*

A. Not to gain the world, or get the applauſe of men, as hypocrites do; but to pleaſe God, ſhew forth his glory, and promote their neighbours edification, 1 Cor. x. 31. Col. i. 10. Phil. ii. 4.

Q. *What are the properties of goſpel obedience?*

A. 1. It is univerſal; the obedience of the whole man to the whole laws and commands of God, Pſalm cxix. 34. 2 Cor. vii. 20.

2dly, It is a willing obedience, not conſtrained by the commands of men, education, a natural conſcience, or fear of hell; but an obedience that ſprings from love to God and his ways, Pſal. cx. 3. Pſalm xi. 8. Rom. vii. 22.

3*dly*, It is a quick and ſpeedy obedience, Pſalm cxix. 60. Gal. i. 16.

4*thly*, It is a perſevering and reſolute obedience, notwithſtanding of trials and difficulties, Pſalm 119. 106, 112. Acts xi. 23. Rev. ii. 19.

5*thly*, It is a humble and ſelf-denied obedience, Luke xviii. 10.

6*thly*, It is a fiducial obedience, performed in Chriſt's ſtrength, and relying on his merits for acceptance with God, Eph. i. 6. Heb. xiii. 15.

So much concerning the firſt part of our preparation for the Lord's ſupper, *viz.* Self-examination. And ſo we come to the ſecond part.

Concerning the Excitation of GRACE.

Queſt. W*HY ſhould grace be excited and quickned, before our partaking of the Lord's ſupper?*

A Becauſe livelineſs and activity of ſoul is neceſſary to worthy communicating. That a man may be qualified for a feaſt, it is fit that he not only be living but alſo be in health, and have an appetite: For a ſick or ſwooning perſon is unfit for a feaſt, as well as a dead man. So in order to worthy communicating, it is requiſite that grace not only be in the habit, but that it be brought forth to the lively exerciſe: and that for theſe reaſons;

1. The very work of communicating lies in the vigorous actings of faith, love, repentance, and other graces of the Spirit.

2*dly*, Becauſe, in this ordinance, we make a ſolemn and immediate approach unto the living God, who will be ſerved in a lively manner and abhorreth a cold and lukewarm temper in his worſhip, Rom. xii. 11. Acts xxvi. 7. Rev. iii. 19. Mal. i. 14.

3*dly*, Becauſe to act without livelineſs, is not only unſuitable to this ſolemn ordinance, and to the author of it, but alſo moſt uncomfortable to ourſelves; for lifeleſs duties, are unpleaſant, and do occaſion many bitter reflections to the ſoul.

4*thly*, Without livelineſs of grace we are in hazard of unworthy communicating, and of drawing down judgments on ourſelves, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29, 30.

Q. *What is that lively frame of ſoul, which a communicant ſhould have, in approaching to the Lord's table?*

A. He ſhould have all the ſacramental graces drawn forth into excerciſe and his heart thereby brought into a humble and ſelf abaſing frame, a melting frame, a loving and affectionate frame, a longing and panting frame, a thankful and praiſing frame, and a willing and obedient frame, to run the ways of God's commandments, Pſalm cxix. 32.

Q *What courſe ſhall we take, to get the ſacramental graces brought to lively exerciſe?*

A. By the diligent uſe of the means which God hath inſtituted, particularly by reading and hearing of God's word, by ſerious and retired meditation upon proper objects, and by earneſt prayer and frequent ejaculations to God for the help of his Spirit.

Q *What are theſe proper objects we ſhould meditate upon, in order to bring the grace of faith into lively exerciſe?*

A. Let us meditate on the greatneſs of Chriſt's ſufferings, the acceptableneſs of his ſacrifice, the infinite virtue of his blood, the fulneſs and ſweetneſs of his promiſes, and the freeneſs of his gracious invitations, with the aſſurance he gives of acceptance and welcome to all that come unto him.

Q. *What ſhall we meditate on, in order to get holy fear quickned?*

A. We ought to meditate on the infinite juſtice and holineſs of God, and his vehement indignation againſt ſin, manifeſted in the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin; and upon the near approach we make to a holy God in this ordinance, and the danger of unworthy communicating.

Q *What ſhould we meditate on, to get repentance quickned?*

A. Upon the heinous and God-provoking nature of ſin, the number and greatneſs of our ſins, the variety and greatneſs of our Redeemer's ſufferings, and upon our ſins as the cauſe of them all.

Q. *What ſhall we meditate on, to get love to God and Chriſt quickned?*

A. Upon the infinite love of God in ſending his own Son to die for us, upon the matchleſs love of Chriſt in coming into the world, his readineſs and willingneſs to ſacrifice himſelf for us, his intrinſick lovelineſs and excellency, the unſpeakable vileneſs and unworthineſs of thoſe whom he loved, and ſuffered ſo much for.

Q *What ſhall we meditate upon, to get love to the people of God quickned?*

A. Upon the words of our dying Redeemer enjoining it, upon the image they bear, their near relation to Chriſt and to us; and upon the love of Chriſt in dying for them.

Q. *What ſhall we do, to get love to our enemies quickned?*

A. Let us think on Chriſt's command for it, and his example in loving and dying for us when enemies to him.

Q. *What ſhall we think on, to get our deſires and ſpiritual appetite quickned?*

A. Upon our ſouls manifold neceſſities and wants, the fulneſs and ſuitableneſs of the ſupplies Chriſt hath provided for us in this ordinance; and the gracious promiſes he hath made to ſatisfy theſe that hunger and thirſt.

Q. *What ſhall we meditate upon, to get our thankfulneſs to God quickned?*

A. Upon the freeneſs and greatneſs of redeeming love, the ſuitableneſs and excellency of the new covenant, the richneſs and fulneſs of this goſpel feaſt and our unworthineſs of the leaſt of God's mercies.

Q. *What ſhall theſe do, who complain of their ſpiritual deadneſs ſtill continuing and who cannot get their hearts brought to a lively frame, for approaching to this holy ordinance?*

A. 1. They ought to examine what may be the cauſe of their ſpiritual deadneſs. 2*dly*, Uſe all proper remedies for curing this diſeaſe.

Q. *What are the ordinary cauſes of our ſpiritual deadneſs?*

A. 1. Our commiſſion of ſome ſin, and not repenting for it; upon which account God is provoked to withold the influences of his Spirit, Pſalm li. 11. 2*dly*, Our omiſſion of duty, or ſluggiſh performance of it, brings on deadneſs. A key not turned ruſts in the lock, Iſaiah lxiv. 7.

3*dly*, Our careleſs entertaining of convictions and the motions of the holy Spirit, doth grieve and quench the Spirit, and ſo brings deadneſs.

4thly, Our unthankfulneſs for former mercies eſpecially ſpiritual mercies and revivings, provokes God to ſhut his hand, and ſuſpend his influences, Col. ii. 7.

5thly, Our earthly mindedneſs, and taking too much liberty in the delights of the world deadens the heart, Pſalm cxix. 37. Jude 19.

6thly, When we grow proud of gifts, attainments or enlargement in duty, God is provoked to blaſt them to us, James iv. 6.

7thly, Heavy troubles and diſcouragements tend to deaden the heart, Pſalm cxix. 107.

Q. *What are the proper remedies for curing our ſpiritual deadneſs?*

A. 1. Let us be deeply ſenſible of this ſad plague, ſearch out the cauſe of it, and be humbled for it before the Lord.

2dly, Let us ſtudy to keep up a lively faith of the unſeen things of another world; for when unbelief prevails, our ſpiritual life decays Heb. iii 12.

3dly, Let us act faith on Chriſt, and thereby draw life and quickning from him, who is the *fountain of life and head of influences* to his people; he is a living head and will communicate life to his languiſhing members, John x. 10.

4thly, Let us carefully cheriſh all the motions and convictions of God's Spirit, watch againſt all known ſin, the love of the world, the company of the wicked, and every thing that tends to grieve and quench the Spirit, 1 Theſſ. v. 19.

5thly, Let us be frequent in reading, hearing and meditating upon the quickning word and precepts of God, Pſalm cxix. 93.

7thly, Let us think much on the activity and livelineſs of the glorified ſaints and angels above, in the ſervice of the living God; and as we pray that we may *do his will on earth as they do in heaven*, let us join our endeavours with our prayers, chide our drouzy hearts and excite them to liveline ſs, Mat. vi. 10. Pſalm lvii. 8. Pſalm ciii. 1, 2. Jer. xxx. 21.

8thly, Let us attend God's quickning ordinance, and continue to uſe all means; ſtill waiting, longing and looking to the Lord, who hath promiſed to give power to the faint, and to be as the dew to Iſrael, Pſalm xxvii. 8. Iſa. xl. 29. 31. Hoſ. xiv. 5.

Q. *But what ſhall poor exerciſed ſouls do, who after uſing all means, find their deadneſs ſtill continuing? dare they adventure to approach to the living God in the ſacrament?*

A. 1. We ought to conſider that our dying Saviour hath commanded us to come to his table, and we are under an indiſpenſible obligation to obey it, and that ſinful indiſpoſition cannot excuſe us from our duty. And therefore,

2dly, We muſt not ſiſt in complaining of our deadneſs but we muſt be reſtleſs under it, mourn over it, pray againſt it, ſtruggle in the uſe of all means to get it removed, and ſet our hearts to our duty: And if we be conſcious to ourſelves. that we have been honeſtly exerciſed, (tho' with much weakneſs) in the uſe of all appointed means, we are not to give over thoughts of communicating; but in obedience to Chriſt's command, and with a ſerious deſign to keep up the remembrance of his dying love, we ought to ſet about it with hope and expectation that God will meet with us in this quickning ordinance, and graciouſly remove our complaints, according to his promiſe, Pſalm ix. 18. Pſalm xxxiii. 18. 22. Iſa. xli. 17, 18.

3dly, Let us remember that this courſe of ſincere aiming to obey Chriſt's command, and preparing ourſelves in the uſe of all means, is to lay ourſelves in God's way and road, who has promiſed to meet ſuch as remember him in his ways, and commonly hath a deſirable iſſue. For God oft ſurprizes his people with ſupplies of life, when they are ſtruggling with their deadneſs in the uſe of means; help comes in, in the mean time, ſo that tho' they begin duty with a dead frame, yet, they end it with a lively. *Before they are aware, their ſouls will make them as the chariots of Amminadab;* Iſa. lxiv. 5. Cant. vi. 12. read Pſalm xiii. the firſt verſes compared with the latter.

Q. *Are not retired meditations upon the ſufferings of Chriſt, and ſecret prayer to God, two ſpecial means for quickning our graces, and preparing us for the Lord's table?*

A. Yes; when they are rightly managed and duly performed.

I. Concerning the Meditation of CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

Queſt. WHerein doth the nature of the duty of ſolemn and retired meditation conſiſt?

A. It conſiſts in the ſoul's abſtracting and retiring itſelf from the world, and ſetting itſelf ſeriouſly to contemplate, and think upon ſpiritual objects, for holy and practical uſes: Which religious exerciſe is a very neceſſary and profitable duty in itſelf, and the character of a godly man, Joſh. i. 8. Pſalm i. 2. Gen. xxiv. 63. Pſalm cxix. 97.

Q. *What is the advantage of this duty?*

A. It is a great help to other duties, it affords matter to the tongue in prayer and praiſe, it makes us fruitful in reading and hearing the word, it over-awes the ſoul from ſinning, and melts the heart into penetential tears for ſin, it quickens the graces in communicating, raiſeth the ſoul's eſteem of Chriſt, enforceth holineſs, and excites diligence and activity in the ſervice of God, Pſalm xl. 1. James i. 24. Pſalm cxix. 97, 99. Pſalm xc. 11. Pſalm li. 3, 2. Tim. i. 12. Cant. v. 16. Pſalm xxvi. 3. Heb. x. 36.

Q. *Why is this uſeful and profitable duty ſo much neglected by us?*

A. 1. Becauſe of our ſpiritual ſloth, that makes us unwilling to engage in duties, that are difficult, ſpiritual and tedious to the fleſh, Prov. xxii. 25.

2dly, Becauſe of our guilty conſciences, that make us unwilling to be alone and retired, leſt the mind ſhould fall upon itſelf, or bring the awful judge of the world, and a future ſtate into our remembrance, Rom. i. 28.

3dly, Becauſe of the carnality and dulneſs of our hearts, the throng of worldly buſineſs that takes up the time of many, the barrenneſs of our thoughts as to ſpiritual things, and the natural inclination of our hearts to wander and ſkip from one ſubject to another, Iſa. vi. 10. Jer. iv 14.

Q. *How ſhall we manage this work of retired meditation before the ſacrament?*

A. 1. Let us call in the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of

God, to diſpoſe and fix our hearts for it, Cant. iv. 16.

2dly, Let us excite and rouze up our ſouls and all their faculties to the work, Pſalm lvii. 8.

3dly, Let us meditate but upon one thing at once, and labour to keep our mind and thoughts fixed upon the object that we think on, for ſome time together till once our hearts be affected with it, and moved to holy mourning, prayer or praiſe.

4thly, When we come any ſpeed in this exerciſe, let us bleſs God for it, and this is the way to have more ſucceſs in it: For as that which goeth up in vapours, comes down again in ſhowers; ſo that which goeth up in praiſes, comes down again in bleſſings, Pſalm lxvii. 5. 6.

5thly, Let us begin and end this work with prayer; in the beginning, let us pray for a bleſſing on the duty, and in the end, let us pray that God may preſerve the ſpiritual thoughts we have had upon our hearts, 2 Chron. xxix. 28.

6thly, Let us realize the preſence of God to ourſelves, and ſiſt ourſelves before his all ſeeing eye, when we are about his exerciſe, firmly believing that his eye pierceth into our heart and moſt ſecret actions; Pſalm vii. 8.

Q. *What ſhould be the ſpecial ſubjects of our meditation before our approach to the Lord's table?*

A. The evil and demerit of ſin, the goodneſs of God, the love of Chriſt; the preciouſneſs of the ſoul, and the excellent contrivance of our redemption; all which, as in a bright looking glaſs, we may contemplate and view the ſufferings of Chriſt, which therefore ſhould be the principal ſubject of our meditation, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Gal. iii. 1 John i. 29.

Q. *What is it, in the ſufferings of Chriſt, that we ſhould eſpecially think upon?*

A. We ſhould meditate, 1. On the variety and greatneſs of them. 2. On the cauſe of them. 3. Chriſt's innocency and patience under them. 4. The excellent properties of them.

Q. *How ſhall we meditate on the variety and greatneſs of Chriſt's ſufferings?*

A. By taking a ſerious and fixed view of the many ſore calamities and diſtreſſes which he endured in this world, in his life, and at his death, both in ſoul and body.

1. Think, how our glorious Redeemer was haraſſed and tempted by the devil forty days in a wilderneſs.

2dly, What poverty and want he lay under, travelling up and down on foot, and having no where to lay his head.

3dly, What grievous reproaches were caſt upon him.

4thly, How he was the object of the common hatred of the world; a multitude went to apprehend him, as if he had been a common enemy or robber; the multitude cried, *Away with him,* and preferred the greateſt malefactor before him, tho' he went ſtill about doing them good.

5thly Think on the unſpeakable preſſure of divine wrath which he lay under in the garden of Gethſemane, which made him wreſtle as in an agony, and ſweat great drops of blood, complain to his diſciples, and cry to heaven for relief.

6thly, Think how he was betrayed by one of his own diſciples, and ſold to his enemies for a very ſmall price.

7thly, How he was denied by another of his choſen diſciples, and deſerted by all the reſt, in time of his diſtreſs.

8thly, How he was taken and faſt bound with cords, as if he had been a thief or an evil doer.

9thly, How cruelly he was affronted and abuſed by rude ſoldiers a whole night; by being buffeted, ſpit upon, blind folded, ſtruck on the face, mocked with a ridiculous garb put upon him, and having the hair plucked from his cheeks.

10thly, How he was hauled to the judgment-ſeat of men, accuſed for crimes he knew nothing of, and without any cauſe, ſtripped naked, and ſeverely ſcourged.

11thly, How he had a crown of thorns plaited for his head, with the ſharp points turned inward, and this put on, and driven into his head by a ſtaff.

12thly, How contrary to all law as well as the conſcience of his judge, he was condemned to be crucified, and put to death as one of the vileſt malefactors.

13thly, How the heavy tree of the croſs was laid and faſtned on his ſore bleeding ſhoulders, and he forced to carry it to the place of execution, yea, to wreſtle with it up to mount Calvary, till he was ready to faint under the burden.

14thly, How he was laid on the ground, ſtretched forth naked, and racked on the croſs and both feet and hands faſtned to it with big nails; and then the croſs lift up with our nailed and bleeding Saviour upon it, and let fall into a deep hole digged for the foot of it; and ſo the wounds widened and the blood guſhed forth, till he expired amidſt theſe tortures, which laſted, (as learned men think) for the ſpace of ſix hours.

15thly, Think how great the anguiſh of his ſoul was at this time, when he bore our ſins, in his own body on the tree, he was inwardly ſcorched with the fire of God's wrath, which *dried up his ſtrength like a potſheard,* and made him cry out, *Thirſt* yea, cry aloud, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me.* So fearful were his ſufferings, the whole world was moved thereat, the earth ſhook, the rocks rent, the heavens darkned, the ſun vailed his face; and ſhall not our hearts be moved with contemplation of them?

Q. *What was the cauſe of Chriſt's ſufferings?*

A. Our ſins, which Chriſt out of pure love undertook to become a ſurety and ſacrifice for, to the juſtice of God: Theſe were the burden that preſſed him down in the garden: that made the nails, and drove them into his body on the croſs, Iſa. liii. 5. Rom. vi. 25. Dan. vii. 26.

Q. *How did Chriſt's innocency and patience appear under his ſufferings?*

A. In that he was the immaculate Lamb of God who had done no evil. His judge on earth was forced to exculpate him, the Judge of heaven was well pleaſed with him, and received him into glory. *He was brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and opened not his mouth,* he reviled not his perſecutors, but heartily prayed for them, and willingly poured out his ſoul unto death, Iſa. liii 7. 12 1 Pet. ii. 22. 23. Luke xxii. 14. 15 34.

Q. *What are the properties of Chriſt's ſufferings, on which we ought to meditate?*

A. 1. The ſeaſonableneſs of them; Chriſt ſtept in and ſuffered for his people, before ſo much as one drop of wrath alighted on them.

2dly, The voluntarineſs of them: he moſt willingly offered himſelf a ſacrifice to divine juſtice, without any ſort of compulſion, nay, he haſted to do it, Pſalm xl. 8. Luke xii. 50. Luke xxii. 15.

3dly, The univerſality of them; he ſuffered in all his offices, in his good name, his outward goods, in all his ſenſes, in all his members.

4thly, The extremity of them; the cup he drank was moſt bitter, being altogether mingled with wrath and curſes, he was roaſted with the fire of divine vengeance, and found no pity nor abatement, Rom. 8. 32.

5thly, The acceptableneſs of them to God; a ſlain Chriſt was a *ſacrifice of ſweet ſmelling ſavour to God*, ſeeing it brought honour to his law, glory to his juſtice, praiſe to his mercy, and ſafety to his people, Eph. v. 2.

6thly, We ought to think upon the efficacy and benefit of Chriſt's ſufferings to us: So great is the efficacy and virtue of them, that they reach back to the beginning of the world, and extend foreward to the end of it: and procure great bleſſings to his people in all ages. In a word, the wounds and ſufferings of Chriſt, have an atoning, reconciling, healing, purifying, and ſoftning virtue, which we ſhould often think upon.

Q. *How may we know, if we have an intereſt in theſe ſufferings of Chriſt, and if he died for us in particular?*

A. By theſe marks, 1. If we be his people, and willing to do and ſuffer what he would have us, Mat. i. 21. Pſalm cx. 3.

2dly, If we have an high eſteem of Chriſt, and his ſufferings, 1 Cor. ii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

3dly, If we reject all other ſaviours, and deſire only to be ſheltered in Chriſt's wounds, and ſanctified by his blood, Hoſ. xvi. 3. Rev. i. 5.

4thly, If our hearts melt for piercing him, Zech. xii. 10.

5thly, If we be bent to kill ſin that crucified Chriſt, Gal. v. 24.

6thly, If we be friends and lovers of Chriſt, ready to obey his commands, John xv. 13, 14.

II. Concerning Prayer.

Queſt. *WHY is prayer ſo needful before we approach to the Lord's table?*

A. 1. Becauſe prayer is a great mean on our part, for making up and preſerving our acquaintance with God, Job xxii. 21, 26, 27.

2dly, It is needful, both to ſanctify the ordinance to us, and us to this ordinance, 1 Sam. xvi. 5. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

3dly, It is the way to procure the Spirit's influences, for quickning graces, and enlivening us for duty, Cant. iv. 16.

4thly, Becauſe no benefit can be expected by this ordinance without prayer, for it is the means appointed of God for obtaining all ſpiritual bleſſings, Ezek. xxxiv. 37. Mat. vii. 7. James i. 17.

Q. *What things ſhould communicants eſpecially pray for, before their partaking?*

A. 1. For pardon of the ſin of neglecting this ordinance formerly, and of unſuitable partaking of it.

2dly, For the preparation of our hearts for this ordinance, and for quickning all the ſacramental graces, particularly, faith, love, repentance, and hunger and thirſt for this ſpiritual feaſt, Pſalm x. 17. Prov. xvi. 1.

3dly, For pardon of all defects and ſhort-comings in our preparation, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 20.

4thly, For the Lord's gracious preſence both with miniſters and people, for communion with Chriſt in the ordinance, for the intimations of his favour, the breathings of his Spirit, and communications of his grace; that we, and many others may be nouriſhed, ſtrengthned and comforted by this ordinance, Exod. xxxiii. 14. 18. Cant. iv. 16. Iſa. lxiv. 4.

Q. *What kind of prayer is it, that will be effectual?*

A. 1. Humble prayers; we muſt level ourſelves with the duſt, when we ſpeak to the God of heaven; for it is ſuch prayers that he will regard, Gen. xviii. 27. Pſalm x. 17.

2dly, Prayer in faith; if we would prevail in prayer, we muſt by faith eye the power, mercy and promiſe of God, and rely upon the mediation and righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, in all our pleadings with God, James i. 6.

3dly, It muſt be fervent and importunate; as if it were the laſt prayer we were to put up, and the laſt ſacrament we were to ſee, and as if our lives and eternal well-being depended upon it, Gen. xxxii. 25, 26. Lam. iii. 41. Iſa. lxiv. 7.

4thly, It muſt be agrumentative; pleading the power of God, the mercy of God, his free promiſe, the blood of his Son, the glory of his name, our great miſery and neceſſity, Joſh. vii. 9. Pſalm lxxxix. 9. Dan. ix. 16, 17. 18.

Q. *But what if we have prayed and wreſtled and yet the Lord ſhuts out our prayers, and gives no anſwer?*

A. 1. This is no ſingular complaint, for it hath been the caſe of many of God's ſaints in former ages, Pſalm xxxi. 22. Lam. iii. 8, 44. Jonah ii. 4.

2dly, There is a great difference betwixt delaying, and denying of prayer, or betwixt God's ſuſpending the anſwer of prayer and his rejecting it. For God, many times, for wiſe and holy ends is ſilent, and lets his peoples ſuits depend long before he anſwer them; when yet in the mean time he approves and accepts of their prayers, Luke xviii. 7. Mat. xv. 23, 28.

Q. *How ſhall we know that our prayers are not rejected, when yet, we receive no anſwer to them?*

A. 1. When we are reſolved and enabled ſtill to wait upon God in the way of duty, tho' he hide himſelf from us, Iſa. viii. 17.

2dly, When we are enabled to clear and juſtify God in his dealings, and blame ourſelves only for the cauſe of his ſilence, Lam. iii. 39, 40. &c.

3dly, When we are helped to diſcover the failings and defects of our prayers, as to be humbled for them, Iſa. lxiv. 6. 7.

4thly, When we get the Spirit's aſſiſtance to ſtrengthen and enlarge our hearts in prayer, Pſalm cxxxviii. 3. Iſa. lxv. 34.

5thly, When the Lord's ſuſpending his anſwer, makes us the more inquiſitive into our hearts, and ways, to find out the cauſe thereof, Lam, iii. 8, 40.

Q. *Wherefore is it, that the Lord delays to hear his peoples prayer?*

A. For theſe ends; 1. To chaſten and humble them for their ſins, ſuch as, their ſloth and formality in duty, their ſelf conceit, and leaning upon their performances, their neglecting the Spirit's motions, their want of ſuitable apprehenſions of God, and pure ends in prayer, their not joining ſuitable endeavours with their prayers, their not watching for a return, *&c.* Iſa. lix. 2. Pſalm. lxvi. 18. Iſa. lxvi. 7. 1 Pet. v. 5. James iv. 3. Pſalm v. 1.

2dly, For the manifeſtation of his own glory, particularly, for diſcovering his power and goodneſs in helping and delivering his people, when matters are brought to extremity with them, John xi. 5, 6.

III. For the trial and exerciſe of his peoples graces, either that the weakneſs of them may be diſcovered, or the ſincerity of them evidenced, particularly, the Lord deſigns hereby,

1. To try our faith, if we will truſt him for what we ſee not, and believe he is ſtill as good as his word, tho' ſenſe ſuggeſt the contrary, Mat. xv. 27, 28. 2 Cor. v. 7

2dly, To try our patience, if we be content to wait God's leiſure, and time of accompliſhing his promiſes, Heb. vi. 12. Heb. x. 36.

3dly, To try our love if we will eſteem, and ſpeak well of Chriſt, even when he frowns or hides himſelf, Cant. v. 6, 10. Cant. viii. 7.

4thly, To try our conſtancy, if we will adhere to a withdrawing God, and perſevere in duty, when we have no ſenſible encouragement for it, Hab. iii. 17, 10.

IV. God delays to anſwer his peoples prayers, to advance their ſpiritual welfare, for hereby he keeps them humble and depending, quickens them to more fervency in prayer, and makes mercies more ſweet to them when obtained, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. Cant. iii. 1, 2. Mat. xv. 25, 27, 28.

Q. *What is our proper duty in ſuch a caſe, when God ſeems to ſhut out our prayer?*

A. 1. We ſhould ſearch for the Achan in the camp, and caſt out the accurſed thing, as ſoon as we find it. And if we cannot find it, we ſhould go humbly to God, and cry, *Shew me, Lord, wherefore thou contendeſt with me?* Job x. 2.

2dly, Let us juſtify God in all his dealings towards us, and lay all the blame on ourſelves, Micah vii. 9.

3dly, Let us watch and look after our prayers, Pſalm v. 3.

4thly, Let us be diligent alſo in the uſe of all other means for obtaining our deſires, and go from one duty, to another, Cant. iii. 1. 2.

5thly, We muſt reſolve to perſiſt in prayer, in midſt of all diſcouragements, and wait patiently on God, tho' it were to the laſt hour of our lives, Iſa. viii. 17. Pſalm xi 1.

Q. *Who are theſe, in a word, that are in a fit caſe to come to the Lord's table?*

A. All penitent believers, who have ſeriouſly conſidered the nature of the covenant of grace, with the ends and uſes of this ſacrament; and examined themſelves if they have unfeignedly conſented to the covenant, and ſtand to the conſent already given; live according to the covenant, in a ſober, righteous and godly life, repent ſincerely of all known falls and breaches, and continue not in any known ſin; aſk forgiveneſs of all they have wronged, and forgive theſe who have wronged them; ſtir up themſelves to the lively exerciſe of faith, and all the other ſacramental graces.

Concerning the Duties requiſite in partaking.

Queſt. HOW *ſhould we be employed when the time of partaking comes?*

A. I have already anticipated much that might be ſaid here, in opening the nature of this ſacrament, and ſhewing what is ſignified by the ſacramental elements, words, and actions, which is employed in the act of worthy communicating, and what is the bodily geſture requiſite therein: To which the reader is referred. Beſides which, I ſhall add ſome directions how we ought to be employed, when going to the Lord's table, and when we ſit down at it, and in the act of communicating.

Q. *How ſhould we be employed when going to the Lord's table?*

A. 1. We ſhould be thinking what a high privilege it is, that ſuch unworthy creatures as we ſhould be admitted unto ſuch near communion and fellowſhip with God.

2dly, We ſhould have awful impreſſions of the ſolemnity of the ordinance, and greatneſs of the work we are going about; the great advantage of doing it right, and the great danger of doing it wrong.

3dly, We ſhould be thinking, this may be the laſt communion we ſhall ſee on earth, and the laſt offer we ſhall get of the water of life, in this manner; and therefore we ought carefully to receive and improve it.

4thly, We ſhould guard againſt wandering and impertinent thoughts, and labour to get our hearts wholly fixed on the great work in hand.

5thly, We ſhould be meditating on the unſearchable love of Chriſt, and his undertaking to ſuffer both the pains of death and hell for us, that were enemies to him.

6thly, We ſhould be meditating on the fulneſs and ſuitableneſs of the many ſweet offices and relations, which Chriſt bears to his people. Let us think on him and go to him, as a ſurety, to pay our debt; as a phyſician, to heal our diſeaſes; as a mediator, to make up our peace with God; as a ranſomer, to deliver us from captivity; as a refuge to ſhelter us from danger, as a teacher, to open our eyes; as a bountiful friend, to give an alms, and ſatisfy our hunger; yea, as a loving huſband, to clothe us, enrich us, and provide for us, all we want.

Q. *How ſhall we be employed when we ſit down at the Lord's table?*

A. 1. We ſhould compoſe ourſelves into a ſerious frame and diſpoſition, agreeable to this ordinance.

2dly, We are to behold by faith, the affecting ſight repreſented to us in this ordinance.

3dly, Raiſe holy and ſuitable meditations from the ſacramental elements, words and actions made uſe of, in the adminiſtration of this ordinance.

4thly, Exerciſe the graces in a lively manner, which are neceſſary in the act of communicating.

Q. *What is that ſerious frame or ſuitable diſpoſition of ſoul, which communicants ought to have when they ſit down at the Lord's table?*

A. We ſhould approach to God in this ordinance, and partake thereof; 1. With an holy awe and reverence of God; adoring his juſtice and holineſs, manifeſted in the ſufferings of Chriſt, 1 Sam. vi. 20. Pſalm v. 7. Heb. xii. 28.

2dly With humble, low, and abaſing thoughts of ourſelves, and all that we can do, looking on ourſelves as poor and maimed, halt, blind and impotent, unworthy of the leaſt crumb, Luke xiv. 21. Iſa. lvii. 25. James iv. 6, 20.

3dly, With ſtayedneſs and fixedneſs of thought, ſummoning all the faculties of the ſoul, and thoughts of the heart, to attend and keep cloſe to this momentuous affair, Eccleſ. v. 1. Pſalm cxviii. 27.

4thly, With holy confidence, as children ſitting down at their father's table, looking for, and expecting ſome gracious allowance from him, and believing that he would not give us ſtones when we aſk bread, Mat. vii. 9. Heb. iv. 15, 16. Heb. x. 22.

5thly, With a ſharp and lively appetite after the ſpiritual benefits contained in this feaſt, earneſtly deſiring nearer communion with God, clearer tokens of his diſtinguiſhing love in Chriſt, Pſalm lxxxi. 10.

6thly, With burning love and affections to Chriſt, who purchaſed this feaſt and opened this fountain to us, and laid out the moſt precious treaſure of his blood to make us happy, Pſalm lxxiii. 25. Cant. v. 8.

7thly, In this ſuitable communion frame, there ſhould be a mixture of holy mourning and rejoicing. 1. Mourning for ſin, when we call to mind the anguiſh of Chriſt's ſoul, the bruiſes of his body, and the effuſion of his blood for it. 2dly. Rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus as thoſe that are ſatisfied with his undertaking, and thankful for his coming, and wonder at the rich feaſt he has provided for us, Zech. xii. 10 Rom. 5. 11. Phil. iii. 3. Pſalm xxii. 26.

Q. *What are theſe affecting ſights ſet before the eyes of our faith, at the Lord's table, which we ought to contemplate, when we ſit down thereat?*

A. In general, Chriſt crucified is here evidently ſet forth, which is the moſt percing and affecting ſight to the eye and heart of a believer, Gal. iii. 1. Zech. xii. 10.

More particularly, we may here ſee, 1. The great evil of ſin, that nothing could attone for, but ſuch a ſacrifice, and nothing can cure but ſuch a medicine.

2dly, The infinite juſtice of God, and his diſpleaſure againſt ſin, which nothing could pacify, but a ſatisfaction of an infinite value.

3dly, The greatneſs of the damned's miſery, who have God's juſtice to ſatisfy for themſelves for ever, without hope of any to be a propitiation for them.

4thly, The dreadfulneſs of that wrath which we deſerved and muſt have ſuffered, if no ſurety had interpoſed to ſuffer it for us.

5thly, The greatneſs of the love of Chriſt, who condeſcended to ſuffer both the pains of death and hell, for ſuch vile creatures as we are.

6thly, The preciouſnes of our ſouls, and the great value that Chriſt put upon them, in that he gave both his ſoul and body to be a ranſom for them.

7thly, The excellency and bleſſedneſs of pardon of ſin, that our infinitely wiſe Redeemer gave ſuch a price to obtain it to us.

8thly, The worth of heaven and eternal glory, that could be purchaſed at no lower rate, than the blood of the Son of God

9thly, The riches and glory of the heavenly feaſt, where the ſaints ſee Chriſt as he is, and feed on him eternally, without ſigns or ſymbols.

10thly, The earneſt deſire Chriſt hath to engage ſinners hearts to him, in that he comes in the ſacrament, with his dyed garments to cover them, his wounds opened to ſhelter them, and his blood ſtreaming forth to cleanſe them.

Laſtly, We may here ſee, our glorious Redeemer ſpoiling principalities and powers (conquering and diſarming our enemies, the law, Satan, death and hell) *making a ſhew of them openly, and triumphing over them in his croſs*, Col. ii. 15.

Q. *What meditation ought we to raiſe from the ſacramental elements, words and actions, made uſe of at the Lord's table?*

A. I have already inſiſted on theſe more largely, when ſhewing the meaning and ſignification of them, from whence we may raiſe many ſuitable meditations. All I ſhall ſay now, ſhall be briefly ſummed up in theſe following things.

1. When we ſee the elements of bread and wine, let us think on the body and blood of Chriſt, as the only proper food and nouriſhment of the ſoul.

2dly, When we ſee the miniſter take the bread into his hand, to ſeparate it from common uſe; let us think on God's ſetting Chriſt apart by his eternal decree, and ſeparating him from all other men to be our mediator and ſurety.

3dly, When the miniſter doth bleſs and conſecrate the elements; Let us think on God's ſending his Son into the world, ſanctified and furniſhed with all gifts and graces needful for his mediatory office.

4thly, When we ſee the bread broken; let us meditate on the breaking and wounding of Chriſt's ſacred body on the croſs, and all the bruiſes, ſufferings, and pains which he endured, both in ſoul and body, for our ſins.

5thly, When we ſee the wine poured out; Let us think on the ſhedding of Chriſt's moſt precious blood and on his willingneſs to pour out both his blood and ſoul unto death, to ſave us from eternal wrath.

6thly, When we ſee the miniſter offering and giving the elements to us; let us meditate on the infinite love of God the Father, in giving Chriſt to be our mediator; and of Chriſt the Son, in giving himſelf to be a ſacrifice for us; and of the Holy Ghoſt, in revealing and applying Chriſt to us.

7thly, When the miniſter ſaith to us, *Take, eat, Drink ye all of it;* let us think, how freely God offers Chriſt to us, and how earneſtly he preſſeth us to accept of him as our Saviour.

8thly, When we ſee that there is both bread and wine provided for us in this feaſt; let us think on the plentiful redemption, compleat nouriſhment, and fulneſs of grace which we have in Jeſus Chriſt.

9thly, When we ſee that both of them are offered and given to us; let us think, that it is God's will that we ſhould ſtretch out the arms of faith, and embrace Chriſt wholly, in all his benefits, offices, laws, and croſs.

10thly, When we ſee the bread and wine given ſeparately; we ſhould think how Chriſt's blood was ſeparated from his body, that we might not be ſeparated from God for ever.

11thly, When we ſee the elements divided and diſtributed among the communicants; let us think, how Chriſt is really, tho' inviſibly dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and ſufferings to the worthy receivers.

12thly, When we are receiving and eating and drink-ſing the bread and wine; we ſhould be meditating on the ſpiritual receiving, and applying of Chriſt by faith, and the ſweetneſs and pleaſantneſs of the benefits of his death, and on the cloſe and intimate union that is betwixt Chriſt and believers.

13thly, When we feel the wine warming our cold ſtomachs; we ſhould meditate the more intenſly upon the warm love and blood of Chriſt, till once they warm our cold hearts and affections with vehement love and deſire to our Redeemer.

14thly, When we hear of Chriſt's dying charge *to do this in remembrance of him;* and of his teſtament ſealed in this ſacrament; we ſhould affectionately remember the love of our dying friend, and meditate on the precious legacies he hath bequeathed to believers. Of which I have treated more largely.

Q. *Wherein doth the work of communicating chiefly conſiſt?*

A. Beſides what I have ſaid before on this head, I ſhall add theſe two things; 1. Upon God's part; *Communicating* lyes on God's giving infeftment to the believer, of Chriſt, and all his purchaſe, by the ſymbols of bread and wine. Chriſt doth here marry believers, and give himſelf to them, in the relation of a huſband; and in token thereof gives them, as it were, his ring or picture, and grants them the inveſtiture and poſſeſſion of his houſe or palace above, by delivering the key thereof into their hand; which upon their conſent and acceptance, gives them as true right to Chriſt and all his purchaſe, as any man hath to an houſe or eſtate by an infeftment or ſealed charter.

2dly, On the believers part; *Communicating* lyes mainly in their receiving the ſeal of God's covenant with them, and the ſeal of all his gracious promiſes to them in Chriſt; and particularly in laying hold and applying of Chriſt for pardon of ſin, for cleanſing from ſin, and for ſtrength to do every commanded duty; all which is promiſed in this covenant. So that the work of communicating doth not (as ſome are ready to think) ly principally, in meditating upon Chriſt's love and ſufferings, our engaging and covenanting to be the Lord's, making vows againſt ſin, or putting up of prayers and requeſts to God. All theſe indeed, ought neceſſarily to attend our communicating, but they are not the direct and principal acts, of it. The nature whereof, as is ſaid, conſiſts mainly, in our cordial receiving of Chriſt and his purchaſed benefits, as they are tendered in the covenant of grace, and ſealed and applied in this ſacrament: And in our believing that Chriſt's broken body, and ſhed blood here repreſented, with all his merits and graces, are as truly applied to us, for curing and ſaving our ſouls, and become ours by faith; as the conſecrated bread and wine do enter into our bodies, and become ours by feeding thereon. And theſe acts are to be accompanied with the lively exerciſe of all the ſacramental graces, particularly faith, repentance, deſire, love and joy.

Q. *How is faith to be exerciſed in partaking of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. Faith being as the eye of the ſoul, to diſcern Chriſt; as the hand of the ſoul, to receive him; and as the mouth of the ſoul to feed on him in this ordinance, ſhould be moſt actively imployed and diligently exerciſed in our partaking; particularly in theſe acts;

1. In believing firmly the doctrine of the goſpel, the truth of Chriſt's death, his redemption, and the world to come.

2dly, In looking unto Chriſt lifted up upon the croſs, for healing to our ſouls maladies.

3dly, In fleeing into the open arms and wounds of a crucified Jeſus, our bleeding high Prieſt, for ſhelter and protection from wrath.

4thly, In embracing and claſping about this Redeemer as our ſoul's up-making portion, ſaying with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God.*

5thly, In applying the blood and merits of Chriſt to ourſelves, for ſtopping the mouth of conſcience, ſilencing the clamours and curſes of the law, and anſwering the accuſations of Satan.

6thly, In pleading his blood with a juſt and faithful God, for the pardoning of our ſins, the juſtifying of our perſons, the acceptance of our performances, the ſoftning of our hearts, the curing of our diſeaſes, the quickning of our graces, and ſanctifying of our ſouls.

7thly, In giving up our ſouls and bodies to Chriſt, to be ſaved by his blood, guided by his Spirit, ruled by his laws and diſpoſed of by his providence: ſaying with the Spouſe, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

Q. *How is repentance to be exerciſed, in our partaking of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. By remembring our ſins that pierced Chriſt, with holy ſhame and ſorrow abhoring them, loathing and condemning ourſelves for them, firmly reſolving againſt them, and ſincerely purpoſing to follow Chriſt all our days in the ways of new obedience.

Q. *How is holy deſire to be exerciſed, in partaking?*

A. In panting and breathing after the virtue and efficacy of Chriſt's blood, ſtill more and more; for ſubduing und killing of ſins and luſts, for enlivening our dead ſouls, and curing our heart plagues, for quickning and ſtrengthning our weak and decayed graces, and for more intimate fellowſhip with Chriſt, and ſurer tokens of his ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing love.

Q. *How is love to Chriſt to be exerciſed, in partaking?*

A. By the outgoing of the heart and ſoul towards him, cloſely thinking upon his free love and the expreſſions of it, with wonder and admiration: highly eſteeming and prizing this glorious Redeemer, delighting in him, and cleaving to him, as our ſouls chief good and portion, and longing for the full enjoyment of him in glory.

Q. *How is holy joy to be exerciſed, in partaking?*

A. By the ſouls being cleared and lifted up in the believing view of its intereſt in Chriſt and his purchaſe, rejoicing in God as its covenanted God and portion, ſhewing forth his praiſe and magnifying him for redeeming love.

Q. *What ſhall theſe poor ſouls do, who in obedience to Chriſt's command come to the Lord's table, but when they are ſet down at it, are wholly out of caſe (as they think) for the exerciſe of the foreſaid graces, being plagued with much deadneſs and confuſion, and likewiſe haraſſed with ſtrong temptations?*

A. It is indeed very afflicting and diſcouraging when it is ſo with any poor exerciſed ſoul, and will occaſion many great thoughts and ſearchings of heart.

But 1. If the diſorder of our hearts be our great grief and burden, and we deſire nothing more than a right frame of ſpirit, for remembring and receiving a dying Saviour in the ſacrament; it is a ſign of ſome ſpiritual life and feeling.

2dly, We ſhould conſider, that it is no ſingular caſe, to be aſſaulted with temptations, at ſuch a juncture; for Joſhua the High Prieſt when ſtanding before the Lord, had ſatan at his right hand to reſiſt him, Zech. iii. 1. 2.

3dly, If we feel much heart-deadneſs at ſuch a time we ſhould ſend up ſome fervent ejaculations for the aſſiſtance and breathings of the Spirit to warm our hearts, and enliven our affections, Cant. iv. 16.

4thly, We ought to rouze and ſtir up ourſelves, uſe quickning motives and arguments, and expoſtulate with our own hearts, and ſay, Oh I am lively enough in all my worldly concerns, which are but trifles; and ſhall I be dead and dull in this weighty affair; when the queſtion is, *Whether I ſhall live in heaven or hell for ever*? What life and activity have many in the ways of ſin, and ſervice of the devil? and ſhall I be ſo dead in the ſervice of the living God? *Oh my drouſy heart! art thou not aſhamed to think ſo coldly on thy bleeding Saviour? Is Chriſt's heart ſo warm to thee, and thine ſo cold to him?* Thus all means muſt be uſed in dependence upon God; and ſo let us wait on him, and help will come in the time of need, Pſalm xxxi. 24. Pſalm xliii. 5. Pſalm lvii. 8.

5thly, Let us hence ſee the more need of a crucified Jeſus, to quicken our dead hearts, and ſubdue our ſtrong temptations; and let us apply the more heartily to him in this ordinance, where he ſeats himſelf on a throne of grace, ready to anſwer his peoples requeſts, and ſupply their needs. Let us draw life from his death, and quickning from his reſurrection. And let us remember, it was Chriſt's ſpecial errand into the world, to bring *abundant life* to his people, and to *deſtroy the works of the devil*, John x. 10. John iii. 8.

Q. *What ſhall theſe do, who complain of ſuch wandring hearts, that they cannot get them ſtayed a moment upon one ſubject; and even when they are ſet down at the Lord's table, they find them hunting after vanity?*

A. 1. Let them groan under this before God, as a very grievous plague and affliction; for if ever there was a time when the heart ſhould be fixed, and the thoughts ſtayed, it ſhould be, when we ſit down at the Lord's table, and have the great God to tanſact with.

2dly, Let us labour to over-awe our hearts with the deep apprehenſions of God's preſence and all-ſeeing eye, believing that God noticeth us now more than ever.

3dly, Let us cry for more love to Chriſt, and for further diſcoveries of his lovelineſs, and this would be a mean to fix the heart, *For where the treaſure is, there will the heart be alſo.*

4thly, Let us chide and check our hearts, for every vain excurſion, and ſay, *O my wandring heart! Did I come here to think on any thing, but Chriſt and his love? Is this a place for earthly trifles? Is this the way to ſhew forth the Redeemer's death? If I cannot watch with Chriſt one hour; how ſhall I dwell with him, and live in the contemplation of him for ever?*

5thly, Let us preſent a crucified Chriſt to the eye of the mind, and ſtudy to hold this object ſtill in its view. And let us have the communicants proper work deeply fixed in our minds and memories and labour to keep the heart cloſe to its work, and even let us *bind the ſacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar*, viz. the cords of ſtrong reſolutions and fervent ejaculations; and when thoſe birds of prey come down upon the ſacrifice, let us, like Abraham, drive them preſently away, Gen. xv. 11. Pſalm cxviii. 27. Pſalm xxxvi. 11.

Q. *Are not* vows *and* prayers *requiſite, at the Lord's table?*

A. Yes; for here we are to profeſs our ſorrow for ſin, our thankfulneſs for God's favours, and join ourſelves to the Lord in an everlaſting covenant: and it certainly becomes all true penitents, thankful ſouls, and honeſt covenanters to make vows: And theſe vows are nothing worth without prayers to God joined therewith, for ſtrength to keep them. And theſe vows and prayers ſeem to be moſt ſeaſonable after our receiving of the elements, and our exerting of the direct acts of communicating, Job xxxiv. 31, 32. Gen. xxviii. 20. John i. 16. Neh. x. 29.

Q. *What is the nature of theſe* vows, *which we ought to come under, at this juncture?*

A. A religious vow is a ſerious oath of dedication of ourſelves to the Lord's uſe and ſervice; or, it is a ſolemn engagement and promiſe unto the Lord, whereby we bind and oblige ourſelves to be the Lord's dutiful children and ſervants, Numb. xxx. 2. 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13, 14, 15.

Q. *What is the neceſſity of making ſuch vows?*

A. 1. Becauſe God is pleaſed thus to bind himſelf ſolemnly to us, which ſhould draw out ſome anſwerable return from us to him, Hab. vi. 28. Pſalm cxix. 106.

2dly, That we may ſolemnly confirm and ratify what was done and engaged in our name at baptiſm: A bargain that is made for an heir, during his nonage, is to be confirmed by him when he comes to age.

3dly, That thereby we may give our ſolemn approbation and teſtimony to God's ways and ſervice as the beſt and moſt excellent.

4thly, That thereby we may engage our ſouls the more to ſtedfaſtneſs and conſtancy in duty, diſcourage Satan and our ſpiritual enemies, and prevent our backſliding, which we are naturally prone to, Hoſ. xi. 7.

Q. *What are theſe things, which we ought to vow and oblige ourſelves unto, at the Lord's ſupper?*

A. 1. That we will in the ſtrength of Chriſt keep ourſelves from all known ſin. 2dly, That we will make conſcience of performing all known duties, or in a word, that we will, *ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well*, Iſa. i. 16, 17.

Q. *What are theſe evils, that we ſhould* mainly *vow againſt, at the Lord's ſupper?*

A. 1. In general, we muſt vow againſt all ſin, as the traitor and murderer of the Lord of Glory. If ever the ſoul take up a prejudice and antipathy againſt ſin, it ſhould be at the Lord's table, where the evil of it is ſo clearly diſcovered; then it is eſpecially, that we, by ſolemn vow, ſhould caſt away all our tranſgreſſions, ſaying with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Hoſ. xiv. 8.

2dly, In particular, we ought to vow; 1. Againſt all groſs ſins. 2. Againſt all ſecret ſins. 3. Againſt all heart-ſins. 4. Againſt our darling-ſins, and theſe ſins that do moſt eaſily beſet us. 5. Againſt all temptations to ſin, and eſpecially, the ſnares of bad company, Pſalm xxvi. 5. Pſalm cxix. 115.

Q. *What are theſe religious duties that we ſhould vow, and bind ourſelves unto, at the Lord's ſupper?*

A. 1. In general, we ought in the ſtrength of the grace of Jeſus Chriſt, ſolemnly to vow and promiſe, that we will mind religion as the one thing needful, and make the pleaſing of God the chief buſineſs of our lives; that we will give God, not only the outward man, but the heart, in all duties; that we will ſet the Lord always before us, and ſtudy to live a life of communion with God, and ſtill preſs foreward to the full enjoyment of him above, Rom. xii. 11. Pſalm xvi. 8. Phil. iii. 13, 14.

2dly, In particular, we ſhould vow and bind ourſelves; 1. To the conſcientious performances of ſecret duties, which the eye of the world cannot obſerve. 2. To theſe duties, that contribute moſt to promote the life of religion, and bring us unto communion with God. 3. To theſe duties, that conſcience doth moſt accuſe of neglecting. 4. To theſe duties, by which we may be moſt capable to advance God's glory and the welfare of precious ſouls, and by which we may adorn our profeſſion, and make religion amiable in the eyes of ſtrangers: And eſpecially, that we will make conſcience of family-religion and ſtudy to recommend piety to our near relations; Gen. xviii. 19. Joſhua xxiv. 15. Pſalm ci. 2.

Q. *Is it a ſeaſon for communicants to be making requeſts, when they are at the Lord's table?*

A. Yes; for then we come to Chriſt in a good day, when there is plenty about his hand, when he hath on his dealing garments, and both his heart and hand are open to us. On this royal feaſt-day, he ſets himſelf upon a throne of grace, with a ſceptre of mercy in his hand, and waits for our addreſſes, and ſays as the king to Eſther at the feaſt, *What is thy petition?*

Q. *What are theſe particular ſuits, we ſhould be putting up at the communion table?*

A. Our requeſts at that time, ſhould be ſuitable to the particular circumſtances and neceſſities of our ſouls, which are beſt known to ourſelves. Only in genenral, it is very proper at that time to be putting up requeſts, for ſtrength to keep our eagagements, and pay our vows; for the Spirit's influences to quicken us to livelineſs of frame in this, and all duties; and to preſerve livelineſs in us; and likewiſe, for holy wiſdom and ſkill, to improve Chriſt for righteouſneſs and ſanctification: for heart-holineſs and grace, to ſubdue indwelling ſin: for ſtrength to grapple with temptations, and bear up under trials; for converting grace to our near relations; for the advancement of Chriſt's kingdom and intereſt through the world, and eſpecially the land of our nativity, and the congregation we belong to; for perſecuted proteſtants, that are deprived of ſuch goſpel-feaſts, *&c.*

Concerning the DUTIES requiſite after partaking.

Queſt. WHAT *duties are required of us, after partaking of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. 1. To preſerve and keep up a ſuitable frame of Spirit, when we riſe up and come away from the Lord's table.

2dly, To examine ourſelves, when we go to our retiring places.

3dly, To order our converſation aright afterwards.

Q. *What is that ſuitable frame and diſpoſition of Spirit, which communicants ought to have, when they riſe and come from the Lord's table?*

A. We ought to come away from this ordinance, 1. In an admiring frame. 2. In a thankful frame. 3. In a rejoicing frame. 4. In a humble frame. 5. In a watchful frame. 6. In a praying frame. 7. In a charitable frame. 8. In a willing and obedient frame. 9. In a fixed and reſolute frame. 10. In a longing and heavenly frame.

Q. *What is it, that ſhould be matter of admiration to us, when we come from the Lord's table?*

A. We ſhould wonder at the goodneſs and condeſcenſion of God to us that he ſhould have had ſuch thoughts of love to us; provided ſuch a ſurety and ſacrifice for us, as his own beloved Son; entertained us at his table; taken us into covenant and communion with himſelf, and given us earneſts of the everlaſting inheritance: And that he who is higher than the heavens ſhould have done all this for creatures who are by nature, mean as worms, nay polluted and loathſome in the ſight of God, Pſalm viii. 4. Pſalm cxiii. 5. 6. 2 Chron. vi. 18. 2 Sam. vii. 18.

Q. *What is it, that we ſhould be thankful for, when we come from the Lord's table?*

A. We ſhould be thankful to God, for his love in giving Chriſt; for Chriſt's love in giving himſelf; and for the love of the holy Spirit in revealing Chriſt to us, and in us. Alſo we ſhould bleſs God for all the bleſſed fruits of this love, particularly for the well-ordered covenant of grace, and the ſeals of it; for pardon of ſin, and all the rich benefits ſealed to us at a communion-table; that we live in a Goſhen on earth, and have the proſpect of a Canaan above, Luke ii. 1. Eph. i. 3. 2 Cor. ix. 12, 15. Rev. i. 5. Deut. viii. 10.

Q. *What is it, that we ſhould rejoice in when we go from the Lord's table?*

A. 1. In the perſons of the glorious Trinity; in God the Father, as our covenanted God and portion; in God the Son, as our Saviour and Redeemer; and in God the Holy Ghoſt, as our comforter and ſanctifier, Pſalm xlii. 4 Rom. v. 11.

2dly, In the attributes and perfections of God; particularly in his goodneſs, mercy, wiſdom, almightineſs, immutability and faithfulneſs, as being all in confederacy with us, and engaged to promot our well being and happineſs, Pſalm civ. 24. Pſalm lxxiii. 25, 36. Pſalm xlviii. 14. Heb. iii. 17, 18.

3dly, We ought to rejoice in our Redeemer's love, his wonderful undertaking, and in the glorious victories and purchaſe he hath obtained for us, Phil. iii. 3. Luke i. 46, 47, 49, 50, 51.

4thly, We ſhould rejoice in the ways of God, having our hearts lifted up in them, and enlarged both to run and ſing in the ways of the Lord, and to go about every commanded duty with pleaſure, Acts viii. 39. 2 Chron. xvii. 6. Pſalm cxix. 32. Pſalm cxxxviii.

Q. *Wherefore ſhould we come from the Lord's table in a humble frame?*

A. Becauſe we have manifold grounds for our humiliation before God at that time, when we conſider;

1. Our vileneſs by ſin, and our deſervings on that account; we have more reaſon to cry out than Mephiboſheth had, when David promoted him to eat bread at his table, *What is thy ſervant, that thou ſhould look upon ſuch a dead dog as I am?* 2 Sam. ix. 8.

2dly When we conſider the defectiveneſs of our preparation for this ſolemn ordinance; alas, our ſouls were *not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctuary!*

3dly, When we conſider our great ſhort comings in the near approach we were making to a holy God; namely, that our hearts were not more deeply affected with the great ſights preſented to our view, and the glorious things put in our offer at the Lord's table; that our dull affections were not more raiſed, our wavering minds more fixed, and our cold hearts more warmed, when we were about ſuch ſpiritual and heavenly work, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

Laſtly, We have cauſe to be humbled, when we conſider, that we are ſtill expoſed to many dangers, and environed with ſtrong enemies, who are never more buſy and active, than after we have been at the Lord's table, or admitted to nearneſs with God; and eſpecially when we conſider our own weakneſs and inſufficiency to grapple with them, Luke xxii. 31. 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

Q. *Wherefore ought we to come from this holy ordinance, in a watchful frame?*

A. Becauſe of the many evils, ſnares and enemies, that we are then in hazard of; and therefore we muſt ſtand upon our guard and watch, particularly againſt theſe;

1. The malicious deſigns and devices of Satan, who is going about ſeeking to rob us of any benefit we have got by this ordinance, Luke xxii. 31. Mat. xxvi. 41. 2 John 8.

2dly, We ought eſpecially to watch againſt the workings of ſpiritual pride, after this ordinance; for our wicked and deceitful hearts are moſt ready to be lifted up with the great favours and honour here conferred upon us, Luke xxxiii. 25.

3dly, We ſhould guard againſt reſting upon the ſacrament, as if all our work were now done, and our warfare accompliſhed; no we are ſtill in a military ſtate, and may expect new aſſaults from our ſpiritual enemies; we have ſtill the *good fight of faith to fight*, and the *work of ſalvation to work out*, which muſt be done with a conſtant holy *fear and trembling*, Cant. iii. 7, 8. Phil. ii. 12.

4thly, We muſt watch againſt the levity and wanderings of our hearts, that are prone ſoon to divert from the work we have been about; and ſtudy to keep them cloſe in meditation upon a crucified Chriſt, and the great ſights which we ſaw at a communion-table.

5thly, We ſhould watch againſt vain and frothy diſcourſe, and the ſnares of company after this ordinance; for hereby many have ſoon loſt that ſweet reliſh of the things of God, which they have had upon their Spirits; wherefore it is much ſafer for communicants to retire for ſecret meditations, prayer, and praiſe after this ſolemn work, than to be in the beſt of company.

6thly, We ſhould watch againſt the inroads of worldly cares and incumbrances, that they be not allowed ſuddenly to ruſh in upon us, to rob us of the ſpiritual frame and comforts we have been privileged with in this ordinance. We ought not haſtily to return to our worldly buſineſs after a ſacrament, but by degrees: and that with great tenderneſs, care and circumſpection; reſolving that Chriſt ſhall have the throne of the heart, and the world, be kept at the footſtool.

7thly, We ſhould carefully guard againſt all temptations to paſſion and raſh anger, and ſtudy to be meek and quiet under provocations; for if we give way to the diſorders and tumultuous paſſions of our hearts, the holy Spirit will be grieved, and provoked to withdraw from us.

8thly, We ſhould watch againſt ſloth and formality in duty, and be endeavouring always to ſtir up ourſelves to livelineſs and ſpirituality in all our performances.

9thly, We muſt watch againſt relying on our own ſtrength in performing duty, and ſtudy to keep ourſelves conſtantly depending on Chriſt as our head of influences, and looking to him for our quickning and ſtrength.

Q. *Why ſhould we come from this ordinance in a praying frame? Do we need any thing more than God hath freely given us?*

A. Tho' all things needful be freely promiſed and ſealed to us in the ſacrament, yet we muſt continue to pray for accompliſhment of theſe promiſes, Pſalm cxix. 39.

2dly, We muſt pray for the continuance of the Spirit's influences and grace to preſerve in us that tenderneſs of heart, warmneſs of affection, and livelineſs of frame which have been wrought in us by means of this ordinance, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. Pſalm lxviii. 28.

3dly, We muſt pray for ſtrength to keep the promiſes, and pay the vows which we have made to the Lord at this occaſion; and that God may ſave us from apoſtacy and backſliding, which our hearts are naturally bent unto, Pſalm xvii. 5.

Q. *Wherein lies that charitable diſpoſition which we ought to have, when we come away from the Lord's table?*

A. 1. In bearing a good will to the ſouls of all men, and heartily wiſhing their welfare, 1 Theſſ. v. 12. 15.

2dly, In having a true love to all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body, and bearing with them, though in ſeveral things they differ from us.

3dly, In readineſs to relieve the poor and indigent, according to our ability, Gal. vi. 10.

4thly, In a diſpoſition to forgive thoſe that have been injurious to us. And ſurely all who have been ſharers of God's mercy and grace in the ſacrament, will come away from it, with ſuch a charitable diſpoſition.

Q. *What is that willing and obedient frame, which communicants ought to have, when they come from the Lord's table?*

A. It lies in theſe things; 1. A grateful ſenſe of the many ties and obligations we are under to ſerve him.

2dly, In making it our great ſcope and deſign to approve ourſelves to God in all things.

3dly, In making it our ſtudy to know God's mind and will, and what it is that is moſt acceptable and pleaſing to him.

4thly, In having an univerſal reſpect of all God's commands, and a readineſs of mind to every good work.

5thly, In being active and zealous for the glory of God and the intereſt of his kingdom among men.

Q. *What is that fixed and reſolute frame which they ought to have?*

A. It is the ſoul's deliberate and ſtedfaſt reſolution to adhere to Chriſt, his ways, and intereſt, in the midſt of all trials and difficulties. We muſt now be at a point in this matter, fully determined, by the grace of God, to look and go foreward in our Chriſtian courſe, and that no ſollicitation or temptation ſhall move us, either to look back, or draw back; but that with *purpoſe of heart we will cleave unto the Lord*, Pſalm cxix. 30. 31. 115. Acts ix. 23.

Q. *What is that longing and heavenly frame, which we ought to have when we come from the Lord's table?*

A. It conſiſts in theſe things; 1. In a firm belief of Chriſt's ſecond coming, and of the life everaſting.

2dly, In a lively meditation upon Chriſt's coming, and the future glory.

3dly, In an earneſt looking for that bleſſed hope, and a joyful expectation of the glory to be revealed, Tit. ii. 13. Rom. v. 2.

4thly, In a conſtant watching and preparing for the coming of the Bridegroom, Luke xii. 36. 37.

Q. *Are not our hearts prone to loſe their tenderneſs and ſpirituality after the ſacrament? How then ſhall we retain our livelineſs, and keep up in ſome meaſure our communion frame, even when the communion is over?*

A. 1. We muſt have deep impreſſions of the treachery and falſeneſs of our hearts, and of their woful natural byaſs to depart from God, and turn carnal, Hoſ. xi. 7.

2dly, We muſt be humbled under a ſenſe of our own weakneſs and inſufficiency to preſerve our ſpiritual life, or ſo much as to think a good thought of ourſelves; for God gives grace to ſuch humble ſouls, 1 Pet. v. 5.

3dly, We ſhould be keeping up a conſtant thankful ſenſe of God's kindneſs to us at the ſacrament, and be frequently praiſing him for it; and this is an excellent way to engage the continuance of his mercies, Pſalm lxviii. 5. 6.

4thly, We ſhould be frequently thinking on theſe affecting ſights which we ſaw at the Lord's table, and ſtudy to keep up the impreſſions thereof on our minds. I made mention of theſe ſights before.

5thly, Let us ſtudy and learn the art of deriving life and influences from Jeſus Chriſt, by acting a conſtant and believing dependance on him, as our fountain of life, and head of influences, John x. 10.

6thly, Let us watch over our hearts and frames with much holy ſuſpicion and jealouſy, leſt ſatan, the world, or our luſts ſhould rob us of the ſpiritual treaſure we have got. And eſpecially, let us watch againſt the firſt declinings of the heart, and beginnings of deadneſs, and preſently cry to the Lord for help and quickning.

7thly, Let us be much in ſecret prayer, pleading with God for the conſtant ſupplies of his Spirit, which is the fire that can only maintain warmneſs and livelineſs of frame in our ſouls, againſt all the cold blaſts of the devil, and the world,

8thly, Let us delight in the company and converſe of lively Chriſtians; for one live coal makes another to burn, Heb. x. 24.

9thly, Let us delight in attending ſacrament occaſions, and be ſtill longing for the returns of this quickning ordinance, and for the Lord's ſpecial preſence therein.

Laſtly, Let us always guard againſt theſe things that that tend to deaden our hearts, or that may occaſion the loſing of our frames. And theſe I mentioned before, when treating on the cauſes of ſpiritual deadneſs.

Concerning SELF-EXAMINATION after the Sacrament.

Queſt. WHAT *is the neceſſity of ſelf examination after the ſacrament?*

A. 1. Becauſe our Lord put his diſciples to the trial, concerning their faith, after they had been at his table, John xvi. 31.

2dly, This is a neceſſary mean to bring us to humiliation and repentance, for the defects and ſhort-comings that have attended our communicating.

3dly, It is needful to keep people from deceiving themſelves, by thinking that they have true grace, and are in a happy ſtate while in the mean time they are poor, wretched and miſerable.

4thly, Without it we cannot be thankful to God for the benefits we received in this ordinance; ſeeing it is by after-reflection, that we come to be ſenſible of the Lord's gracious dealings with us.

5thly, The neglect of ſelf examination after the ſacrament, is the occaſion of many doubts, and perplexities, that the Lord's people fall into after this ſolemn ordinance. Did we carefully remark the workings of our faith and love at the Lord's table, and the tokens of Chriſt's love we receive there, we might be enabled to reſolve many doubts, and repel many temptations, that otherwiſe will be too hard for us.

Q. *What are theſe things, which we ought to examine ourſelves about, after we come from the ſacrament?*

A. Concerning two things; 1. How we have dealt with God in this ordinance. 2 How God hath dealt with us. We ought narrowly to examine if we have dealt ſincerely and honeſtly with God in this ſolemn work; and if God hath dealt graciouſly and bountifully with us.

Q. *By what marks may we know, if we have dealt ſincerely and honeſtly with God, in this ſolemn ordinance?*

A. By theſe; 1. If we were meditating upon a crucified Chriſt at his table, with faith love, mourning and thankfulneſs, ſincerely aiming and deſigning to keep up the remembrance of his matchleſs love, to ſhew forth his death till he come again; and were looking only to Chriſt for acceptance in the duty.

2dly, If it was our aim, when receiving the elements believingly to accept of a bleeding Jeſus, as our High-prieſt, Saviour and Lord, and to apply his blood for anſwering all the exigencies end neceſſities of our ſouls.

3dly, If we ſincerely aimed to tranſact and ſeal a covenant with God through Chriſt, at his table, according as perſonal covenanting was explained before.

Q. *How may we know if we were ſincere in our tranſacting and covenanting with God?*

A. By theſe two things: 1. By reviewing the frame that our hearts were in, while we were a doing it.

2dly, By conſidering the diſpoſition of our ſouls ſince that time.

Q. *How ſhall we know if we had the right and gracious frame of heart, while we were tranſacting with God, which ſincere covenanters have?*

A. We may know it by theſe marks; 1. If we were low and vile in our own eyes, and deeply ſenſible of our unworthineſs to be received into covenant with God, Ezek. xvi. 62 63.

2dly, If we were weary of the burden of ſin, and groaning to be delivered from it, Pſalm xxxviii. 3. Mat. xi. 28.

3dly, If we were longing and panting for Chriſt, as the only ſuitable help and remedy provided for us by God, without whom we could have no acceſs to God, no peace, no pardon, no grace, no glory.

4thly, If we found our hearts going out to God in Chriſt, as our God and portion, making choice of him, as our happineſs, chief good and end; and accepting of Jeſus Chriſt as the only way to God.

5thly, If we were reſigning, and giving up ourſelves in all we are, and in all we have, unto God, to be governed, diſpoſed of, and employed according to his pleaſure, 2 Cor. viii. 5.

6thly, If we ſincerely renounced our own righteouſneſs, in the point of juſtification; and our own ſtrength in ſanctification, and the performance of duties; ſaying, *In the Lord* Chriſt only, *we have righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xlv. 24.

7thly, If we be ſincerely renouncing and parting with every ſin, and ſaying with Ephraim, *What have we to do any more with idols?* Hoſ. xiv. 8.

Q. *How ſhall we know, if the preſent diſpoſition of our ſouls be ſuch, as ſincere covenanters uſe to have, after their coming from the Lord's table?*

A. Let us try by theſe marks; 1. If we can ſay, our ſouls have high and exalting thoughts of God whom we have choſen; and admiring thoughts of Chriſt the Mediator, as altogether lovely, Iſa. xxv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

2dly, If we be well pleaſed with the contrivance and deſign of the covenant, *i. e.* to have our ſins pardoned, and our ſouls juſtified and ſaved wholly by the righteouſneſs of our Redeemer, that free grace alone may eternally have the praiſe, Rev. i. 5. Pſalm cxv. 1.

3dly, If our hearts be melted for ſin, at the remembrance of the wounds of Chriſt, which were repreſented to us at his table as pierced and opened by our ſins; and be fully reſolved through his grace, that we will pierce him no more.

4thly, If indwelling ſin and heart-plagues be a greater burden to us than all the croſſes and troubles that we can meet with in this world, and that we are more deſirous to be rid of ſin, than of any affliction whatſoever.

5thly, If we are reſolved through divine ſtrength to be a people zealous of good works, and to obey every commanded duty, John xv. 14. Tit. ii. 14.

6thly, If we are ſenſible of our own inſufficiency and weakneſs to keep covenant with God, and therefore are brought to renounce all confidence in ourſelves, and to ſay, *In the Lord* only, *we have righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. x v. 24.

7thly, If we can ſay, the world and its beſt things are, in our eyes, as dung, and nothing, in compariſon of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs: And that we are more concerned to have an intereſt ſecured in him, to have heart-holineſs, and the image of Chriſt drawn in us; and that we deſire further degrees of grace, of faith, of love, and brokenneſs of heart for ſin; more than any honours, profits, and pleaſures this world can afford: Then ſurely theſe are good ſigns that our hearts have been ſincere in covenanting with God.

Q. *Is not their caſe ſad, who, upon examination, may find that their hearts are not right with God, and that they have dealt falſly and hypocriticaly in this matter, and ſo have communicated unworthily?*

A. Yes; it is very ſad. For, 1. They have been guilty of diſſembling with the great God, in pretending to join themſelves in covenant with God, while they continue in league with the devil and ſin.

2dly, They have ſadly been deceiving themſelves in pretending to come and receive the pardon of their ſins, while they never repented of them, nor deſigned to part with them; and ſo are in hazard of going to the grave with a lie in their right hand.

3dly, They have been crucifying Chriſt afreſh, and putting him to open ſhame, and the blood of Chriſt is crying for vengeance againſt them.

4thly, they have been eating and drinking damnation to themſelves, *not diſcerning the Lord's body;* nor receiving him by faith.

Q. *Is there any help for theſe that are in this ſad caſe; and what is it they ſhould do?*

A. 1. They ought to ſet their ſouls a trembling before God, for their condition is very ſad and highly dangerous.

2dly, They ſhould ſet their ſouls a wondering, that the Lord did not lay his hand upon them, and ſmite them dead with the bread in their mouth, or cup in their hand; or that he did not ſend them to hell, from the communion table.

3dly They ought to bleſs God that their caſe is not hopeleſs, remedileſs like that of the damned; and that yet they are in the land of prayer and repentance, and have an offer of mercy and pardon through the blood of Chriſt.

4thly, They ſhould preſently go and weep and mourn over a ſlain Chriſt, whom they have pierced and crucified by their ſins, and particularly by their unworthy communicating. The advice which Peter gave to Simon Magus (whom he declared to be in the *gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity*, after he had received the ſacrament of baptiſm) is very proper for them: *Thy heart is not right in the ſight of God; repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs; and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee*, Acts viii. 21, 22.

5thly, They ought preſently to flee by faith to the blood of Chriſt, which they have ſhed; and apply it for pardon and cleanſing; ſeeing nothing can waſh them from this guilt, but that very blood which they have ſpilt; and bleſſed be God for this efficacious remedy that can cure the deepeſt wound, and moſt deſperate diſeaſe; *for the blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin*, 1 John i. 7.

Q. *Ought we not alſo to examine and try how God hath dealt with us in this ordinance?*

A. Yes; we are not only to examine and try how we have dealt with God in this ſolemn ordinance; but alſo how the Lord hath been pleaſed to deal with us, that if we be ſenſible of his bountiful dealing toward us, we may be thankful for it; and if we be not ſenſible of it, that we may enquire into the cauſe, and be humbled before God.

Q. *May not ſome miſtake God's dealings with them in this ordinance, and make wrong concluſions thereanent?*

A. Yes; there is no doubt, but many miſtake and deceive themſelves in this matter; ſome concluding they have got real benefit by this ordinance, when they have got none; others, that they have got no good by it, when really they have; like thoſe mentioned, Prov. xiii. 7.

Q. *Who are theſe that deceive themſelves, thinking they have got benefit by the Lord's ſupper, when they have really got none?*

A. 1. Theſe who miſtake the common flaſhes of affections, which they may have on this occaſion, for ſpiritual livelineſs of ſoul, and the gracious influences of the Spirit.

2dly, Theſe who miſtake their ſeeming joy and delight, which they may feel at this time; for joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

3dly, Theſe who take their deluſive and falſe peace, which they may have in their minds on this occaſion, for a true peace of conſcience.

4thy, Thoſe who apprehend their temporary faith, counterfeit love, and their pangs of grief, tears and reſolutions, which they may attain to, at ſuch a time, to be true grace, and certain evidences of a gracious work of the Spirit; when yet they are no more than what hypocrites may arrive to, without the aid of ſpecial grace.

Q. *How ſhall we diſtinguiſh the gracious livelineſs of believers, from the common flaſhes which hypocrites may have, at ſacraments?*

A. By theſe characters; 1. True livelineſs of ſoul ariſes from a gracious and renewed heart, is influenced by the Spirit of God: But theſe common flaſhes may be, where there is no gracious change in the heart at all, being occaſioned only by outward things ſuch as the external revelation of the great things done by Chriſt for loſt ſinners, the patheticneſs or fervency of a miniſter, the lively repreſentation of Chriſt's ſufferings, the example of others, or the like.

2dly, Gracious livelineſs humbles the ſoul, and inclines it to give all the glory to God: But common flaſhes do cheriſh pride, puff up the man to conceit of himſelf, and to reſt upon his attainments.

3dly, Gracious influences of the Spirit leave ſome ſolid and laſting impreſſions upon the ſoul, and make a man tender and conſcientious in his after-walk: But common flaſhes are ſoon gone, leave no abiding impreſſions, and produce no gracious effects in the heart or life, but the man that hath them, turns as carnal and careleſs, hardned and profane as formerly, Pſal. lxxviii. 34 37. 2 Pet. ii. 22.

Q. *How ſhall we diſtinguiſh betwixt the joy of believers, and that which hypocrites may have at communion occaſions?*

A. They differ in theſe things; 1. In reſpect of their antecedents; true joy follows after true ſorrow and heart-brokenneſs for ſin: This hypocrites know nothing of. but believers do, Pſalm cxxvi. 5. Mat. v. 4.

2dly, In reſpect of their foundation: true joy is founded upon the promiſes and the Mediator of the covenant, and ſprings from a gracious diſcovery of redeeming love, and our intereſt therein. But the hypocrite's joys are built on a falſe and ſlippery foundation, Mat. xiii. 20, 21. Phil. iii. 3. Rom. v. 11.

3dly, They differ, in reſpect of the matter of them; hypocrites joys are only terminated upon the external part of duties and ordinances; but the believer's joy is upon the account of God's preſence in them. The hypocrite rejoiceth not in Chriſt's ways and ordinances, as they are means for enjoying communion with him, but only as they ſatisfy conſcience, and get them the applauſe of men.

4thly, They differ in their fruits and effects. 1. True joy abaſeth, but the hypocrite's joy puffs up the heart. 2. True joy makes the believers heart burn in love to Chriſt, and to have a very high eſteem of him: but the hypocrite's joy hath no ſuch effect. 3. The ſpirit of ſanctification, and endeavours after holineſs, do always attend joy in the Holy Ghoſt: but notwithſtanding of the hypocrite's joys, the heart is ſtill carnal and the life unholy, Rom. xiv. 17. 4. Spiritual joy doth encourage and ſtrengthen the ſoul for duty, particularly, for attending ordinances, bearing afflictions, and reſiſting temptations, Neh. viii. 10. Iſa. xl. *ult.* But the hypocrites joy produceth no ſuch fruits.

Q. *How ſhall we diſtinguiſh betwixt a falſe and deluſive peace, which ſome may have after a ſacrament, from a true peace of conſcience?*

A. They differ mainly in two reſpects; 1. In reſpect of their antecedents and cauſes. 2. In reſpect of their conſequents and effects.

Q. *How do they differ, in reſpect of their antecedents and cauſes?*

A. 1. A falſe peace of conſcience, which hypocrites have, doth ordinarily flow from theſe ſprings; 1. From the flattery and deceitfulneſs of our own hearts, that are bent to ſpeak peace to us, when there is no peace from God. 2. From the deluſions and ſuggeſtions of Satan; ſometimes he keeps the houſe as a ſtrong man armed, and ſo all is at peace: At other times he is fain to make uſe of his cunning artifices for that end; he flatters the ſinner, blinds the mind, dazzles the eye with falſe appearances, and ſometimes ceaſeth from tempting, and ſo he goes out when he is not caſten out, Mat. xii. 43, 44. 3. This falſe peace proceeds from a man's miſtaking of his ſoul's ſtate and condition, thinking himſelf ſomething, when he is nothing; apprehending conviction to be converſion, legal ſorrow to be repentance unto life, common flaſhes and ſtirrings in the affections to be the ſpecial influences of the Spirit. 4. From too high an opinion of our duties and performances, as if theſe were ſufficient to ſatisfy God's juſtice, and recommend us to him. 5. From outward favourable providences and worldly proſperity, as if theſe things were a certain ſign of God's ſpecial love. But,

II. True peace of conſcience, which is wrought by the Spirit of God in the believer, doth ſpring from other cauſes and antecedents; ſuch as theſe,

Firſt, From a true faith in Jeſus Chriſt our peacemaker, Rom. xv. 13.

2dly, From a true love to God and his law, Pſalm cxix. 165.

3dly, From a tender and conſcientious walk, Gal. vi. 16.

4thly, From a view of our covenant relation to God, and gracious nearneſs to, and communion with him in duty, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 1 Sam. i. 18.

5thly, Solid peace of conſcience commonly follows upon an inward ſoul conflict, and deep humiliation and trouble for ſin, Pſalm cxlvii. 3. Iſa. lvii. 15. Iſa. lxi. 3.

6thly, It ordinarily follows upon fervent wreſtling with God by prayer, and upon the diligent uſe of all the other means and ordinances of God's appointment 1 Sam. i. 18. 2 Theſſ. iii. 16.

Q. *How doth a true and falſe peace of conſcience differ, in reſpect of their conſequents and effects?*

A. 1. A falſe peace hath ordinarily ſuch things attending or following upon it, as theſe;

1. It doth not incline the ſoul to be low in its own

eyes, and to exalt Chriſt and free grace; but rather to exalt ſelf, and lean upon duties and attainments.

2dly, It doth not determine the heart to hate ſin, and love duty, or influence a man to a holy walk and converſation; but rather to ſeperate what God hath joined together, *viz.* holineſs and peace, Deut. xxix. 19.

3dly, A falſe peace cannot ſupport a man when outward comforts are withdrawn; but leaves him comfortleſs in the time of affliction.

4thly, It makes a man unwilling to be ſearched and tried by the light of God's word, John iii. 20. But,

II. A true peace of conſcience hath ſuch conſequents and fruits, as theſe:

1. It makes the man to have an high eſteem of Jeſus Chriſt, who is our peace, and to count all things as loſs and dung beſide him.

2dly, It makes a man content with that lot and condition in the world, which the Lord thinks fit to carve out for him.

3dly, It compoſes and chears the heart in time of the greateſt dangers and difficulties, and when all worldly comforts do fail, Hab. iii. 17. John xvi. 33. Pſalm iv. 7, 8.

4thly, It makes a man active for God's glory, and the intereſt of religion, Pſalm li. 12, 13.

5thly, The man that hath it, doth not ſhun the light, but is willing to be tried by it, Pſalm cxxxix. 23.

6thly, He guards againſt the temptations of Satan, the riſing of corruption, the out breakings of ſin, and every thing that tends to diſturb his peace.

Q. *How may we know, that the faith, whereby we were receiving and apprehending Chriſt in the ſacrament, was a true and ſaving faith, and not a temporary faith which hypocrites may have?*

A. By taking a view of the different properties and effects of a temporary and ſaving faith.

I. As for a temporary faith, it hath theſe following;

1. It only gives a ſeeming conſent to Chriſt, like the ſtony-ground hearers, and almoſt perſwades them to be Chriſtians: But doth not prevail with them cordially to accept of Chriſt, both as a Saviour and Lord.

2dly, It doth not make them part wholly with their own righteouſneſs for Chriſt's righteouſneſs, but ſtill they continue upon their legal foundation, and reſt upon their own doings.

3dly, It never brings a man the length, to reſign himſelf, and his moſt valuable intereſts and concerns in the world, to Jeſus Chriſt, to be diſpoſed of by him, as he thinks fit: But ſtill ſome Agag or other muſt be reſerved.

4thly, It never brings a man to apprehend Chriſt, as matchleſs and altogether lovely, and to be willing to ſuffer the loſs of all things for him: But ſtill there is ſomething the hypocrite prefers unto Chriſt. But,

II. A true faith determines the ſoul to embrace Chriſt wholly in all his offices; it makes a man part intirely with his own righteouſneſs, and cry, *None but Chriſt*. It makes him give up himſelf wholly to Chriſt, to eſteem Chriſt as exceeding precious, to ſtudy to raiſe his honour, advance his intereſt, and oppoſe his enemies, and to do every thing that is well-pleaſing in his ſight.

Q. *How ſhall we know, if the love we were expreſſing to Chriſt at his table, be true and ſincere, and not counterfeit love, ſuch as hypocrites may have?*

A. 1. The hypocrite's love is ſelfiſh; he loves Chriſt, becauſe he apprehends that Chriſt loved him, laid down his life for him, and hath purchaſed great happineſs to him; but he doth not love him for his own intrinſick beauty and excellency. Again, the hypocrite's love is not ſuperlative, he loves him not above all things in the world, his love doth not prompt him to all that Chriſt commands, and to undertake theſe duties that are moſt difficult and ſpiritual: It doth not make him thirſt for nearneſs to him in ordinances, and long to ſee him, and dwell with him in glory. But,

2dly, True love to Chriſt, makes the believer do all theſe, it makes him deſirous of his preſence, zealous for his intereſts, concerned for his people, and afraid to diſpleaſe him. It makes the believer have common friends and common enemies with Chriſt; love what he loves, and hate what he hates; rejoice when he is glorified, and grieve when he is diſhonoured: It makes him deſire conformity to him, and love holineſs, becauſe it is his image; and alſo to long to be with him above, where he ſhall be like him, and ſee him as he is.

Q. *How ſhall we know, if theſe pangs of grief and tears, which ſome attain to in this ordinance, be hypocritical ſorrow, or repentance unto life?*

A. There is no doubt but hypocrites, and theſe whoſe hearts were never truly broken for ſin, may ſhed tears, and have ſome pangs of ſorrow at ſuch an occaſion; but then, it is certain, their ſorrow doth not proceed from an internal principle, or a ſpecial diſcovery of the evil and hateful nature of ſin; but only from external motives and conſiderations, ſuch as theſe, the conſideration of the ſolemnity of this ordinance, the great danger of unworthy partaking, the hearing of a pathetick ſermon, or a fervent repreſentation of Chriſt's ſufferings, the example of others weeping beſide them, a view of the ſad effects of ſin, as it expoſes the ſinner to infinite wrath, and ſhuts out from eternal happineſs, Theſe things, I ſay may occaſion ſome pangs of ſorrow and tears in natural men, at a ſacrament, and eſpecially in theſe who are endued with ſomething of a natural compaſſion and ſympathy, which diſpoſes them to relent and weep at the hearing of any tragical ſtory, or beholding any pitiful ſpectacle. All this may be without any ſpecial operation of the Spirit of God, or real change on the heart; the hearts of natural men are like the ſtones, which are wet by the rain, but not ſoftened. But,

2dly, That repentance which is true and ſaving makes the ſoul to mourn for ſin, upon the account of its intrinſick evil, becauſe it highly diſhonours God, abuſes the goodneſs of a Father, wounds a loving Redeemer, grieves the Spirit of grace, defiles the precious ſoul, defaces the image of God, and debars from communion with him. It makes the ſoul to mourn for heart-ſins, as well as outward ſins, and long earneſtly for more heart-purity, and a total deliverance from ſin.

Q. *How ſhall we diſtinguiſh theſe purpoſes and reſolutions which hypocrites may put on at a ſacrament to walk religiouſly and circumſpectly; from the ſincere reſolution of true believers?*

A. 1. Hypocrites purpoſes and reſolutions are not cordial and deliberate, but haſtily taken on without conſideration; they are not made in faith, and with ſelf-denial and dependence on Chriſt; but taken on in their own ſtrength. Their reſolutions are not ſincere and univerſal, againſt all known ſin, and for all known duty; but only againſt ſome particular ſins, and for ſome particular duties. They proceed not from a principle of heart-love to God and holineſs; but only from legal terrors and apprehenſions of wrath.

Laſtly, They are not continuing, for they are only taken on in a fit, and ſoon evaniſh. But,

2dly, Believers reſolutions are cordial and deliberate, humble and ſelf-denied, ſincere and univerſal, and make abiding impreſſions on the ſoul. They proceed from heart-love to God, a deep conviction of the evil and danger of ſin, and a gracious diſcovery of the beauty and excellency of holineſs. They are made in an humble ſenſe of their own weakneſs, wholly diſtruſting their own power, and relying intirely upon the grace and ſtrength of Chriſt their ſurety, according as it is promiſed to them in the covenant of grace, Pſal. lxxi. 16.

Q. *Are there not ſome ſincere ſouls, who miſtake the Lord's dealing with them, and think they have got no benefit by the ſacrament, when really they have?*

A. Yes; for there is a difference betwixt real communion with Chriſt, and ſenſible communion with him; the two diſciples going to Emmaus had the firſt but wanted the latter; they converſed with Chriſt in the way, but knew him not. So God's people may ſometimes get ſpecial tokens of his bounty at the ſacrament, when they are not ſenſible of it; and many have ground to ſay, as Jacob did of Bethel, *ſurely God was in this place, aud I knew it not*, Gen. xxviii. 16.

Q. *What may be the reaſons of their miſtake?*

A. 1. Some may think they have got no good at the ſacrament, becauſe they have not got that which they particularly expected and looked for, tho' perhaps God hath given them ſomething in lieu of it, that is as neceſſary and fit for them.

2dly, Some may reckon they have got no good, becauſe they have not got ſo much as others; or perhaps as they themſelves have felt at former occaſions: They too much overlook and undervalue the crumb God hath given them, becauſe of its ſmallneſs; tho' ſurely the leaſt token of his favour ſhould be highly prized, and thankfully received, as being far greater than they deſerve.

3dly, Some may think they have got no good, becauſe they did not ſenſibly perceive it when they were at the Lord's table, or immediately thereafter: but we muſt know, that a ſovereign and wiſe God will not be limited but take his own time and way, to make his people ſenſible of theſe things that are freely given them at his table.

Q. *What is the reaſon that ſo many of the Lord's people complain, they get little or no benefit by this ſolemn ordinance, that they come expecting to meet with Chriſt at his table, but alas, they return diſappointed?*

A. 1. Sometimes the Lord may hide himſelf from his people, for his own holy and wiſe ends; that he may try them, how they will behave in his abſence; that he may humble them under a ſenſe of their own weakneſs; and that he may excite them to greater earneſtneſs and fervency in ſeeking after him. But,

2dly, The ordinary cauſe of God's dealing ſo with any, is for ſomething in themſelves: Either, 1. They have not been at due pains in preparing themſelves, before they came to this ordinance. Or, 2. They have truſted too much to the preparation, and pains they were at, expecting that this would make them acceptable to God, and merit ſomething at his hand. Or, 3. Their appetites were not ſharpned enough for this feaſt, they had not ſuch a ſenſe of wants and plagues, as was needful. 4. It may be, they reſted more upon the ordinance itſelf, or the miniſters that diſpenſed it, than upon the Author and inſtitutor of it. 5. Perhaps there was ſome leaven in the houſe, or Achan in the camp, I mean, ſome ſecret luſt or idol, which was unhumbled for, or uncaſt out of the heart, for which God may be chaſtiſing them. 6. It may be, they have not readily hearkned to Chriſt's knocks, nor opened the door preſently when he came to it, for which Chriſt is ſometimes provoked to depart, as Cant. v. 2. 3. 6.

Q. *What courſe ought theſe to take, who complain they find no benefit in this ordinance?*

A. 1. They ought always to juſtify Chriſt in his dealings, and never blame him, who is eternally a gracious and bountiful Saviour, and delights in mercy.

2dly, They ſhould only blame themſelves for it, and diligently ſearch for the cauſe of their diſappointment in themſelves, and cry with Job, *ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me, make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my ſin?*

3dly, When the ſin is found out, they ſhould humble themſelves for it, mourn over it before the Lord, and flee to the blood of Chriſt for pardon.

4thly, They ſhould long for another communion occaſion, prepare for it more diligently and ſelf deniedly, watch more carefully over their hearts, and ſeek Chriſt more earneſtly than before; reſolving ſtill to look to him, wait for him, and ly at his feet; pleading his power, mercy and faithfulneſs, to the very laſt.

Q. *How may we know if the Lord hath dealt bountifully with us in this ordinance?*

A. The Lord deals bountifully with his people in this ordinance, when he viſits them with his gracious preſence, draws nigh to them by his Spirit's operations, and vouchſafes to hold communion with them.

A. *Are not God's people always near God, and he to them; and doth not his Spirit ſtill dwell in them?* Pſalm xxxiv. 18. and cxlviii. 13. John xiv. 16. 17. *How then doth God draw nigh to them with his gracious preſence and Spirit in the ſacrament?*

A. 1. We muſt diſtinguiſh betwixt a ſtate of nearneſs and acts of nearneſs. Believers, by converſion and faith in Chriſt, are brought into a ſtate of nearneſs to God, in ſo far as they are brought into favour, and friendſhip with God, get the image of God drawn upon their ſouls, and the Spirit of God to dwell in their hearts. But it is in worſhip, that believers attain to acts of nearneſs and communion with God.

2dly, There are ſome ſpecial acts of nearneſs to God in worſhip, that believers only attain to at ſome times: For God is nearer to them in ſome duties than others; as he allows them more of the evidences of his favour, and of the influences of his Spirit, at one time than another.

3dly, Tho' God be always near to his people, in reſpect of his Spirit's inhabitation; yet, not always in reſpect of his ſenſible operation. Tho' Chriſt doth ſtill dwell in the heart, by his Spirit, yet he doth not always act alike in the ſoul, but only according to his good pleaſure.

4thly, God is always near his people, by theſe operations and influences of his Spirit, which are neceſſary, for preſerving the being of grace in them; but not always near by theſe influences, which actuate and enliven grace, and give them ſuitable conſolations.

Q. *How is it that God draws nigh to his people by his gracious preſence, and holds communion with them by the ſpecial operations of his Spirit?*

A. He draws nigh and communicates himſelf to his people, by his ſpiritual influences; 1. Of light. 2. Of life. 3. Of ſtrength. 4. Of comfort.

Q. *How is it that he draws nigh to his people with his influences of light, in this ordinance?*

A. By giving them gracious and ſatisfying diſcoveries of God, and Chriſt, and ſpiritual objects: As,

I. When he gives them ſuch a view of God's glory in his attributes and perfections, as makes deep impreſſions on their hearts; as, 1. When he lets them ſee the greatneſs and majeſty of God, ſo as to fill them with holy fear and reverence of God, and humble them under a ſenſe of their own nothingneſs before him. 2. When he ſhews them the infinite holineſs and purity of God, ſo as to humble them under a ſenſe of their own vileneſs and ſinfulneſs in his ſight, and make them cry with Iſaiah, *Wo is me, I am undone, I am unclean,* &c. Iſa. vi. 5. 3. When he makes his goodneſs and mercy paſs before them, proclaiming his name in their hearing, *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs,* &c. Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7. So, as to ſet them a wondering at God's free grace and goodneſs in pitying wreched rebel-ſinners, and finding out a way for their recovery.

II. When he diſcovers to us the glorious divine attributes ſhining forth in a crucified Saviour: As, 1. When he lets us ſee the infinite juſtice and mercy of God illuſtriouſly diſplayed, yea, meeting together, and ſweetly reconciled in the death and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt.

2dly, When he lets us ſee the divine power and ſtrength treaſured up in a crucified Jeſus; and that he is able to draw our dead ſouls out of the grave, though our ſins were as mountains of lead to hold them down. That he is able to kill our luſts, though every one of them were like Goliah for ſtrength. That he is able to cleanſe our ſouls, though every one of our ſins were red as crimſon. That he is able to bear us up, bring us through, and keep us by his power through faith unto ſalvation, though of ourſelves we be weak and unſtable as water.

3dly, When he lets us ſee the infinite goodneſs and mercy of God laid up in a crucified Chriſt, that he is not only able, but moſt willing, compaſſionate, and ready to ſave and pity helpleſs ſinners; ſo as our hearts are melted by the diſcovery, and made to ſay, we'll never again have uncharitable thoughts of Chriſt, we'll never ſay, he is cruel or hard hearted to a periſhing ſinner; for we ſee he is all made up of bowels and tender mercies.

4thly, When he lets us ſee all the divine fulneſs dwelling in a crucified Redeemer. 1. That there is a fulneſs of grace in our Mediator, anſwerable to all our ſouls wants and miſeries; a fulneſs of light for our darkneſs; a fulneſs of life for our deadneſs; a fulneſs of ſtrength for our weakneſs: and a fulneſs of merit for our guiltineſs. 2. That there is in him a fulneſs and ſuitableneſs of offices; being conſtitute of God to be a prophet, to cure our ignorance; a prieſt, to atone for our guilt; and a king to reſcue us from the bondage of our enemies. 3. That there is in him a fulneſs and ſuitableneſs of relations; that he ſtands in the relation of a phyſician, to cure our diſeaſes; of an advocate to plead for our acceptance with God; of a ſurety, to clear our old compts and arrears; of a ſhepherd, to ſeek the loſt ſtraying ſheep; of a brother and friend, to agent our cauſe with God, when we are incapable to act for ourſelves.

III. When he lets the ſoul ſee that Jeſus Chriſt is not only a great and glorious Redeemer in himſelf, but that he is our Saviour; when he clears up to us the evidences of our intereſt in him; ſo that we are in caſe to ſay with Job, *I know my Redeemer liveth;* and with Paul, *I know in whom I have believed.*

IV. When he lets us ſee the intrinſick evil and vileneſs that is in ſin, and gives us ſuch a diſcovery of it, in the glaſs of Chriſt's ſufferings, as makes us to ſee its monſtrous deformity, and God-provoking nature; and alſo to loath ourſelves, becauſe of our abominations.

V. When he lets us ſee ſuch a beauty in holineſs as it is the image of God, and that which makes us to reſemble him, as cauſeth our ſouls to thirſt for further degrees of it.

VI. When he gives us a heart engaging view of the fulneſs, ſuitableneſs, freeneſs, ſureneſs, order, and excellency of the new-covenant and its promiſes; that it is Chriſt's bleſſed teſtament and latter-will to his people, containing and bequeathing many rich and precious legacies to them; all which are ratified and ſealed to them in the Lord's ſupper.

VII. When he gives us a convincing view of the emptineſs of the world, and the inſufficiency of all creatures to help a ſinner, or ſatisfy the deſires of an immortal ſoul; ſo that we are fain to betake ourſelves to Chriſt as our all ſufficient help, and cry, *None but Chriſt.*

VIII. When he gives a ſoul-raviſhing diſcovery of the things that are unſeen in the other world, the glory of heaven, and the inexpreſſible happineſs of the ſaints that dwell there; ſo as to make us long for the finiſhing of our pilgrimage, that we may depart and be with Chriſt.

Theſe, and ſuch like diſcoveries, doth the Lord, often times make by his Spirit to his people, in this ordinance; by opening their underſtandings to ſee divine things another way, than ever they ſaw before.

Q. *How is it that the Lord draws nigh and communicates himſelf to his people in the ſacrament, by the influences of life?*

A. By ſending his quickening Spirit to put life in their graces, and do draw them forth to a lively exerciſe; particularly, 1. When he actuates their faith and enables them to go out to Chriſt, lay the burden of their ſins upon him, and lean wholly to him for pardon and ſalvation.

2dly, When he quickens repentance, and makes the heart to melt into tears and godly ſorrow for ſin.

3dly, When he kindles love in the heart, and makes it to burn, while he talks with them, and opens to them the ſcriptures.

4thly, When he draws out the deſires and pantings of their ſouls towards Chriſt, and makes them hunger and thirſt for God, and follow hard after him.

5thly, When he quickens the ſpirit of prayer in them, and makes them more fervent and lively in pouring out their hearts to God, and cauſes them to take delight in their duty. Thus the Lord draws nigh to his people in the ſacrament, by enlivening their ſouls in the exerciſe of grace; but ſeeing I have treated of this livelineſs more particularly before, and given marks for the trial of it, I ſhall add no more upon this head.

Q. *How is it that the Lord draws nigh, and communicates himſelf to his people, in this ordinance by his influences of ſtrength?*

A. He doth it by the operations of his Spirit in their ſouls, theſe ſeveral ways;

1. When he ſeaſonably ſteps in, and ſupports their weak faith, ſtaggering hope, and fainting hearts, when ready to ſink with fears and diſcouragements, Iſa. xli. 10.

2dly, When he encourages them to undertake, and enables them to perform the hardeſt and moſt difficult duties, not only to attend all public ordinances; but even to make conſcience of ſecret prayer, mortification, mourning over ſin, *&c.* Iſa. xl. 24.

3dly, When he enables them, not only to perform duty, but even to do it with delight and activity; counting it their meat, and drink to do God's will, and reckoning one day in his courts worth a thouſand elſewhere.

4thly, He ſtrengthens his people at the ſacrament by enabling them to conquer and ſubdue their ſtrong luſts and corruptions, that formerly were too hard for them.

5thly, He doth it by enabling them to reſiſt all temptations, and get the victory over Satan, Luke xxii. 31.

6thly, By heartning them to patient bearing of the croſs, and all theſe afflictions and burdens that the Lord thinks fit to lay upon them, Pſalm cxxxviii. 3.

Q. *How is it that the Lord draws nigh to his people in the ſacrament, by his influences of comfort?*

A. 1. By clearing up the evidences of their graces to them; ſo that they are made to ſee, that they have true grace wrought in them, by the Spirit of God. Before, they queſtioned if they had any faith; but now they can ſay with that poor man in the goſpel, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief:* Before, they doubted if they had any love to Chriſt; but now they are helped to ſay with Peter, *Lord, thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee?*

2dly, He comforts them, by clearing up to them, their intereſt in the great and precious promiſes; and in Jeſus Chriſt the author of them, and his glorious purchaſe; ſo that they are enabled to ſay with the ſpouſe Cant. ii. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his;* and neither ſin nor death will diſſolve this ſweet relation, Rom. viii. 35, 38. and this gives them very ſtrong conſolation,

3dly, He comforts them, in the ſacrament, by intimating to them the pardon of their ſins, and a free diſcharge of all their debts, graciouſly whiſpering by his Spirit into the ear of the ſoul, ſuch a word as that which Chriſt ſpoke to the man ſick of the palſy, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee,* Mat. ix. 2.

4thly, He comforts them, by looſing them from their bonds and ſtraitning of ſpirit, and allowing them free acceſs unto the throne of grace ſo as they can pour out their melting hearts in God's boſom with ſome confidence of his favour and good will, 2 Cor. iii. 17.

5thly, He comforts them, by hearing and anſwering their prayer, and graciouſly beſtowing upon them their ſpiritual mercies, which they have been many a day ſeeking and wreſtling for, Deut. iv. 7.

6thly, He ſometimes gives them the aſſurance of his love and favour, by the witneſſings of his Spirit concurring with the reaſonings of their ſpirits, whereby they are enabled clearly to diſcern and know the things freely given to them of God, and conclude, that they are in covenant with God, and paſſed from death to life, 1 Cor. ii. 12. Rom. viii. 16.

7thly, He comforts them, by letting out upon their ſouls the ſenſible breathings and influences of his Spirit, that are like the dew to the whithered graſs, the rain to the dry ground; or the ſouth wind to the ſpices. And theſe who enlarge their hearts, put an edge upon their faith and love, and make them chearful in every duty, Pſalm lxxii. 6. Hoſ. xiv. 5. Cant. iv. 16. Pſalm cxix 32.

8thly, He ſometimes comforts them, by bringing them into his banqueting houſe, and ſetting them under the banner of his love. He ſheds abroad his love in their hearts, and gives them peace and joy in believing. He ſcatters their clouds, diſſolves their doubts, removes their fears, and makes them to hear the voice of joy and gladneſs. Conſcience acquits them, as ſincere in their faith and love. God ſmiles on them and kiſſes them, with the kiſſes of his mouth, *i. e.* he enables them to apply the ſweet comforts of his promiſes, which are the refreſhing words of his mouth, ſweeter to them, than honey from the honey-comb. Thus the Lord ſometimes makes his people joyful in his houſe of prayer, ſatisfies them as with marrow and fatneſs, gives them the peace that paſſeth underſtanding, and fills them with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory; whereby they are enabled to delight and rejoice in God, as their covenanted God. He brings them out of the miry clay, ſets their feet upon a rock, eſtabliſhes their goings, and puts a new ſong in their mouth, *even praiſes to our God,* Pſalm xl. 1, 3. Cant. ii. 4. Rom. v. 5. Rom. xv. 13. Pſalm li. 8. Cant. i 2. Pſalm lxiii. 5.

Q. *How ſhall we know that our manifeſtations and attainments on ſacrament occaſions, are real, and not deluſions?*

A. 1. Theſe manifeſtations which are from God, do commonly carry their own evidence alongſt with them, that convinces the ſoul of their reality.

2dly, they are uſually attained after much wreſtling, humiliation, and tender walking.

3dly, They are accompanied with great ſelf loathing and abaſement, and bring humbling diſcoveries of our own emptineſs and vileneſs, Luke x. 8.

4thly, They excite us to high exalting thoughts of Chriſt and free-grace, and to approve heartily of Chriſt in all his offices.

5thly, They ſtir up thoſe that have them, to holineſs and tenderneſs of walk, and to have a holy jealouſy over themſelves. But ſo do not the deluſory attainments of hypocrites.

6thly, Where manifeſtations are real and gracious, the ſoul entertains good thoughts of Chriſt, and gives him its teſtimony as lovely and matchleſs even when he is withdrawn, Cant. x. 6. 10.

Q. *But what ſhall theſe ſerious ſouls do that can not* *lay claim to theſe high attainments and comforts before-mentioned?*

A. 1. Let them bleſs God, that they have theſe things neceſſary, for making out a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt; for ſome of theſe high things aforementioned are not eſſential thereunto.

2dly, Let them beware at any time of razing the foundation, upon the account of their wanting theſe ſpecial bleſſings and attainments; ſeeing the promiſes of life and ſalvation are not annexed to theſe, but unto faith followed with holineſs.

3dly, We have even ground from Heb. ii. 15. and other texts, to believe that there are ſome heirs of glory, who have a cloudy paſſage, and a rough ſea through their whole voyage to the heavenly Canaan; being all their life-time very ſubject to fears and darkneſs: Tho' indeed, I grant, it is God's ordinary way to give his people ſome lucid intervals, and calm breezes now and then, for their ſupport and through-bearing.

Q. *May not ſome poor ſouls have real communion with Chriſt, and reap ſpiritual benefit by this ſolemn ordinance, who have not ſuch comforts and ſenſible manifeſtations from God, as before-mentioned?*

A. No doubt they may; for when Chriſt gives his people a hearty grief and ſorrow for ſin, it is as ſure an evidence of his gracious preſence, and his holding communion with them, as when their ſouls are affectionately melted into love, praiſe, and joy: There is communion with Chriſt, even in a reproof, as is evident in the caſe of Peter, when he denied his Maſter; Chriſt gave Peter then a look, and it was a heart-piercing look, whereby he was ſharply rebuked; and yet it was one of the ſweeteſt and kindeſt looks that ever Peter met with ſince his converſion, for it melted his heart, ſet him a mourning, and brought him back again to his Redeemer, whom he had ſo fully deſerted. And there we ſee, was ſweet communion with Chriſt, even in ſharp rebukes; ſo that the nature of communion with Chriſt, is by many very much miſtaken, when they confine it only to ſenſible manifeſtations of God's love, and the ſmiles of his face. For there may be real communion with Chriſt, and great ſoul advantage reaped by the Lord's ſupper, where theſe are not enjoyed.

As for inſtance, 1. When we find our repentance and grief for ſin increaſed, when we ſee more of ſin's deformity and bitterneſs, abhor it, and reſolve againſt it more, as Chriſt's enemy; and are more afraid of grieving or piercing him by it, than formerly.

2dly, When we have an higher eſteem of Chriſt and his glorious undertaking, and find our hearts better pleaſed with the tenor of the covenant, and contrivance of redemption through Chriſt, than formerly.

3dly, When we are ſtrengthned to pray better, cry more fervently to God, and be more anxious for his preſence in duty, than formerly.

4thly, When we find ſtronger deſires after heart-holineſs, and for grace to make us capable to ſerve Chriſt, and advance his glory and intereſt in any ſtation.

5thly, When our hearts and conſciences are more tender than formerly, ſo that we dare not now ſhift any known duty, nor venture on ſin, or temptations to it, as before. The company of the wicked, and all other temptations to ſin, are now unwelcome to us.

6thly, When at leaſt, we can ſay, that we have a greater burning of deſires towards Chriſt than before; that we long, thirſt, and are wholy reſtleſs without him, and even would be content to part with all our beſt enjoyments in the world for an intereſt in him: Then it is a ſign Chriſt hath been with us in this ordinance, and hath ſhewed us tokens for good, for which we have cauſe to be thankful to him.

Q. *What ſhall we ſay of theſe, who thought they had ſomething of the ſhining of God's face upon their ſoul, when they were at the table; but now they are gone, and their ſky is again over-caſt with clouds; they apprehended, their hearts were melted, and their affections thawed, and their ſouls were in a good frame, but now they are dead again, as before?*

A. 1. Let ſuch examine their attainments, whether they be temporary flaſhes, or ſeeming goodneſs of hypocrites, by the marks and differences, which I have laid down before, for that end.

2dly, Let them not conclude, that all they taſted or felt at the Lord's table, was deluſion; becauſe their caſe is ſo ſoon altered; for it is no new thing for the people of God to complain of a ſudden change in their proſperous condition, and to be troubled with heart-deadneſs and drouſineſs, and with Chriſt's withdrawing ſoon on the back of ſweet communion with him; Pſalm xxx. 6, 7. Cant. ii. 17, 18. compared with Cant. ii. 1. Mat. xxvi. 26, 30, 35. compared with v. 40, 43. 45.

3dly, They ought to reflect upon their own carriage under Chriſt's ſmiles, and ſee what ground they have given him to withdraw. It may be, 1. They were not thankful, when they had his preſence. Or, 2dly, Perhaps they were vain or proud of it. Or, 3dly, They were not watchful againſt their ſpiritual enemies. Or, 4thly, They truſted too much to themſelves, and did not depend upon Chriſt for preſerving their gracious frame of heart.

Q. *What courſe ought theſe ſerious ſouls to take, who have ſo ſoon loſt their gracious frame and attainments?*

A. 1. Let them beware of queſtioning all the former proofs of God's favour, or blaming Chriſt now for unkindneſs, in tarrying ſo ſhort while with them; but let them blame their own unwatchful and untender carriage while he was pleaſed to viſit them with his preſence.

2dly, Let them go in ſecret, and be deeply humbled under a ſenſe of their miſcarriage and miſmanagement, and look to the blood of ſprinkling for pardon.

3dly, Let them try to cloſe afreſh with Chriſt on the goſpel offers, and ſeal the covenant of new; and if they ſubſcribed it before with a trembling hand, and ſo indiſtinctly and darkly, that they cannot read their name; let them now ſubſcribe it over again, and ſtudy to do it in more diſtinct and legible characters.

Q. *What is incumbent upon thoſe, who are ſtill ſenſible of God's gracious preſence, and bountiful dealing towards them, at the ſacrament?*

A. 1. They ſhould wonder, that he condeſcends ſo far to ſuch vile unworthy creatures, 2 Sam. vii. 18.

2dly, They ſhould be thankful, and rejoice in him: Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King, Pſalm cxlix. 4.

3dly, Let them entertain their Redeemer kindly, and hold him in the galleries by a holy importunity, and carefully guard againſt every thing that may ſtir him up, or awake him, till he pleaſe, Cant. ii. 7.

4thly, They ought to ſet up their pillar of remembrance, record what they have ſeen and met with at this ordinance, take all about them to witneſs that it is Chriſt, and reſolve to keep it always on record, and make uſe of it againſt the time, when curſed unbelief, or a challenging devil will be ready to ſay, *Where is thy God?* Pſalm xliii. 3, 4, 6.

5thly, They ought to walk very tenderly and watchfully, fearing, leſt they ſhould loſe what they have got; like a traveller that hath much money or many jewels about him, who is apt to ſuſpect every one he meets with for a thief. We have many envious enemies, who have a narrow eye upon us at this market of grace, and ſeek to rob us of the precious treaſure we get there, Luke xxii. 31.

6thly, They ought to pity and pray for others that have not won their length, and by prayer ſend portions to theſe, for whom nothing is provided.

7thly, Let them commit their hearts and frames to Chriſt's keeping, that he may preſerve any good thing to them they have got, and be ſurety for them and it, and make it forth-coming to them againſt the time of need, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. Pſalm cxix. 122. 1 Tim. i. 12.

8thly, Let them carefully notice the firſt ſtep or leaſt degree of God's withdrawing from them, and endeavour to hold him, and ſtop his way by throwing themſelves at his feet, and humbly beſeeching him to ſtay with them, notwithſtanding of many grounds of provocations.

Q. *But what ſhall theſe poor believers do, who inſtead of praiſing God for his bountiful dealing at this ordinance, are put to ſigh and mourn under darkneſs and deſertion?*

A. 1. They ſhould conſider that this caſe is not unuſual for the beſt of ſaints; Job, David, Aſaph, Heman, nay, Chriſt himſelf, have complained of deſertion.

2dly, They ſhould make no harſh conſtruction of God's dealing with them, but leave their complaints upon themſeves, and juſtify God in all he doth.

3dly, They ſhould be deeply humbled under the loſs of God's gracious preſence, be grieved for theſe things that have ſinned him away, ſit as a widow in his abſence, and refuſe all other comforters till he return, Lam. i. 16.

4thly, They ſhould be ſearching diligently for the Achan in the camp, the ſin for which God is contending with them, Pſalm lxxvii. 6. Job x. 2.

5thly, They ſhould learn to live by faith, and truſt in a withdrawing God; believe him, think and ſpeak well of him, when he frowns, as well as when he ſmiles, Job xiii. 15.

Q. *Is not deſertion, or the withdrawing of God's preſence from a poor ſoul, a very ſad and melancholy caſe?*

A. Certainly it is, For, Firſt, The ſoul under deſertion, is deprived of the light of God's countenance, which is the choiceſt bleſſing in the world, Pſalm iv. 6.

2dly, The conſequents of God's withdrawing are very heavy and grievous to believers; becauſe ordinarily there follows upon it theſe evils;

Firſt, Great darkneſs and confuſion upon the Spirit, Lam. iii. 2.

2dly, Great hardneſs and impenitency upon the heart, Iſa. xliii. 17.

3dly, Much deadneſs and ſtupidity upon the affections.

4thly, Loſs of ſpiritual appetite and deſires.

5thly, Unſpiritedneſs and diſability for duty, Pſalm xl. 12. Pſalm lxxxviii. 4.

6thly, A general barrenneſs upon the ſoul, and witheredneſs of the graces, John xvi. 6.

7thly, Liableneſs to all ſorts of dangers and enemies, Numb. xiv. 9.

8thly, Anxiety of mind for former unkindneſs and unthankfulneſs to God, Pſalm lxxvii. 3.

9thly, Unwelcome thoughts of death and judgment.

10thly, A revived ſenſe of wrath, and of the law's curſes and threatnings.

11thly, Melancholy apprehenſions of God's judgments to purſue them, while they are in time.

12thly, Fears of utter rejection; and eternal baniſhment from God's preſence, Pſalm lxxvii. 9. 10. Pſalm cxix. 8.

Q. *What are the uſual cauſes of God's withdrawing from his people?*

A. 1. Their ſcandalous outbreakings, Iſa. i. 23. 15.

2dly, Their wearying of duty, Iſa. xliii. 22.

3dly, Their not entertaining Chriſt's calls, and his Spirit's motions, Cant. v. 2, 3, 6.

4thly, Their earthly mindedneſs, and preferring of time's things to precious Chriſt, Iſa. lvii. 17. Mat. viii. 28.

5thly, Their ſloath and formality in duty, Iſa. lxiv. 7.

6thly, Their want of a due ſenſe of their own ſins, and the ſins of the land where they live, Hoſ. v. 15.

7thly, Their making a ſaviour of their duties, and putting theſe in Chriſt's room.

8thly, Miſcarriages under, or after ſignal enjoyments and manifeſtations, 1 Kings i. 9.

9thly, Their ſins under, or after great afflictions, Iſa. lvii. 17.

Q. *What ſhall we do to recover God's gracious preſence again, when we have loſt it?*

A. 1. Let us be ſenſible that we have ſinned him away.

2dly, Let us humbly enquire into the cauſe of his departure.

3dly, Let us be reſtleſs and uneaſy in our minds till he return.

4thly, Let us conſcientiouſly attend all ordinances, and uſe all means for recovering God's preſence.

5thly, Let us be ſtill lamenting after the Lord, and bewailing the loſs we ſuſtain for want of him.

6thly, Let us both be mourning for, and ſtriving to mortify theſe ſins and idols, that have taken our Lord away from us.

7thly, Let us ſtill continue in fervent prayer, and wreſtle with God for his gracious return; and let us fill our mouths with arguments to plead with him for it, Pſalm xxv. 16, 17. Job xxii. 3, 4.

Q. *What are theſe proper arguments, which we are to plead in prayer, for the return of God's gracious preſence?*

A. 1. We ought to plead the low and helpleſs caſe we are in without it, Pſalm lxxix. 8.

2dly, We ſhould plead the extreme need we ſtand in of it.

3dly, Plead the greatneſs and tenderneſs of God's mercy, and Chriſt's bowels of compaſſion, Mat. xv. 22.

4thly, Plead how eaſy it is for him to anſwer all our complaints, and redreſs all our grievances, Pſalm lxxx. 1.

5thly, Plead the freeneſs of his grace.

6thly, The greatneſs of his power.

7thly, The glory of his name, Pſalm lxxix. 8.

8thly, Let us plead former experiences of his kindneſs, Pſalm lxxxvi. 3, 5, 13.

Laſtly, Let us much plead our covenant-relation to God, and our intereſt in him: The church and people of God, do often make uſe of this argument with God, *We are thine, a people that belong to thee,* Iſa. lxiii. 19. Pſalm cxix. 94. Pſalm lxxix. 8. And this argument hath often prevailed with God to return to his people, Iſa. lxiii. 8. Exod. xxxii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Q. *But what ſhall theſe do, who cannot plead this argument, in regard, they fear they are not in covenant with God, and ſo cannot ſay to him, We are thine?*

A. 1. Tho' believers under deſertion are often tempted to renounce and quit claim to any covenant-relation to God; yet we ſhould not hearken to that temptation, nor be willing to let go the covenant we have taken hold of. But ſeeing we have fled to the horns of the altar for ſafety, we ſhould abide by them; and even when by temptations we are beat off from one horn, we ſhould ſtrive to hold faſt by another. And therefore when we cannot ſay to God, *We are thine* by his acceptance; yet we ſhould ſay, *We are thine* by our own reſignation. As we have formerly given up ourſelves to God, ſo we reſolve to abide by that deed: We will not be the devil's nor the world's, but we will be the Lord's. And when we are thus helped reſolutely to caſt ourſelves upon him, our ſouls may revive, and faith gather ſtrength in prayer; for to be ſure, God is more ready to covenant with us, than we with him; and more willing to be ours, than we are to be his.

2dly, Let us plead a title to God by creation, when we cannot do it by redemption: ſo doth the church under deſertion, Iſa. lxiv. 7, 8, 9. *O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou our Potter, and we are all the work of thine hand. Be not wroth very ſore,* &c. If we can do no more, let us thus plead an intereſt in him by creation, and wait his leiſure; for if we duly make uſe of this one talent, it will increaſe.

Q. *What ſhall be ſaid to thoſe diſconſolate ſouls, who are complaining, that it is not with them now, as in the days of old, and in months paſt, when the candle of the Lord ſhined on their heads: once they went to communions with great ſatisfaction, and returned with the high praiſes of God in their mouths; but now God hath altered the courſe of his dealing with them: He hides his face, and ſacrament-days are melancholly occaſions to them. They call to mind former experiences, but alas they find that doth but increaſe their trouble,* Pſalm lxxvii. 3.

A. 1. Let all ſuch conſider, that God takes different ways of dealing with his people. He uſeth to treat young beginners otherwiſe than thoſe who have made ſome progreſs in religion: He knows young beginners are raw and tender, and unable to bide a ſtorm: and therefore it is ſaid, *He carries his lambs in his boſom.* We uſe to hire children to learn their leſſon, when they go firſt to ſchool; but afterwards we correct them, and make them learn with a frown.

2dly, We ought to remember, that Chriſt will have his people to live and walk by faith, and not by ſenſe, to follow him in dark nights, and through rough paths, and even when he ſeems to flee from them. It would be no trial to our faith and love, to follow Chriſt in the rougheſt ways, had we ſtill a view of the crown, and of Chriſt's ſmiling face: but Chriſt will have his diſciples taught to follow him without ſenſible encouragements. We ſee theſe that run a race, get a ſight of the ſilver cup or prize, firſt when they ſet forth; but perhaps never ſee it again till they get it in their hand, and yet they run on: So, a traveller may ſee a city he is going to, when he is ſeveral miles off; and yet it may be out of his ſight when he is within half a mile of it; but he believes it is not far off, and therefore ſtill goes on.

3dly, Let ſuch diſconſolate ſouls ſtrive to keep up a warm love to Chriſt, and to commend him highly, even in his abſence, as did the ſpouſe, Cant. v. 6. There we ſee, ſhe had ſought Chriſt, but could not find him; ſhe called him, but he gave no anſwer; and ſhe is rudely handled in his abſence by the watchmen, and upbraided by the daughters of Jeruſalem: Yet notwithſtanding of all theſe diſcouragments, ſhe breaks out in the moſt lofty commendation of her beloved and his matchleſs excellencies, ver. 10. to the cloſe: and concludes all with this, *He is altogether lovely.*

4thly, However melancholly the preſent caſe of ſuch may be, yet they ſhould ſtudy to ſing praiſes to God, in a thankful remembrance of the kindneſs he hath ſhewed to them in former times. It is a provoking carriage in many believers, that when any new cloud comes, or doubt ariſes, they prove as froward and unthankful to Chriſt, as if he had never done any thing for them at all. It would certainly be both juſt and and generous to believers, to ſing praiſes to their beloved, under their darkeſt clouds.

Q. *But how ſhall they ſing, who think they have cauſe to weep with Jeruſalem,* Lam. i. 16. *For theſe things I weep, mine eyes run down with water, for the comforter that ſhould relieve my ſoul is far from me?*

A. They ſhould even mix their weeping with ſinging, for tears and praiſes are not inconſiſtent, ſometimes it rains while the ſun ſhines. Believers are called to *praiſe God at all times, and in every thing to give thanks, and to rejoice evermore.* We ſee Paul and Silas ſang praiſes to God in a dark priſon at mid-night, when their backs were torn with ſcourges, and their feet faſt with ſtocks, Acts xvi. 25. Hence it is, that believers are called *ſinging birds,* Cant. ii. 12. They ſhould ſing in all the ſeaſons and months in the year, even in winter, and in the dead months of affliction and deſertion. When it is winter and foul weather, they ſhould ſing in remembrance of their fair blinks they have had, and in expectation of the ſummer-ſun at the return of the year; and ſo rejoice in hope of better times.

2dly, This courſe may prove very ſucceſsful to the removing of our grievances, and altering of our frames. For thus, ſome exerciſed ſouls have ſung away their heart plagues and ill frames. By praiſing, they have conquered their unbelief, diſtruſt, and unworthy thoughts of Chriſt as Jehoſhaphat did the Ammonites, by ſending ſingers before the army into the field when he was in great diſtreſs, 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22. So did David in his dejected and melancholly condition, Pſalm xlii. 6, 8, 9, 11. "O my God, my ſoul is caſt down "within me, therefore will I remember thee from the "land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill "Mizar: Yet the Lord will command his loving kindneſs in the day time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be “with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. —I will ſay unto God my rock, why haſt thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning becauſe of the oppreſſion of the enemy? Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? And why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” Where we may obſerve, how David ſings away his diſcouragement and dejection, partly by reflecting and looking back on what God had done for him before; and partly by expecting and believing what God would yet do for him. Likewiſe we ſee the church in the Lamentations, for as low as ſhe was in diſtreſs, under which ſhe was mourning and weeping; yet ſhe hopes and praiſes in the midſt of all, Lam. iii. 17, 18, 24, 25, 31, 32.

Q. *But what ſhall theſe do whoſe caſe is ſo dark, and hopes ſo ſunk, that look they back or foreward, they can ſee no light? How ſhall they ſing or praiſe?*

A. Tho' they had no other matter of praiſe, they ſhould try to ſing of Chriſt's wonderful free love, his glorious undertaking and amazing condeſcenſion, in leaving his throne in heaven, to dwell with worms on earth, and bear their ſins upon the curſed tree. Is there not here ſufficient, nay, endleſs matter of praiſe, both for angels and men.

Q. *How ſhall theſe praiſe, who think they have no intereſt in that love-undertaking?*

A. 1. How many things do we praiſe that we have no intereſt in, and are nothing the better of. We praiſe the ſtrength of Samſon, the wiſdom of Solomon, and the courage of Alexander, that we are not intereſted in.

2dly, The angels admire and praiſe Chriſt's glorious undertaking for loſt men, though he took not upon him the nature of angels, nor died for them; and much more ought we, whoſe nature he aſſumed, to whom he ſo freely offers the benefits of his death, Rev. v. 11, 12.

3dly, It is ſurely our own fault, if we have not an intereſt in Chriſt's undertaking, ſeeing we are ſo preſſingly invited to come and ſhare of it: for if we will but come and accept of Chriſt's love, and the benefits of his death, then all is ours. And why then ſhould we not willingly accept of the goſpel-offer, and claim an intereſt in all that Chriſt hath done for ſinners?

4thly, Let us mint to look to Chriſt, love him and praiſe him as we can; and he will cauſe our ſky to break, and give us more ground of praiſe. For we are ſure he never ſent one to hell, that loved and praiſed him with his heart.

Q. *But what ſhall theſe dejected ſouls do, who can ſay they have prayed, they have praiſed, gone to many communions, attended all ordinances, and all duties, and eſſayed all means they can think of; but they miſs God in them all, ſtill he hides his face; and ſo they are almoſt hopeleſs, and fear matters will never mend with them?*

A. 1. We have Job that eminent ſaint, making that very ſame complaint, Job xxiii. 8, 9. *Behold, I go foreward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himſelf on the right hand that I cannot ſee him.* Where we ſee, he tried all airths, eſſayed all means, and uſed all diligence to find God's gracious preſence, and ſtill he is diſappointed. And good Hezekiah, in his diſtreſs, ſays, He mourned as a dove, and his eyes failed with looking upward, Iſa. xxxviii. 14. So that we ſee, ſuch a complaint is no ſingular caſe.

2dly, We ſhould never ſuccumb in the day of adverſity, whatever be our trial, but always make known our caſe to God by prayer, and never faint, Prov. xxiv. 10. Luke xviii. 1. As this is our commanded duty, ſo it is the practice of the ſaints in the greateſt ſtrait; they ſtill lie at the throne of grace, and never give over duty, Pſalm cxix. 81, 82, 83. Yea Jonah, when his caſe ſeemed moſt hopeleſs, he being in the belly of a *whale*, and in the bottom of the ocean, yet he perſiſts in duty, Jonah ii. 6. *When my ſoul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee?*

3dly, As we ſhould perſiſt in ſeeking Chriſt, ſo we ſhould continue to do it ſorrowing and weeping, as Mary did at the ſepulchre; yea, her ſorrow for her loſs was ſo great, that two angels could not dry up her tears, nor comfort her heart without Chriſt.

4thly, Let us ſee that our ſorrow be of the right ſtamp; that it be, 1. Not only for our loſs, but for our ſins that are the cauſe thereof; alas, it is our ſins that have grieved his Spirit.

2dly, That it be not ſo much for the loſs of the comfort and ſweetneſs we have felt in communion with God, as for the loſs of God himſelf, and his preſence which is valuable.

3dly, That it be not ſo much for the diſadvantage we ourſelves ſuſtain, as that we are leſs capable to ſerve God, having no life for duty, no ſtrength to love or praiſe him, as formerly.

4thly, In the midſt of our deepeſt ſorrows for God's abſence, let us not omit to take notice of God's goodneſs in any thing that is favourable in our cauſe and bleſs God for it: As for inſtance, 1. That he gives us a ſenſe of our condition, and that we are not paſt all feeling, as many are.

2dly, That we are living, and have yet time to ſearch, mourn, pray, and uſe means for recovering his preſence.

3dly, That we are not in a hopeleſs, deſpairing condition, like Spira, or the damned in hell; for what better are we, than they?

4thly, When our reaſon tires and ſuccumbs, then faith ſhould take place, and we ſhould even hope againſt hope, according to Rom. iv. 18. When ordinary means do not ſucceed, we ſhould even look to God, that can work without means, beyond them; and can act miraculouſly. Let us obſerve Jonah's behaviour in the whale's belly, Jonah ii. 3, 4. *Thou haſt caſt me into the deep, in the midſt of the ſeas, and the floods compaſſed me about, all thy billows and thy waves paſſed over me. Then I ſaid, I am caſt out of thy ſight: Yet I will look look again toward thy holy temple.* Jonah's caſe looked to be ſingular, he thought God had quite forſaken him, and would never return again; for he had no example before him of any in his caſe, or of any that were delivered out of a fiſh's belly. There was no way of eſcape open to him, but by a miracle; and what ground had he to expect that a miracle of mercy ſhould be wrought for him, who was now made a monument of juſtice. His own conſcience, no doubt, would flee in his face, and tell him, that he had wickedly fled from the preſence of the Lord, and therefore

God might juſtly caſt him out of his preſence: That he had procured all this ſad diſtreſs to himſelf, and ſo had little ground to expect deliverance. And yet we ſee how wonderfully his faith overcame his fear and deſpondency, ver. 4. *Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.* Tho' his guilt made him aſhamed to ſay, he would dwell in God's houſe either on earth, or in heaven; yet he ſays, I will at leaſt look toward it: Tho' thou ſhouldſt caſt me never ſo far away from thee, *Yet I will look again to thee;* yea, though thou ſhouldſt caſt me down as low as hell, yet I will look up from it to thee again; ſtill my heart will hanker after thee, and I will look for pity at thy hand.

5thly, Let us plead the mercy of God's nature, and the faithfulneſs of his word, and ſtay our fainting ſouls on theſe propes; and when our darkneſs is great let us ſend forth hope, that good meſſenger, to ſee what it can ſpy, and what good news it can bring in from the mercy and faithfulneſs of God, according to Pſalm xliii. 5. Pſalm cxix. 81. Pſalm ciii. 9. Iſa. lvii. 16.

6thly, It becomes us, under hidings and diſappointments, at ſuch a ſolemn occaſion, humbly to ſubmit to divine ſovereignty (for God knows what is beſt for us) and quietly to hold his time and leiſure; and ſtill to hope for a viſit from him in due time: It was a noble ſaying of one, in ſuch a caſe, “Tho' he came not to “dine with me, yet he'll come and ſup, therefore I “will wait on.” The Lord takes a liberty with his people while here, becauſe he has a whole eternity to manifeſt himſelf to them; the time is near when theſe who groan under his abſence, *ſhall be ever with the Lord,* 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. O deſerted believers, take comfort; for what you come ſhort of obtaining on earth, will be abundantly made up to you in heaven; whatever doors, walls or lateſſes, are now betwixt you and Chriſt, hereafter there ſhall be none. You may ſay, how long he will hide, I cannot poſitively determine, but this I am ſure of, he can withdraw himſelf no longer from a poor believer, than he is in this world. Rejoice in this, you ſhall drop all your complaints, fears and jealouſies at heaven's gates, and never take them up again. And, in the mean time, let preſent hiding and diſappointments have the ſame effect upon you, they had on the ſpouſe, Cant. iii. 3. ſhe turns ſick of love to Chriſt, riſes from her ſloth, and goes through all the ſtreets and ways of the city, ſeeking him whom her ſoul loved.

Q. *But what ſhall be ſaid to thoſe diſtreſſed ſouls, who apprehend that none of theſe counſels and comforts that belong to God's children under deſertion, are applicable to them; becauſe they fear they are totally and finally forſaken?*

A. 1. Let ſuch remember what counſel they have ſometimes given, to ſupport others, in the like caſe, and ſtudy now to take it to themſelves; leſt it be applicable to them, what Eliphaz ſaid to Job, *Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou haſt ſtrengthened the feeble knees: But now it is come upon thee, and thou fainteſt; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled,* Job iv. 4, 5. It is indeed much eaſier to give advice, than to take it: people in health will adviſe ſick folk to take this and the other thing; and yet when the caſe comes to be their own, they are at a ſtand what to do.

2dly, Let ſuch ſeriouſly conſider, whether indeed they bear the characters of a total deſertion, yea, or not; indeed, if their hearts be willing to quit God, give up all claim to him, be ſatisfied with the world, and indiffrent whether he return again or no, it is a bad ſign: But let them be ingenuous; Is there not ſtill ſome hankering deſire in their ſouls towards God? Is there not ſomething in their hearts, that ſays, Let him do with me as he pleaſes; I am reſolved to ly all my days at Chriſt's feet, and never go to another door for mercy: Tho' he ſhould never ſmile on me: Yet I'll ſtill be uneaſy and reſtleſs without his favour: I'll wait for him, cleave to him, and mourn after him? Whatever the devil or my own heart ſuggeſt, I will not believe any evil report of Chriſt. I will not hear an ill tale of that lovely one, nor go from his door with any harſh thoughts of him. And tho' their caſe be very dark and hopeleſs like, yet let me aſk them, if they would be willing to quit any little hope they have of Chriſt, for all the world's pleaſures, or flattering offers that ſin and Satan can make them. Nay, is there not ſomething in their conſciences, that ſtill ſtands up for God againſt ſin, ſaying, tho' I ſhould die in darkneſs, yet I will never hearken to ſin or Satan, I'll never quit prayer, I'll never hate Chriſt or holineſs, I'll never yield to temptations, nor join with the wicked, who wallow in ſin's puddle, and mock at religion. Do they not ſee many about them, that for as ill as their caſe is, yet they would not exchange caſes with them, for all the riches and honours in the land? Then ſurely they are not totally nor finally forſaken. For what is it but the Spirit of God, that keeps them waking and reſtleſs without Chriſt, when others are ſleeping in ſin, and have no trouble for want of him? What is it, but his grace that keeps them ſtill waiting on God in the way of duty, and in the uſe of all means? And tho' they come little ſpeed, yet they dare not ſlight ordinances, nor neglect prayer as many do, but ſtill would be at caſting themſelves in Chriſt and his Spirit's way, and keep as near him as poſſibly they can; and dare never think of ſaying to God, with the wicked, Job xxi. 14. “Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways.” Surely this is owing to Chriſt's upholding grace, and not to ourſelves: For were we wholly left by him, we would run as far from God and his preſence, as ever we could, and ſhun all ſorts of converſe with him. Let us then receive and take notice of the leaſt crumb of Chriſt's goodneſs with thankfulneſs, and cordially bleſs him for it, for that is the way to get more, Pſalm lxvii. 5, 6. Luke xvii. 15.

Of the converſation of COMMUNICANTS, after they have been at the LORD's table.

Queſt. WHAT *is that converſation that communicants ought to have after the ſacrament?*

A. It muſt be a converſation that is rightly ordered, and ſuitable to the obligations we are laid under by this ordinance: particularly, it muſt be in ſome meaſure ſuitable to theſe things; 1. The rule of God's word. 2. The pattern of Chriſt's life. 3. The principles of our profeſſion. 4. The vows we have made. 5. The ſights we have ſeen. 6. The favours we have received. 7. The promiſes that are ſealed to us in this ordinance. Laſtly, The offices and relations, which Chriſt hath undertaken, and ſtands in to his people.

Q. *When is our converſation ſuitable to the rule of God's word?*

A. 1. When we conſcientiouſly ſtudy to know God's mind revealed in his will.

2dly, When we put a high value on God's word, and eſteem all its precepts to be juſt and right.

3dly, When we ſincerely aim at an univerſal conformity thereto, both in heart and in life, without neglecting any known duty.

4thly, When we carefully notice all our wandrings and aberrations from this rule, mourn for them, reform from them, and alſo hate and avoid every thing contrary to this holy rule, Iſa. viii. 20. Pſalm cxix. 128.

Q. *When is our converſation ſuited to the pattern of Chriſt's life?*

A. When we ſtudy to follow his ſteps when he lived on earth, and imitate him in all his imitable perfections: particularly in theſe;

1ſt, His meekneſs and lowlineſs.

2dly, His mortification and deniedneſs to the world, and its enjoyments.

3dly, His heavenlineſs and ſpirituality in diſcourſe.

4thly, His frequency and fervency in prayer.

5thly, His love to holineſs.

6thly, His zealous concern for the purity of God's worſhip and ordinances.

7thly, His readineſs to do good to others.

8thly, His forgiving and praying for enemies.

9thly, His obedience to parents.

10thly, His peaceful and quiet deportment.

11thly, His temperance in diet.

12thly, His contentment in a mean condition.

13thly, His thankfulneſs for mercies.

14thly, His willingneſs to die.

Q. *When is our converſation ſuited to the principles of our profeſſion?*

A. When we diſtinctly know them, firmly believe them, openly profeſs them, ſtedfaſtly adhere to them, and have our practice correſponding to our profeſſion, particularly, when we live and walk as theſe who fixedly believe,

1ſt, That God is infinitely holy and juſt.

2dly, That God is the fountain and giver of all good.

3dly, That all things in the world are vanity, and infinitely below God.

4thly, That ſin is the greateſt evil in the world, and cannot be expiated without an infinite ſatisfaction.

5thly, That Jeſus Chriſt is the only Saviour of ſinners, and infinitely precious.

6thly, That Chriſtleſs ſouls are in a loſt ſtate, under the power of Satan.

7thly, That a holy God hath tied ſin and ſorrow together.

8thly, That repentance is abſolutely neceſſary to the pardon of ſin.

9thly, That faith in Jeſus Chriſt is the only way to reconciliation with God, and the obtaining of any mercy from him.

10thly, That without regeneration we cannot be admitted to the communion with God, nor ſee the kingdom of heaven.

11thly, That holineſs and happineſs are inſeparably connected together.

12thly, That God is a Spirit, and can never be pleaſed with bodily ſervice, but muſt needs have the heart in every duty.

13thly, That we have no good thing in ourſelves, grace muſt work all in us, and without Chriſt we can do nothing. Now if our practice be ſuitable to theſe principles, we muſt be numbered among theſe that glorify God and order their converſation aright, Pſalm l. *ult.* But if our walk be contrary thereto, we will be ranked among theſe that "profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him, Tit. i. *ult.*"

Q. *When is our converſation anſwerable to our ſacramental vows?*

A. 1. When we keep up a lively ſenſe of our vows and engagements upon our ſpirits, Pſalm liv. 22.

2dly, When we diſtruſt our own ſtrength, for keeping and performing our vows, flee to God in Chriſt for ſtrength, and back our vows with earneſt prayers, Pſal. cxix. 8. 57, 58.

3dly, When we carefully ſtudy in Chriſt's ſtrength to perform our vows, by a conſtant watchfulneſs againſt all ſin, and a conſtant diligence in all duty, Job xxxi. 1. Pſalm cxix. 106.

4thly, When we make theſe perſons witneſſes to the performance of our vows, whom we made witneſſes to the making of them; that is, when we behave ourſelves ſo circumſpectly and Chriſtianly in all theſe parts of our converſation, which are viſible to the world, that the whole congregation may obſerve a change to the better, and take notice of us, *That we have been with Jeſus*, Pſalm cxvi. 14. Acts iv. 13.

5thly, When we ſtand upon our guard againſt all theſe temptations that may induce us to break our vows; ſuch as evil company, and immoderate love to the world; for by theſe, both Peter and Demas were tempted to break their vows.

6thly, When we improve our vows, in time of temptation, for quenching the fiery darts of the temper, and reſiſting all his ſollicitations, ſaying, *Thy vows are upon me, O God. And how can I do wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God*, Pſalm xii. 22. Gen. xxxix. 9.

7thly, When we remember our vows, ſo as to rouze and quicken us to duty, when we begin to grow backward to it, or ſlothful in performing of it, Pſalm cxix. 106.

Q. *When is our converſation ſuited to the ſight which we behold in the ſacrament?*

A. When we are ſo affected with the ſuffering of Chriſt, and the dreadfulneſs of God's wrath, and ſeverity of his juſtice againſt ſin here repreſented; as to keep up conſtant impreſſions of the evil of ſin, and to hate it, and avoid it with all carefulneſs, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

2dly, When we are ſo affected with the greatneſs of Chriſt's love to us here diſplayed, as to be thereby conſtrained to love him again, to admire and praiſe him; avoid what he hates and forbids; and practice what he loves and commands, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

3dly, When we ſo believe the preciouſneſs of our ſouls, that Chriſt gave his life a ranſom for; and the worth of heaven, that Chriſt ſhed his blood to purchaſe; as to be willing to quit with all ſinful pleaſures to gain theſe and make it the uptaking buſineſs of our lives, to win our ſouls and eternal glory, Mat. xvi. 26. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Q. *When is our converſation ſuited to the favours which we receive at the ſacrament?*

A. 1. When we keep up grateful impreſſions, and a high ſenſe of redeeming love upon our ſpirit.

2dly, When we labour to preſerve theſe comforts which we have taſted at the Lord's table, and to keep theſe evidences unclouded, which we have got there cleared up, by our tender and humble walking with God, 2 John 8.

3dly, When we ſet ourſelves with all holy care and watchfulneſs, to guard againſt the ſnares of ſatan, the charms of ſin, and every thing that is diſpleaſing to Chriſt, who loved us, and hath done ſo much for us, Ezra ix. 13. 14. Pſalm lxxxv. 8.

4thly, When from a principle of gratitude, we ſet ourſelves not only to love and praiſe God for what he hath done for us, but alſo to walk before him in the land of the living, in a holy and examplary converſation; comply with his will, conſult his honour, and lay out ourſelves with zeal and chearfulneſs in his ſervice; thinking nothing too much to do, too hard to ſuffer, or too dear to part with, for him that hath done, and ſuffered, and parted with ſo much for us, Pſalm cxvi. 8. 9. 2 Cor. v. 14. 15.

Q. *When is our converſation ſuited to the great things promiſed and ſealed to us in the ſacrament?*

A. 1. When we firmly believe them, and rely on God's faithfulneſs for the accompliſhment of them.

2dly, When we are thankful and praiſe God for making ſuch great and precious promiſes to us, 2 Sam. vii. 18. 19.

3dly, When we undervalue this preſent world, with all its pomp, treaſures and pleaſures, and look for better and greater things to come, Heb. ii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 13.

4thly, When we are patient under trials and afflictions, expecting a happy change of our circumſtances ſooner or latter, Mic. vii. 9. Pſalm xlii. 5.

5thly, When we wait quietly for the accompliſhment of God's promiſes, even when he ſeems to ſtay long, believing, that at laſt he will make abundant recompence for his ſtay, Mic. vii. 7. Lam. iii. 25. 26.

6thly, When we live as heirs of the promiſes, and behave ourſelves as candidates for heaven, reſiſting temptations, conquering luſts, contemning the world, overcoming the fears of death, and love of life, and ſtudying to be holy in all manner of converſation, Heb. xi. 9. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 11. 12.

Q. *When is our converſation ſuited to the offices and relations, which Chriſt hath undertaken, and ſtands in to his covenanted people?*

A. When we love and honour him in theſe offices and relations, and ſtudy to expreſs our love and reſpect in our carriage and behaviour towards him. As for inſtance, 1. Is Chriſt our Prophet, to inſtruct us? Then let us carefully hearken to him, and learn theſe leſſons which he teaches us; particularly, to condemn the world, deny ourſelves, and depart from all iniquity; which he tells us is the trueſt wiſdom, Job xxviii. 28.

2dly, Is Chriſt our Prieſt, that appeaſes offended juſtice for our ſins, by his precious blood? Then let us hate ſin, and fear to offend that holy and dreadful God, whoſe juſtice is ſo inexorable, that he would not paſs ſin without ſuch a ſatisfaction.

3dly, Is Chriſt our King to govern us? Then let us behave as loyal ſubjects to him, obey his laws, oppoſe his enemies, and give no harbour or entertainment to theſe traitors that ſeek to dethrone him, or pull the crown off his head.

4thly, Is Chriſt our phyſician, to heal our diſeaſs? Then let us obey his preſcriptions, apply the healing plaiſter of his blood to our wounds, and beware of cutting or mangling ourſelves of new by ſin.

5thly, Is Chriſt our ſurety, to pay our debts? Then let us acquaint him fully with the ſtate of our ſoul affairs, and beware of running ourſelves into new arrears; for this were to turn the grace of God into wantonneſs.

6thly, Is Chriſt our *cleanſer*, that waſhes us in the fountain of his blood? Then let us ſtudy to keep our garments clean, and beware of going again into the puddle of ſin.

7thly, Is Chriſt our *ſhepherd*, that leads and feeds us in green paſtures? Then let us follow him, and beware of ſtraying from him, or going into the devil's fields to feed on ſwiniſh huſks.

8thly, Is Chriſt our *friend* and *agent* in heaven, to appear in our name, and take care of our affairs? Then let us be concerned for his intereſt here on earth; and beware of requiting his kindneſs with unthankfulneſs.

9thly, Is Chriſt our *huſband*, to whom we have given ourſelves in a marriage covenant, and ſworn to be faithful? Then let us put away other lovers, and beware of going a whoring from him; ſeeing in that caſe we can look for nothing from him, but deſtruction, Pſalm lxxiii. 26.

Q. *What is the neceſſity of communicants ſtudying ſuch a holy and well ordered converſation?*

A. 1. Negatively, it is not to permit or purchaſe heaven, for it is only Chriſt's holineſs and obedience that doth this, and not ours. For, 1. Our holineſs and obedience bears no proportion to the reward of eternal life. 2. The grace that enables us to obey, is freely given us of God. 3. Our obedience, at beſt, is imperfect and mixed with ſin. 4. It is our bound duty to God, tho' no reward at all had been promiſed; upon all which accounts we can merit nothing by any of our ſervices, Job xxvii. 3. 1 Cor. iv. 7. Pſal. cxii. 2. Luke xvii. 9. 10.

2dy, Poſitively, this holy and well ordered converſation is abſolutely neceſſary, 1. In reſpect of the command of God, that enjoins it as the beaten road, and pathed way to heaven, peremptorily declaring, *that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God*, Heb. xii. 14.

2dly, It is neceſſary, that we may thereby be conformed to our head, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. i. 15.

3dly, That we may teſtify our thankfulneſs to God for his mercies, eſpecially redeeming love, Luke i. 74. 75.

4thly, That we may evince and clear up our intereſt in God, and our title to heaven, 1 John ii. 26. Matth. xxv. 30.

5thly, That we may be made meet and capable to hold communion with God, here and hereafter. Without holineſs we cannot be prepared either for the employments or enjoyments above, Col. i. 12.

6thly, That we may engage ſtrangers to fall in love with Chriſtianity and godlineſs Matth. v. 16.

Q. *What are the properties of this goſpel converſation, which communicants ought to have after the ſacrament?*

A. 1. It muſt be a good converſation, for ſo it is termed, 1 Pet. iii. 16. becauſe it is a converſation with a good God, according to a good rule, *viz.* his word; having good company, *viz.* his people; and leading to a good end, *viz.* to be ever with the Lord.

2dly, It muſt be an honeſt converſation, ſo it is called, 1 Pet. ii. 12. which includes ſincerity towards God, juſtice in our dealings towards men, and purity and chaſtity in oppoſition to the filthy converſation of the wicked, mentioned, 2 Pet. ii. 7.

3dly, It muſt be a heavenly converſation, Phil. iii. 20. which includes our deniedneſs to earthly things, our imitating the inhabitants of heaven, our delighting in heavenly exerciſes, our ſeeking communion with God and aiming at heaven as our home.

4thly, It muſt be a humble converſation, Mic. vi. 8. which implies, our having a low opinion of ourſelves, our being denied to our own performance, and counting all our own righteouſneſs as filthy rags.

5thly, It muſt be joined with a conſtant dependence on Jeſus Chriſt for ſtrength and acceptance in every duty, Cant. viii. 5. John xv. 5.

6thly, It muſt be adorned with meekneſs, patience, and contentment in every condition, 1 Pet. iii. 4. Phil. iv. 6. 11. 12.

7thly, It muſt be an even and ſtedfaſt converſation, endeavouring to hold faſt what we have got at the ſacrament were it only a good reſolution or purpoſe, and carefully guarding againſt all apoſtacy and backſliding, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Heb. x. 38.

Q. *Wherefore ſhould communicants guard ſo carefully againſt apoſtacy and backſliding after the ſacrament ?*

A. 1. Becauſe God is much delighted with his peoples ſtedfaſtneſs, earneſtly wiſheth it, and frequently enjoins it, Deut. v. 29. Phil. i. 27. 28. Heb. x. 23. 2 Pet. iii. 17. 2 John 8. Rev. iii. 3. Acts xi. 23.

2dly, Becauſe of the ſolemn vows and engagements we have come under to ſtedfaſtneſs, Pſalm cxix. 106.

3dly, Becauſe we have many enemies and temptations to draw us from Chriſt and duty.

4thly, Becauſe of the many ſad evils and conſequences of apoſtacy, Jer. ii. 19.

5thly, Becauſe of our natural inſtability and proneneſs to backſlidings, Hoſ. xi. 7. Jer. xiv. 10. Nay, the beſt of ſaints have been ready to miſcarry, after vows and ſignal mercies, and manifeſtations of God's favour, as might be ſadly verified by the inſtances of Noah, Lot, David, Hezekiah, Solomon, Peter, the Iſraelites, and Chriſt's diſciples.

Q. *What are the evils and ſad conſequences of apoſtacy and backſliding after the ſacrament ?*

A. They are many ; for thereby we do great and manifeſt injuries, 1. To Jeſus Chriſt. 2. To ourſelves. 3. To others.

Q. *What injury do we to Chriſt by apoſtacy ?*

A. 1. We thereby requit his kindneſs to us with the baſeſt ingratitude.

2*dly*, We reflect, and caſt reproaches upon him as if he were a bad maſter ; for by our turning our back upon Chriſt, after we have engaged with him, we on the matter ſay, that *after trial, we find the devil the better maſter of the two ;* and this is a greater injury, than if we had given him a flat denial at the firſt.

3*dly*, We hereby open the mouths of atheiſts, and the enemies of Chriſt to blaſphemy, and ſay, *Where is the bleſſedneſs that miniſters and profeſſors of religion ſpeak ſo much of ? Where is the ſweetneſs of Chriſt and his way, that is ſo much talked of ? The report we have often heard is certainly not true,* &c.

4*thly*, By apoſtacy from Chriſt, we wound him to the heart, and cauſe him to take up moſt heavy complaints againſt us, as theſe in Iſa. i. 2, 3. Jer. ii. 5, 11. 12, 13. Mic. vi. 3. What a heart-affecting word was that, which Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples in a time of common defection, John vi. 67. *Will ye alſo go away ?*

Q. *What injury do we to ourſelves by apoſtacy ?*

A. 1. By forſaking the Lord, we let go our life and all our happineſs at once, Deut. iv. 3, 4. Deut. xxx. 20. John vi. 68.

2dly, We loſe all our former pains, and will get no thanks for any thing we have done, Ezek. xviii. 24, 2 John verſes 8, 9.

3dly, We forfeit all fellowſhip and communion with God, in duties and ordinances, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. Heb. x. 38.

4thly, We may make ourſelves incapable of ever recovering again according to that terrible word, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

5thly, We make ourſelves the butt of God's fearful threatnings, and expoſe ourſelves to many ſad ſtrokes and plagues, both temporal, ſpiritual and eternal ; particularly, apoſtates fall more under Satan's power than ever, like priſoners who have made their eſcape, and are afterwards retaken, their fate is to be loaded with double irons. We know what judgments the Lord inflicted upon Lot's wife, Judas, Spira, Julian, beſides many other apoſtates ; and we ſee what he threatens againſt ſuch as do backſlide from him, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Pſalm cxxv. 5. Prov. xiv. 14. Jer. v. 6, Heb. vi. 6. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Q. *What injury do we to others by apoſtacy ?*

A. 1. We wrong the godly by ſadning their hearts, and offending them by our carriage.

2dly, We wrong the wicked, by hardning them in ſin, ſtumbling them at the good ways of the Lord and giving them occaſion to think there is no ſuch excellency in religion, as the goſpel doth report.

Q. *Whence is it that communicants are ſo ready to backſlide, and break their vows after a ſacrament ?*

A. In hypocrites, it proceeds mainly from the want of a ſolid root, and good foundation laid in the ſoul, by a thorough work of grace in the heart ; for they that begin in hypocriſy, do commonly end in apoſtacy. But in believers themſelves, there is alſo great inconſtancy, and proneneſs to backſlidings, becauſe of theſe things ;

1. The immoderate love and cares of the world, which are moſt dangerous to the ſoul ; Hence it was, that both Judas and Demas apoſtatized from Chriſt. And hence it is, we ſoon loſe any livelineſs of frame that we get at a ſacrament ; which ſhould cauſe us to take heed how we return again to the world after ſuch an ordinance, that it be with jealouſie and holy fear.

2dly, Becauſe of our unwatchfulneſs, ſelf-confidence and ſecurity upon the back of a communion ; we are too ready to be puffed up with our priviledges and attainments, to think our mountain ſtands ſtrong and hence to lift ourſelves up above our neighbours, and deſpiſe thoſe that come not our length ; upon which account God is provoked to leave us for a little to ourſelves, as he did Peter on the back of the firſt communion, for the ſame cauſe, and we know what came of him.

3dly, Becauſe of Satan's malice and diligence, who ſeeks by all means and devices, to winnow communicants upon the back of ſuch an ordinance, that he may ſift away their good frames, and ſpiritual motions towards Chriſt and heavenly things, Luke xxii. 31.

4thly, Becauſe of bad company that is ready to enſnare us to do that which is evil, as it did Peter after the ſacrament; or have a bad influence upon us, to cauſe us forget, or neglect that which is good: And therefore we ſhou'd endeavour to ſhun the company of the wicked, their carnal joy, vain mirth and worldly diſcourſe which tend very much to deaden the heart.

5thly, Becauſe of the ſlaviſh fear of man, and of perſecution for adhering to Chriſt and his intereſt. This fear had very bad influences on Peter, when he followed Chriſt to the High-Prieſt's hall.

Q. *What courſe ſhall we take, that we may prevent our apoſtacy or backſliding after a ſacrament?*

A. 1. We muſt labour to keep up the conſtant impreſſions of the odiouſneſs of ſin: For if we would *cleave to that which is good,* we muſt ſtill *abhor that which is evil,* Rom. xii. 9.

2dly, We muſt endeavour to keep up a conſtant high eſteem of Chriſt, and a warm love to him: for we cannot think of parting with that, which we ſincerely love and eſteem.

3dly, Let us beware of entertaining any unmortified luſts, or ſecret idols; for theſe will bid fair to looſe our hearts from Chriſt, when religion begins to thwart with them. Herod heard John gladly till once his Herodias was ſtruck at, but then he turned his enemy.

4thly, Let us beware of ſelf-confidence, or high thoughts of ourſelves; for Peter that promiſed moſt in his own ſtrength, was the firſt that denied Chriſt.

5thly, Let us ſtudy to get as much nearneſs and communion with Chriſt as poſſible; and to experience the power of religion in our ſouls, which would be a noble preſervative againſt apoſtacy; for theſe that know moſt of Chriſt, will be moſt unwilling to turn their backs upon him, John vi. 68.

6thly, Let us be oft on the mount of contemplation, taking a view of the promiſed land, and the crown laid up for the perſeverers in religion, Luke xxii. 28, 29.

7thly, Let us always entertain a jealouſy of our treacherous hearts, and guard againſt the firſt declinings thereof; for *happy is the man that thus feareth alway,* Prov. xxvii. 4. Judas was the laſt of his diſciples that ſuſpected himſelf, and ſaid, *Maſter is it I?* And yet was the firſt that betray'd Chriſt.

8thly, Let us be earneſt in prayer, that God may hold us up by the hands of his power and mercy, which have always ſuſtained his people, 1 Pet. i. 5. Pſalm xciv. 18. As the child is never ſo ſafe, as in the nurſe's arm's; ſo neither are we ſafe, but when we commit ourſelves, by believing prayer, into the hands of divine power and mercy. And therefore we have ſtill cauſe to pray with the Pſalmiſt, *Lord hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footſteps ſlip not.* Pſalm xvii. 5.

Now to him, who only is able to guide us thro' the wilderneſs of this world, carry us over the Jordan of death, and land us ſafe in the Canaan of glory, be everlaſting praiſe and glory in the higheſt. Amen.

AN
APPENDIX
CONTAINING
Some things uſeful for YOUNG COMMUNICANTS.

An EXAMPLE *of a perſonal* COVENANT *with* GOD.

ETERNAL and almighty God, behold me a poor creature, loſt and undone by Adam's fall, and deeply ſunk into the gulf of ſin and miſery; Oh! I want words to expreſs my miſerable condition by nature: I am a poor captive, under the ſlavery of ſin, tyranny of Satan, bondage of the law, and the empire of death. My ſins are great, and alſo many, they ſwarm both within and without me, and have made me black and loathſome in thy ſight. I ſee the ſword of juſtice drawn, the law thundering curſes againſt me and the clouds of wrath hanging black over my head: My ſoul is within a ſtep of death and hell: yea, hell is gaping for me beneath, and my ſins are like millſtones about my neck, weighing me down into it. Lord, it is a wonder of thy mercy and patience, that I am not at this moment roaring in endleſs and eaſeleſs flames, without all help and hope. Lord, ſave me, or elſe I periſh.

Alas! I have long lived in a ſtate of diſtance and enmity with thee, and have preferred Satan's drudgery to thy favour, and ſtopped my ears againſt thy calls. A wicked rebel have I been, the hotteſt place in hell is my due.

But glory to God for free redeeming-love; for tho' I have deſtroyed myſelf, yet a way is found out for ſatisfying juſtice, and ſaving ſinners, by the incarnation and death of Jeſus Chriſt. And therefore, O Lord, ſeeing thou haſt graciouſly contrived, revealed, and offered help and ſalvation to me, a loſt hell-deſerving ſinner, in and by the mediation and ſatisfaction of thy dear Son, as my High-prieſt and Surety: I humbly deſire to fall in with this project of rich, ſovereign, free grace; and venture my periſhing ſoul upon the blood of that glorious Redeemer. I am well pleaſed with the Mediator and his righteouſneſs; and acquieſce heartily in the wiſe and noble method of redemption through him. I conſent to the free offers of Chriſt and ſalvation, thou makeſt to me in the goſpel, and accordingly I do here throw my guilty ſoul into the open arms of a crucified Jeſus, lodge it in his wounds, and claſp about him, as my bleeding High-prieſt and Surety, to make atonement to juſtice for my ſins, waſh me in his blood, and bring me to God; I do here diſclaim and renounce all other ſaviours, and methods of ſalvation; and lay the whole ſtreſs of my ſoul and ſalvation upon Chriſt alone. And ſeeing it is in Chriſt the Mediator only, that God is well pleaſed with any ſinner, and is willing to become my God and portion through him: I do here make choice of God in Chriſt, as my God and portion, for time and eternity. Nay, I take heaven and earth to witneſs, that I unfeignedly accept of the whole glorious Trinity and chuſe God the Father to be my Father, God the Son to be my Saviour, and God the holy Ghoſt to be my Sanctifier. And I do ſolemnly devote and give up myſelf, both ſoul and body, to this God, Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, my God in Chriſt; to pardon, waſh, and ſanctify me for his glory and ſervice.

Likewiſe, according to thy rich goſpel offer I do here embrace my Mediator and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, in all theſe ſweet offices and relations, wherein he is held forth to me; I accept of him as my High-Prieſt, Prophet, and King; and give up myſelf to be ſaved, taught, and ruled by him. I take him for my Prieſt, to atone for me by his blood and merits; I rely intirely upon the virtue of his ſacrifice for my juſtification before God. I renounce my own duties, works, and attainments, and all my own righteouſneſs and worthineſs, as filthy rags; and avow Chriſt alone to be the Lord my righteouſneſs. I accept of him as my great Prophet and Counſellor, and renounce my own wiſdom: I ſubmit to his teaching, and commit myſelf to his conduct, that he may lead and guide me through the wilderneſs, and bring me to heaven at laſt. Nay, he is not only my guide to find my way, but I take him for my ſtrength to walk in it, and my reſt at the end of it.

I likewiſe receive Jeſus Chriſt as my King and Ruler, I make choice of his government and laws, and ſwear allegiance to him, and will ſuffer no other lord beſides him, to have dominion over me. What have I to do any more with idols? I renounce all other lords and lovers, and will have none but Chriſt. I renounce mine own will, and take thy will for my law. I eſteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and will hate every falſe way. I accept of all thy ordinances, and bleſs thee for thy word and ſacraments. I ſubmit to all thy providences, diſpoſe of me and mine as thou thinks beſt. I am content to take up thy croſs, and follow thee whereſoever thou goeſt.

Lord, I do with all my power accept of thee, to be my Lord and huſband. I do willingly make choice of thee, and all that is thine: and that for richer, for poorer; for better, for worſe; for well, for wo; for proſperity, for adverſity; yea, for all times and conditions, to love, to honour, to obey thee above all. O now let the marriage-knot be caſt, which death nor hell will never be able to looſe. Lord, I take thy holy Spirit for my quickner, guide and comforter, thy bleſſed word for my rule; thy promiſes for my encouragement; thy glory for my ſcope; thy teſtimonies for my counſellors: thy ſabbaths for my delight; thy people for my companions. In a word, I take Chriſt for my life, holineſs for my way, and heaven for my home.

And, O Lord, as I do accept of thee, and all that is thine; ſo, through thy grace, I do without reſerve, reſign and give up to thee, myſelf, and all that is mine. Alas! I am poor, and have nothing to give thee: but with the poor widow, I caſt in my two mites, ſoul and body into thy treaſury. I dedicate my heart to be thy temple, my ſoul's faculties and affections, to be thy ſervants and agents; my body's ſenſes and members, to be inſtruments of righteouſneſs; and all my enjoyments to be employed for thy uſe and ſervice; Lord, do thou henceforth ſet thy mark, and ſtamp thy image upon me, and all that is mine; that all I have may be ſet apart and conſecrate for thy glory and honour.

I know, O Lord, thou chiefly requireſt the heart, alas, the heart of man is deceitful above all things; and Oh! My heart is deceitful above all hearts, ſo that I am aſhamed to offer it to thee, and afraid it prove falſe to thee. O if my heart were better, and worthy of thy acceptance! had I ten thouſand hearts, they were but a poor preſent; but ſuch a heart as I have, I here offer it, Lord, to thee who made it at firſt, to make it new: O make it as thou would'ſt have it, ſoft, pliable and holy, put thy fear in it, and write thy laws upon it, that I may ſerve thee continually, and never depart from thee. I give my hearty conſent this day to thy entring in, and taking poſſeſſion of the throne in my ſoul. Be caſt open all ye doors of my ſoul, that the king of glory may enter in, and dwell for ever. Lord come in, put down luſts, ſubdue corruptions, and caſt out all that ſtands in oppoſition to thee: And let my ſoul and body, and all that is within me, be formed and faſhioned by thy Spirit, and ſanctified by thy grace, that I may ſhew forth thy praiſe.

O Lord, I do here avouch thee this day to be my God, to walk in thy ways and ſtatutes: But thou knoweſt my weakneſs, my enemies, and the manifold temptations and ſnares I am expoſed to; nay, in me, dwells no good thing: I look therefore to thee, my Surety, for covenanted grace and ſtrength to enable me for duty, and for righteouſneſs, to cover my imperfections therein, and to preſent me faultleſs before God.

O Lord, I depend intirely on thee, for the daily aſſiſtance of thy Spirit, in order to my reſiſting temptations, bearing afflictions, conquering luſts, performing duties, and exerciſing grace. Lord, give always what thou requireſt, and then demand what thou pleaſeſt. Be ſtill forthcoming to me in my ſtraits, and come in with ſeaſonable ſupplies according to my need. I take heaven and earth to witneſs, that I deſire to be ſaved in the method of free grace, that I diſtruſt my own reſolutions and my own ſtrength, that I make all purpoſes and promiſes in Chriſt's ſtrength; that I reſt not at all in my promiſe made to him, but in his unto me, that he will never leave me, nor forſake me. O Lord Jeſus, in thee only have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength: Be ſurety for thy ſervant for good, and undertake for all that God requires of me, and for all that I have promiſed to him.

Lord, ratify in heaven, what I have done on earth, and let it be a ſure and everlaſting covenant, a covenant which thou haſt made with me, as well as I with thee. And let this covenant be a never failing ſpring of comfort to me, through all the ſteps of my life, and eſpecially at the hour of death; that I may rejoice in God, as my covenanted God in Chriſt, both in time, and through the ages of eternity. *Amen.*

Some MEDITATIONS and MATERIALS for PRAYER, proper for COMMUNICANTS before PARTAKING.

MEDITATION I.

GOD's mercies to me have been very great and diſtinguiſhing. I was born in a valley of viſion, I dwell in a lightſom Goſhen, when many others are covered with Egyptian darkneſs, and ſit in the region of the ſhadow of death. I hear heaven's free market-day of grace proclaimed when others are triſted with ſilent ſabbaths. I am invited to a rich goſpel-feaſt when others are triſted with a famine of the word of God.

It is a great privilege, that I am allowed to ſpeak to God in prayer, or hear from him in his word; but how great is the honour he puts upon me, when he invites me to a communion with himſelf, at his holy table, where I may feaſt upon the fruits of Chriſt's purchaſe, and hear him ſay to the gueſts, *Eat O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

Oh! I am unworthy of the leaſt crumb, that falls from his table, far leſs of being admitted to ſit with him at the table, and eat of the childrens bread.

But ſince, he is pleaſed to honour me ſo far, as to call me to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb; O that he would alſo give me the wedding-garment, prepare my unprepared heart, and grant me all the ſacramental graces, that I may be in caſe to attend and entertain the King of glory.

O for ſpiritual hunger and thirſt for the ſoul-feaſt, the heavenly manna, and water of life, that is to be ſet before me! O that I had walls digged in this valley of Baca, that heaven's rain would deſcend and fill the pools! That ſo the wilderneſs might be turned into a fruitful field, and the dry land of my heart into ſprings of water, and my barran ſoul might bloſſom as the roſe, and ſend forth a ſmell as of a field, which the Lord hath bleſſed.

I am now to aſcend mount Calvary, and go to the place where Chriſt is to be ſet forth as crucified before mine eyes; O that there I may look on him whom I have pierced and mourn for ſin, that made the nails, and drove them into my Redeemer! O that I may there receive a broken Chriſt into a broken heart! O that the blood of Chriſt which ſpeaketh better things than the blood of Abel, may there plead with God for me, anſwer all the challenges of the law, and ſpeak peace to my conſcience! Let him there kiſs me with the kiſſes of his lips, and enable me to embrace him in the arms of my faith, ſaying, *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.* O for a lively and ſtrong faith, that I may take and hold a ſtrong grip of my Redeemer, that like the ſpouſe, I may ſay, *I held him, and would not let him go!* Alas, for my weak and ſlippery fingered faith that oft lets Chriſt go, when I have fair occaſions of getting grips of him. Oft do I loſe my grips; Lord, faſten them better. Did not Chriſt take faſter grips of me, than I do of him, my ſoul had been in the devil's grips without relief. Ever bleſſed be his name for the ſtrong grips he took and held of elect ſinners on the croſs: yea, ſo ſure and faſt were they that neither death nor devils, the wrath of God, nor curſes of the law could ever make him looſe them again. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it. His love was ſtronger than death. Oh! where is my love to him? O that the infinite love of Chriſt in dying on a croſs, might kindle in my frozen heart this ſacred fire of love to him, that might burn up all my luſts and idols as ſtubble; and make me cry out, 'None but Chriſt, none but Chriſt.'

MEDITATION II.

I was entered into covenant with God by baptiſm, and was then brought under ſtrong engagements to be the Lord's: but Oh! I have broken my covenant and backſlidden from Chriſt. Were I under the law or covenant of works, I would be utterly undone. But, bleſſed be God I am under the tenders of a covenant of grace, that admits of repentance, and a ſurety for the guilty criminal; and graciouſly promiſeth pardon to the penitent believer: nay promiſeth repentance to the hard hearted, faith to the unbelieving, and preſſingly inviteth backſliding children to return to God through a Mediator. I do here take hold of this gracious and well ordered covenant, Lord ſeal it to me at thy table; what ſhall I render to the Lord, for inſtituting this ordinance, for leaving this precious legacy and token of love to his Church, for preſerving it to this age, and continuing it in this land; and particularly, for ſparing and allowing me to come unto it? Glory to God, that I ſee the ſeal of this covenant, that I ſee this welcome rain-bow appearing in the clouds of wrath, as a ſign and token of God's confirming his covenant to believers, and ſecuring them againſt a deſtroying deluge. Bleſſed be God, that I am neither among Jews or Pagans, upon earth; nor devils or damned ſouls in hell. I thank the Lord of heaven and earth, that the things which were hid from the wiſe and prudent, are now revealed unto babes: And that my eyes ſee and ears hear that which many prophets and kings deſired to ſee and hear; and yet might not: And that now life and immortality are brought to light by the goſpel.

O what would fallen angels, and damned ſpirits give for ſuch a day and ſuch a proſpect as I have. Lo, fire and brimſtone from heaven is rained upon them, while manna is rained upon me. O that the ſolemn day I have in view, may indeed be a day of the Son of man, a day of his power, and a day of his courts, better and ſweeter to me than a thouſand!

O that the holy table I am going to, may be richly furniſhed by the great Maſter of the feaſt! O that he may grace it with his own preſence, and abundantly bleſs the proviſion! That by it the ſtarving creature may be fed, the needy beggar may be ſatisfied, the hard heart may be ſoftned, the cool affections warmed, the cloudy ſoul brightned, the ſtraitned heart enlarged, the dim eye enlightned, the wandring mind fixed, and the doubting ſoul reſolved. O that it may be a feaſt of fat things full of marrow; a meal ſignally bleſſed from heaven to me! That it may prove life to my ſoul, death to my ſins, ſtrength to my graces, and poiſon to my luſts. Lord, let my heart begin to burn, when I ſee the elements; let my bands be looſed, when I touch them; let mine eyes be lightned when I taſte them; and let my whole ſoul be ſtrengthned when I partake of them.

O that in receiving the bread and wine, I may be enabled to receive Jeſus Chriſt into my heart; and may thereby get true and real infeftment of all Chriſt's purchaſe, and a valid and unqueſtionable title to the everlaſting inheritance ſealed and confirmed to me! Lord, make thyſelf known to me, in the breaking of bread; manifeſt thyſelf to me, as thou doſt not unto the world. O bring me into the banqueting-houſe, and let thy banner over me be love! Lord come to the feaſt, for it will be a dead and heartleſs feaſt, if thou be abſent: Sit thou at the head of the table, carve every one their portion, and give me a Benjamin's meſs, (if it be thy will) that my ſoul may be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, and my mouth may praiſe thee with joyful lips. And when the King ſits at his table, let my ſpikenard ſend forth the ſmell thereof. "Awake, O north-wind, and come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out: And then let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits. O let my well-beloved come and feed among the lilies, till the day break, and the ſhadows flee away."

MEDITATION III.

BLeſſed are they that hear and know the joyful ſound: But, O what will the news of Chriſt avail me, without an intereſt in Chriſt? What will it profit me, to have the Son revealed to me, if he be not revealed in me?

O for the practical and experimental knowledge of Chriſt! Lord, hide not thyſelf from me, ſtand not behind the wall, but ſhew thyſelf to me through the latteſs of ordinances. O draw by the vail of my guilt, and make a diſplay of thy glorious and attractive excellencies, that mine eyes may ſee the King in his beauty, and my ſoul may be engaged to flee to him upon the wings of faith and love.

I am this day called to go the table of this great King: But I am in a ſtrait betwixt two: If I decline to come to this table, then I diſobey my dying Saviour, who commands me to ſhew forth his death in this manner; if I come unworthily, then I fear leſt I contract the guilt of his blood, and eat and drink my own damnation. Alas, my unworthineſs makes me tremble to come; and yet my need pinches me, ſo that I cannot ſtay away. To whom, Lord, ſhall I go, but to thee: For thou haſt the words of eternal life. Thou art my ſun, from whoſe beams I muſt receive the light of grace. Thou art the fountain, from which I muſt draw living water. Thou art the root, from which I muſt receive ſap of increaſe. Thou art my head, from whom I muſt get life and influence. So that without thee, I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing. Let all my wants be upon thee, and let all my ſupplies come from thee. Surely, O Lord, the ſea is not ſo full of water, nor the ſun ſo full of light, as thou art full of grace and mercy. O fill my narrow veſſel out of thy inexhauſtible fountain. Caſt open the doors of thy treaſures, and let me have acceſs to Chriſt's unſearchable riches. Are not theſe freely beſtowed upon the needy, without money and without price? O ſcatter thy bounty among poor beggars, and let me be admitted to gather it. Let not ſuch a miſerable object go from thy door without an alms, for thou wilt'ſt not miſs a crumb to me. O let not the needy be forgotten, let not the expectation of the poor periſh for ever. Let none return aſhamed from the fountain, who come expecting water. Haſt thou not ſaid, *Thou wilt'ſt pour water on them that are thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground?* And is there any more dry, more poor and needy than I am? Lord, make me, as thirſty as I am dry; as humble, as I am poor; and as ſenſible, as I am needy. Open my mouth wide, and then fill it. Alas, the voice of my prayer is weak, but O the cry of my wants is ſtrong: Lord, hear that loud cry. Deal not with me according to my feeling and ſenſe of need, which is ſmall; but O deal with me according to my real neceſſity and thy royal bounty, which is great beyond expreſſion.

Lord, grace thy own ordinance, and beautify the aſſembly of thy people with thy preſence; put the wedding-garment upon the gueſts; let thy Spirit reſt upon them, let thy power be preſent to heal them, and cauſe thy glory fill the temple.

O that God would bow the heavens and come down! O that he would touch the mountains (*viz.* hard hearts, unbelief, pride, worldlineſs, *&c.*) and cauſe them all flow down at his preſence. Let the Jordan of my luſts be driven back. Let the mountains ſkip like rams, and the little hills like lambs. Let the earthly heart tremble at the preſence of the God of Jacob. Let the rock be turned into ſtanding water, and the flint into a fountain of water.

O come down as the rain upon the mown graſs, and as ſhowers that water the earth, and do thou revive all the withered roots of thy people. O for a ſhower from heaven, even a ſhower of the Holy Ghoſt, to make all their ſouls as a watered garden, that they might ſpring up as the graſs, revive as the corn, grow as the lily, caſt forth their roots, ſpread out their branches, and their beauty might be as the olive-tree, and their ſmell as Lebanon.

O if our Lord Jeſus Chriſt's love and glory would come flowing like a full-ſea, or the ruſhing of a mighty wind, and fill all the corners of his houſe and of his table, that great grace might be on all his people. O to hear a ſound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, a ſign that God is gone forth before us to ſmite the hoſts of our luſts, and triumph over our enemies. O that the kindly breathings and proſperous gales of God's Spirit would enliven all the drooping hearts, and fill all the empty ſails of wind-bound communicants. O that this heavenly wind would blow from the right airth, that poor leaky veſſels might come ſpeed in their voyages, and ſail ſtraight foreward to the ſhore of Emmanuel's land,

MEDITATION IV.

HOW great is the divine goodneſs and condeſcenſion to me, in that he is pleaſed to allow me ſuch near acceſs to him! The men of Bethſhemeſh had not liberty to look into the ark: But I have a warrant, yea, a command to contemplate a crucified Jeſus, who is the image of the inviſible God the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon: Yea, not only to look to him, but alſo to touch him, handle his wounds, embrace his perſon, and lodge him in my ſoul.

Oh, Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof; the houſe is ſo ruinous, ſmoaky and defiled, thou haſt not a fit place with me where to lay thy head; but ſince thou didſt not diſdain to ly in a manger among beaſts, nor to dine with Simon the leper; O come in and furniſh the houſe, prepare an upper room in my ſoul, and there abide and keep the paſſover with me. A look or word from thee would do it. Lord, ſpeak the word, and thy ſervant's ſoul ſhall be healed and cleanſed. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou uſeſt to do unto thoſe that love thy name.

Happy would I be, if I might get a heart-melting and ſoul-overcoming look of Chriſt's face, at his own table, even of his face that is white and ruddy, and fairer than the ſons of men. O for ſuch a look as he gave poor Iſrael, when wallowing in his blood, a look that may cauſe me to live. O for ſuch a look as he gave backſliding Peter, a look that may pierce my hard heart, and cauſe me to weep bitterly. O for ſuch a look, as he gave the publican Zaccheus, a look that might bring me ſpeedily down from ſins and idols, from my ſelf-conceit and ſelf-righteouſneſs, and cauſe me receive Chriſt joyfully into my heart.

Lord, look all my idols out of countenance, and look my wandring heart into a right frame for thy work. O come put in thy hand by the hole of the door, and let heaven's ſweet-ſmelling myrrh drop upon the handles of the lock, that I may awake from my drowſineſs, and open all my doors to the king of glory. Come in thou bleſſed of the Lord, wherefore ſtandeſt thou without. Come and caſt out all my idols, worldlineſs, pride, prejudice, doubtings, and unbelief: Come, lay an arreſt on all my wandering thoughts, and call in my ſtraying affections; Come, bind Satan the enemy of my ſoul, and reſtrain him ſo, as I may get my Saviour entertained, at his own table: Come in, Lord, and abide in my heart, as long as I abide here in the fleſh. *Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.*

O thou who delivered'ſt Noah from drowning in the great, deluge, by the ark prepared for him; do thou deliver my ſoul from periſhing in the fearful deluge of thy wrath, by the ark of Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt prepared for ſaving heavy loaden ſinners.

O thou who delivered'ſt Lot from Sodom and the flames of fire; deliver my ſoul from the Sodom of a natural ſtate, and from the flames of divine anger that will conſume thoſe that abide therein.

O thou that delivered'ſt Iſaac from being ſlain and offered up a ſacrifice, by the ram caught in the thickets: O deliver me from being ſacrificed to divine juſtice, by Jeſus Chriſt my propitiatory ſacrifice, in whom thou art well pleaſed.

I am now to make a near approach to a crucified Chriſt my ark and city of refuge: O to be ſafely lodged therein. How ſad will it be, if I be found hovering without the ark, till the flood come and waſh me off from the very ſide of it! And even when I ſee a window opened, and mercy's hand put forth to take in poor ſhelterleſs doves. How ſad eternally will it be, to be ſo near Chriſt, within a ſtep of him, and never reach him, but periſh like the thief upon the croſs, with a Saviour on his ſide, and ſink into hell betwixt the outſtretched arms of his mercy, and with his gracious calls ſounding in mine ears. What woful madneſs will it be, wilfuly to ſtarve for hunger beſide a rich feaſt that is prepared for the hungry? To periſh for thirſt near a full and running fountain? Or to die in my wounds beſide the balm of Gilead, and the ſkilful phyſician there? Let me ſtir up myſelf in time to take hold of him.

O that when I approach ſo near a crucified Jeſus in the Lord's ſupper, I may with Thomas thruſt my hand into his ſide, and alſo throw my heart into it. Let me not only behold the wounds of his ſide, hands and feet, but alſo by faith drink of the water of life that runs from them, and bath my ſoul therein.

MEDITATION V.

THE Lord is now calling me as he did Moſes, (not out of the midſt of a burning-buſh, but out of the middle of the flames of his love) *Put off thy ſhoes from thy feet, for the place* whither *thou* goeſt *is holy ground.* O that I may put of the ſhoes of earthly affections, ſtrip myſelf of worldly cares, and look narrowly to my ſteps when making ſuch a near and ſolemn approach to the great Jehovah. Had not I been invited and commanded to come to his holy table, ſuch a ſinful wretch as I, durſt never have attempted it.

Inſtead of ſtretching forth a ſcepter of mercy to invite me to his table, he might, with the rod of his wrath, juſtly have daſhed me in pieces as a potter's veſſel. Inſtead of entertaining me with the bread of life, and the cup of bleſſing; he might have given me the bread and water of affliction; yea, have thrown me down there, where I ſhould in vain cry out for ever, for a drop of water to cool my tongue.

I am polluted and unfit to appear before God, but Oh, they are undone, who keep away from him. I come not to him, becauſe I am unworthy; but becauſe he is rich in mercy, and has contrived a way for ſaving ſuch as I am. I come as the poor ſtarved wretch to the fire; I come as the hungry to be fed, as the naked to be clothed, as the ſick and maimed to be recovered and healed; as the unclean to be waſhed in *the fountain opened to the houſe of David.*

Lord, make this a healing ordinance to my deſeaſed ſoul, and the ſavour of life to my dead heart; make it alſo a ſealing ordinance, to clear up to me the evidences of grace. Confirm to me the pardon of ſin, and the aſſurance of thy love. O that I may ſo approach to Chriſt at his table, that I may return from it with my heavy laden ſoul diſburdened and at reſt, my conſcience quieted, my corruption ſubdued, my grace increaſed, my ſoul encouraged, and my heart enlarged to run the way of his commandments.

Lord, increaſe my faith, excite my repentance and warm my cold heart with affection to thyſelf; O that the love of God were ſhed abroad in my heart.

Lord, thaw my cold and icy heart with the beams of thy love, and breathings of thy Spirit, may I have grace to wait cloſely upon God, and attend all the motions of his Spirit. And when he draws, O cauſe me to run; when he knocks, O make me to open; when he blows, O help me to ſpread the ſails: And when the waters are ſtirred, O let me put it in for cure. I am lying like the impotent man at the ſide of the pool, but of myſelf I am unable to ſtep in, and there is no man to put me into it; nay, all the men on earth, or angels in heaven cannot do it; only the man Chriſt Jeſus, can give healing virtue to the waters of the ſanctuary, and apply them to me.

Lord bleſs theſe who are to be employed as thy ſtewards, at this ſolemn feaſt; enlarge their hearts, and open their mouths: Give them both a door of utterance, and of enterance: Let them ſpeak from the heart, and to the heart. O make their tongues as fined ſilver, that their words may be powerful and pleaſant, ſuitably and fitly ſpoke, like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver. And while they are buſied in inviting, calling, and ſerving others at thy table; let them not go unſerved themſelves.

O that thou wouldſt deſcend, at this occaſion, upon the mount, in ſight of all the people. Let the Spirit of God with his influences, be like Jordan, at this ſeaſon to overflow all its banks. O for a bleſſed inundation, and a high-ſtream-tide of that river, whoſe ſtreams make glad the city of God; Lord, ſend a ſtream of it into every communicant's heart, and let mine be well-watered, and become like the garden of God. O that I had Jacob's ſpiritual ſtrength, I would wreſtle with thee for thy preſence and bleſſing to myſelf and others; I would even ſay, I will not let thee go till thou bleſs me: Nay, Lord, I would have the bleſſing and keep thee too; for thy preſence is the beſt of all bleſſings. And O it is a needful bleſſing at the ſolemn feaſt; what can the people do there without thee? They will be no better than a company of dead carcaſſes ſet about thy table: Oh! there will be no life among them, if the Lord of life be away. If thy preſence, Lord, go not with me, carry me not up hence: The deſire of my ſoul is to thee, and the remembrance of thy name: For there is none in heaven or earth, but thou alone, who can ſuit my ſoul's neceſſities. Nothing leſs than infinite mercy can forgive my ſin: Nothing but infinite power can ſubdue my luſts: No leſs than infinite fulneſs can ſupply my wants: And nothing but infinite wiſdom can guide me through this wilderneſs, and bring me to Canaan above.

MEDITATION VI.

SHALL ſuch a wretched dog as I preſume to come unto thy table, and eat of the childrens bread; who am not worthy to gather the crumbs that fall from it! But I have heard of the mercy of the king of Iſrael, that he delights to ſhew it to the unworthy, even to the chief of ſinners. Lord, here is an object of thy pity; I am ſtarving, and have no bread; naked, and have no clothing; wounded and have no cure; polluted and have no fountain; in debt and have no money; burdened and have no reſt. Thus I have deſtroyed myſelf, and have no remedy in myſelf; but in the name of the Lord Jeſus, I have a ſure all-ſufficient help.

Lord, I have a multitude of ſins and miſeries, but thou haſt a mulitude of tender mercies. I have deep and heinous guilt, but thou haſt a deep fountain to waſh it out. Behold one depth calleth to another, the depth of my miſery, to the depth of thy mercy. My ſore is broad, but thy plaiſter is anſwerable. My wound is great, but thy balm is excellent. O Lord, be merciful to me, heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee. Come, diſplay thy matchleſs excellencies, and healing virtue of thy balm at this time: And O begin with my diſtempered ſoul, and make experiment of it upon me. I am grievouſly ſtung with ſin and ſatan, theſe fiery ſerpents and lifting it up on the pole, even Jeſus Chriſt wounded, and lifted up on the croſs. O give me faith's eyes to ſpy him thus lifted up, under the ſymbols of bread and wine: O that I may lift up my eyes and ſee his healing wounds, and feel healing virtue come from them to my wounded ſoul.

Lord, draw me, and I will run after thee; caſt a cord of thy love about my heart, and hale me to thee. Oh! but my heart, my ſoul is heavy, I have great guilt, and many luſts like lumps of lead hanging at me; how can I run, and how ſhall I be drawn? But haſt thou not ſaid, Lord, *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.* Sinners of all ſorts and ſizes. Surely a crucified Jeſus lift up on a croſs, with his bleeding arms ſtretched out, to embrace loſt ſinners, is the moſt attractive and drawing ſight in the world. This wonderful load ſtone hath drawn thouſands of iron hearts to it at once: And ſhall my obſtinate heart refuſe to be drawn? O give me faith's eyes, and let me ſee the glorious conqueror Jeſus dying, and drawing his poor captives home to himſelf; and let my heart be drawn with the reſt.

Now the devil is holding, and Chriſt is drawing: Now Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels are ſtriving about communicants ſouls; O that Michael may prevail, and his followers may be increaſed. O that the red-dragon's head may be broken, and his intereſt get a fatal blow at this time.

Lovely Jeſus, ſhew thyſelf at this occaſion through the latteſs, for *thou art fairer than the ſons of men, more glorious than mountains of prey, and the chiefeſt among ten thouſands.* Thou art white and ruddy; white, in regard of thy ſpotleſs innocence; and ruddy, in regard of thy bloody paſſion; and this matchleſs complexion makes thee altogether lovely in the eyes of all true believers. O bright morning-ſtar! I beſeech thee to ſhew me thy glory. Make thy holy table like mount Tabor to me, the mount of transfiguration, where I may get a heart-raviſhing ſight of Chriſt's beauty, and ſuch a view of his comelineſs, as may ſatiſfy my mind, captivate my heart, and make me long to be where I ſhall have the full and everlaſting viſion of his face.

Lord, meet with me at thy own table, and ſhew me a token for good. Deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. Reſcue me from the fearful pit, bring me out of the miry clay; ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings; and put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſe unto our God. Behold, O God our ſhield, and look upon the face of thine anointed, even thy beloved Son in whom thou art well pleaſed. Lord, ſhew thyſelf well-pleaſed with me in him; and let me be accepted in the Beloved.

Lord, ſay unto my ſoul, fear not, I am thy ſalvation. Thy voice is ſweet, O cauſe me to hear it. And make me hear thee, ſo as I may follow thee: and follow thee, ſo as I may find thee; and find thee, ſo as I may never loſe ſight of thee again.

MEDITATION VII.

O WHITHER am I going, the place is holy, the table is holy, the bread that I am to eat is holy, the cup that I am to drink is holy: and God who is infinitely holy is terrible from his holy places.

A wrong touch or look now is criminal, and may coſt me dear, as it did Uzzah and the Bethſhemites. This fearful breach that was made on them, may cauſe me tremble, and cry out, *Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord God?*

If John the baptiſt (one of the greateſt that was born of women, and filled with the holy Ghoſt from the womb) thought himſelf not worthy to unlooſe Chriſt's ſhoes; O how much more unworthy am I (the meaneſt of creatures, yea, a tranſgreſſor from the womb) to be admitted to touch, nay, feed upon Chriſt's broken body and ſhed blood!

If Peter having ſeen Chriſt's glory, and his own vileneſs, thought himſelf unworthy to be in the ſame ſhip with Chriſt, and cried out, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man:* How ſhall I, who am the chief of ſinners, adventure to ſit at the ſame table with him and feed upon his fleſh and blood!

If the poor woman who had the bloody iſſue, feared for to come, and touch the hem of Chriſt's garment; how much more may I, who am full of the running iſſues of ſin, fear to touch the ſarced ſymbols of his body and blood, and to put my hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails? Lord, if the holy angels, theſe pure and unſpotted ſeraphims, who burn in zeal for thy ſervice, muſt even cover their faces before thee: O how dare I appear in thy preſence, whoſe zeal is ſo languiſhing, whoſe love is ſo cold, whoſe mind is ſo earthly, and prayers ſo dull!

But what ſhall I then do? Shall I with thoſe who were bidden to the king's feaſt, refuſe and make my excuſe? Oh, I fear then the king would be angry, declare me unworthy to taſte of his ſupper, and ſwear in his wrath, that I ſhall never enter into his reſt.

I confeſs, Lord, I am fallen aſleep with the foolish virgins, I find no oil in my lamp to go and meet the Bridegroom at his table. But bleſſed be thy name, the market of grace is not yet ended: I will therefore go preſently to thoſe that ſell it, not to the merit of ſaints, or blood of martyrs: but to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who graciouſly counſelled me to buy of him tried gold, and precious oil, that will ſtand me in ſtead in time of need. O that my oil and my lamp may be lighted at the beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs, and ſo it ſhall never be put out.

Many pieces of furniture do I need, I want the girdle of ſincerity, the ſhield of faith, the helmet of hope, the ſword of the Spirit, the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, and to have my feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace. But praiſes to my Redeemer and captain of ſalvation, that hath provided a full ſtorehouſe and armoury to anſwer all my ſoul's neceſſities. O that out of his fulneſs I may receive grace for grace!

Lord, theſe things are ſo valuable, I have not wherewith to buy them, for I am wretched, miſerable, poor, blind and naked. But good news! The pooreſt perſon in the world can make this purchaſe, for all goſpel-wares and commodities are bought without money and without price. O let me win to this cheap market, and be content to take all out of Chriſt's hand, as a free gift, diſclaiming any worthineſs in myſelf.

Lord, furniſh me freely with all the qualifications and grace which I need: And when I come, and offer my gift at thy altar, I'll ſay with David, All things come of thee, and of thine own have I given thee. For what have I but what I have received? Nay, I'll join with the redeemed for ever in their ſong; Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory.

MEDITATION VIII.

If the centurion, whoſe faith was ſo ſtrong and lively, that Chriſt ſaid he had not ſeen ſuch faith in Iſrael, yet was fain to ſay to Chriſt, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof:* What ſhall I think of myſelf, who have ſo little faith, and ſo much unbelief? Can I think myſelf worthy that Chriſt ſhould come into my heart? O! I am utterly unworthy of ſuch a gueſt: But ſeeing ſo great a king is willing to lodge in ſo poor a cottage; Lord, ſend beforehand, and furniſh it for thyſelf. O let thy Spirit come and adorn the upper-room and make me all glorious within. O for a penitent ſoul and a believing heart.

Moſes of old with his rod ſmiting the rock brought forth running water. O if Chriſt with the rod of his word, would but touch my heart, it would ſoon melt into tears of repentance. Alas, my hard heart will neither break nor melt, till the Spirit of Chriſt come and deal with it. Lord, tho' I have not tears enough with Mary Magdalene to waſh thy feet; yet thou haſt blood enough to waſh my feet, heart, hands, and altogether: O bring my polluted impenitent heart to that fountain: I know nothing will bring tears from mine eyes and ſorrow from my heart, if a believing view of that blood do it not.

O for the eyes of faith to look to Golgotha and Gethſemane and view Chriſt's agony and bloody ſweat, and the plentiful ſtreams of his blood that flowed down from the croſs. O that I could remember the wormwood and the gall, the cries and tears, the curſes and pains, the deſertion and anguiſh, which my ſins brought upon the Son of God. O how did they pierce his head with thorns, his hands with nails, his ſide with ſpears, and his heart with ſorrows! O the ſharpneſs of that ſword that pierced his ſoul! O the bitterneſs of that cup which he drank for me, a cup all mingled with the guilt of my ſins, and the curſes of a broken law! O can I go to his table, look to his bleeding wounds, hearken to his dying groans, ſee my Redeemer's heart melted like wax; and yet my heart continue hard and unbroken? O ſhall the rocks rent ſooner than my heart!

O my ſoul, where is they faith? Where thy bowels? Where thy gratitude? Where thy humanity? Come then, behold the author of life becoming obedient unto death, the ſpring of bleſſedneſs underlying the curſe; the fountain of happineſs thrown into miſery, nay, into hell, and all to ſave thee from it. O behold thy glorious Surety with his head bowing on the croſs, and inclined to die. Behold his innocent hands that healed all ſorts of diſeaſes and were ſtill doing good, pierced and beſprinkled with his own blood. Behold his feet that never ſtood in the way of ſinners, but always walked in the law of the Lord, with ſharp and long nails faſtened to the croſs. Behold his ſide opened with a cruel ſpear, and all red with his own blood. Behold his bowels that yearned for ſinners, now ſhrunk and dried up. Behold his face that was fairer than the ſons of men, now defiled with the ſpittings of the ungodly. Behold his mouth that ſpake as never man ſpake, hath no other refreſhment but vinegar and gall. Behold his ears that were wont to hear the angels praiſes, now ringing with the mocks and blaſphemies of the wicked. Behold the eyes that were brighter than the ſun, now darkneſs with the ſhadow of death. Oh! now I ſee the ſun of righteouſneſs under a fearful eclipſe. I ſee his ſpotleſs ſoul covered with the black clouds of the Father's wrath. I ſee the heavens ſhut and darkened againſt him, in the time of his diſtreſs. I ſee his royal viſage turned pale, his ſtrength dried up like a pot-ſheard, his tongue cleaving to his jaws, and the ſtreams of his precious blood watering his pierced feet.

O ſhall I thus ſee the innocent Lamb of God, falling a ſacrifice to incenſed juſtice, for my heinous guilt, and not loath myſelf for all my abominations? O curſed ſin! murderer of the Son of God! ſhall I ever harbour it any more? Oh, let me never look upon it, without tears of grief; nor think of it, without indignation and riſing heart. O that henceforth the face of ſin may be more frightful to me than hell, and temptations to it more terrible than death.

MEDITATION IX.

UNDER the law, they who had touched the dead were forbid to come near the altar upon which were offered ſacrifices, that were but types of Chriſt upon the croſs, and ſhall I who am by nature dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, and perform nothing but dead works, be allowed to approach that holy table, where a living Saviour and a living God is preſent?

Bleſſed be the Lord Jeſus, that has come to viſit the dead, tho' rotting and ſtinking in the grave. O that I may be raiſed up by the word of his power; as Lazarus of old was, and all my bonds looſed, that I may be at liberty to worſhip and ſerve him. And O that I may be allowed to be at the table with him, as was Lazarus after he was raiſed by him from the dead.

Lord, tho' I be dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, yet the bread which thou haſt prepared, cannot only ſtrengthen the living, but can alſo give life to the dead. Art thou not the reſurrection and the life, who can raiſe the dead to life, and call things that are not, as tho' they were? O cauſe me to hear thy quickning voice.

Bleſſed be God, for the encouragement he hath given me, to come to this great feaſt. It being a feaſt of charity, to which are invited not only the rich, but the poor, maimed, lame, and blind, who cannot make any return to the author of it. My bleſſed Saviour while he was on earth, diſdained not to eat with publicans and ſinners; and ſurely tho' he be now highly exalted in glory, he ſtill retains the bowels of a man, and all the pity and charity to periſhing ſouls, that ever he had.

Lord, I am polluted, but will not diſpair, for with thee is the fountain of ſalvation. I am poor, but will not deſpond, for thou art the Lord of the whole earth, and opens thy treaſures to the needy. I am naked, but I will not run away with Adam, and hide myſelf from thee, becauſe I am ſo; but I will come with the more ſpeed to thee, to cover me with the wool and fleece of the Lamb of God, even the ſpotleſs righteouſneſs and innocence of my Saviour. All my righteouſneſs is as filthy rags; but, Lord clothe me with the goodly raiment of my elder brother, which hath a ſweet ſmell in thy noſtrils, that therein I may obtain the bleſſing of my Father, and a title to the inheritance: And let me, by my Saviour's grace, be enabled to offer thee a ſincere and contrite heart, which is as ſavoury meat, in which thou takeſt ſpecial delight. *A broken and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not deſpiſe.* Lord, break my hard heart.

And will God, in very deed, dwell and converſe with men, yea, ſinful men? With thee, Lord, is great and terrible majeſty; nay, to the wicked and Chriſtleſs thou art a conſuming fire. But glory to thy name, I ſee thee ſeated upon a throne of grace, that a poor ſinner like me, may draw near and converſe with thee: Yea, I ſee a rain-bow about thy throne, a ſure token of thy mercy, and willingneſs to be reconciled to ſinners through thy Son Jeſus Chriſt. I ſee thee in the word and ſacraments reaching forth thy ſceptre of grace, that I may come and touch the top of it and live. Lord, all my hope is in the mercy of thy bowels, and the merits of Chriſt's death. Surely, thou art more ready to give then I am to aſk; and more willing to forgive than I am to repent.

I am now going to a great feaſt, Lord, forbid it be to me like Belſhazzar's feaſt, who in the time of it, perceived a hand writing his condemnation. But O that I may ſee the finger of God writing my eternal abſolution, and aſſuring me that God will not enter into judgment with me. And as of old, thy gracious preſence in Solomon's temple, was manifeſted by the fire which came down from heaven, and conſumed the burnt-offering; ſo I beſeech thee to ſend, from heaven into my heart, the fire of thy love to conſume my luſts, kindle my affections to thee, and make my prayers more fervent.

Lord, thou uſeſt not to ſend beggars always from thy houſe without an alms. Yea, thou haſt oft been found of them, that ſought thee not; and haſt made ſurprizing and unexpected viſits to poor ſouls, and made them, before they were aware, like the chariots of Aminadab. O that I could win near hand Chriſt at his table, O that I may be allowed to kiſs his feet, hear his voice, feel the ſmell of his garments, and the ſavour of his ſweet ointments. *Amen.*

Some MEDITATIONS and MATERIALS for PRAYER, proper for communicants after partaking.

MEDITATION I.

WHAT ſhall I render to the Lord, for all his gifts and benefits unto me! The royal Pſalmiſt admires divine goodneſs, in cauſing the ſun, moon and ſtars to ſhine in the firmament, for man's behoof; and cries, what is man that God is mindful of him! But ſurely, more cauſe have I to cry ſo, when I conſider, how God has cauſed the ſun of righteouſneſs to ſhine on me, in the firmament of goſpel-ordinances, and made the day-ſpring from on high to viſit me: O that I may find this heavenly light ſhining alſo into my heart.

The ſame Pſalmiſt alſo exalts God's goodneſs, in giving the beaſts of the field, fowls of the air, and fiſhes of the ſea to be food for man; but far greater cauſe have I to praiſe God's infinite mercy for giving me the fleſh and blood of his only Son, to feed and preſerve the life of my ſoul.

The poor woman of Canaan aſked only leave to gather the crumbs which fell from the childrens table, but unworthy I have been admitted to ſit at the table of the Lord, and eat of the childrens bread! Nay, I have been invited to eat heartily, and drink abundantly; ſeeing then I have eaten of Chriſt's meat, O that in the ſtrength of it, I may travel a good journey, and work a good turn for Chriſt! O that I may be a diligent and faithful ſervant to ſo good a maſter. Lord, I have eaten of thy bread, let me never lift up the heel againſt thee.

Nay, Lord, I have gone to thy table, and adventured to ſeal a marriage-contract with Jeſus Chriſt, as my Lord and huſband: I am indeed a black and uncomely bride; but my glorious huſband can beautify me with his perfect comelineſs put upon me. Let me for ever diſcharge my old huſbands and lovers, the law, my own righteouſneſs, the world, my luſts and idols, and never have any hankering thoughts after them. O that I may be looking, longing, and providing for the marriage-day! The bridegroom is ready long ſince, O that I were ready to go forth and meet him. That will be a glorious day, when he will rend the clouds, come down and ſet tryſt with me in the air; and ſend his angels to carry me up to meet with him there. Why then doth he delay his coming? Not becauſe he is unready, but becauſe I am not ready, and all the elect are not yet gathered in. O that I were made meet and prepared for his coming; and my heart and thoughts were ſtill with him.

I have now a journey to go, and a race to run, even a race to heaven, and I have great need of ſtrength and direction in it. O if Chriſt would take me up into his chariot of ſalvation, that is all paved with love, how eaſily would I ſit, and how ſafely and pleaſantly would I travel in the king's high road towards Emmanuel's land? What ſweet views and proſpects would I get from Chriſt's triumphal chariot? O the lovely hills, the fruitful valleys, the pleaſant rivers, the fair gardens, the flouriſhing trees, which I might ſee in the heavenly Canaan? What ivory palaces, golden ſtreets, and gates of pearl might I ſee in the new Jeruſalem? O could I travel in Chriſt's company, my journey would not be tedious to me.

MEDITATION II.

IF he that wanted the wedding-garment at the king's table, was caſt into utter darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth: What ſhall come of theſe, who have come to Chriſt's table, not only wanting the wedding-garment, but even clade with Satan's livery, wearing the rags of the old man, and drawing the chains of iniquity about with them! Lord, hadſt thou dealt with me, and my fellow-communicants, according to our ſins, nay, according to our religious ſervices, thou hadſt made the congregation an Aceldama, a field of blood: Alas, we have mingled our ſacrifices with our ſins, no wonder tho' thou haſt mingled our ſacrifices with our blood. But bleſſed be thy name, who inſtead of deſtroying us with the breath of thy mouth, art pleaſed to breath ſuch words of comfort to us *I will not execute the fierceneſs of my wrath, becauſe I am God and not man. I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye ſons of Jacob are not conſumed.* Merciful God, thou forbids men to give that which is holy to dogs, and caſt pearls before ſwine; And yet in thy boundleſs compaſſions, thou giveſt thy Son who is the holy one of God, and the moſt precious pearl in heaven, unto ſuch miſerable ſinners as I am, even to me, who has ſo oft promiſed to live holily, and to leave my ſins; and yet have ever returned to my vititous courſe, as the dog to his vomit again, and the ſow that was waſhed to her wallowing in the mire. But ſeeing God has been yet again offered and ſpeaking peace to me, O let me never again return to folly. Lord, ſave me from making peace again with theſe luſts, which nailed Chriſt's hands and made his ſoul heavy unto death. May I now be helped to abandon all my old ſins, and never venture again upon that which killed my Saviour, diſhonours his Father, grieves his Spirit and damns my own ſoul.

Lord Jeſus, undertake for me, deliver me from my ſpiritual enemies, and eſpecially from myſelf, and from my falſe and treacherous heart, which hath ſo oft beguiled me, and yielded me a prey to ſin, Satan and the world, and will now be ready to do it over again, if it be not prevented by thy grace. I have great need to be always near thee; for without thee I can do nothing, but ſin; I can do nothing but contract defilement for thee to waſh, make wounds for thee to heal, and take on debt for thee to pay. O Lord, my poor ſoul is oft like a leaky veſſel which is heavy laden, and ready to ſink; the tempeſt of wrath blows hard, and threatens to overſet me. O that I may get my veſſel run aſhore near the rock Chriſt, ſo that if it break or ſhipwrack any where, it may be about the clefts of this rock, where, many a ſhipwrackt periſhing ſoul hath found ſafety. O, whoever periſhed at Chriſt's lee ſhore? Who ever drowned in the ſea of wrath, that ſincerely aimed to grip to, and faſten upon the clefts, of this rock?

MEDITATION III.

THE *manna* in the wilderneſs was lodged in the tabernacle, and kept within a pure golden pot. And ſhall I lodge Jeſus Chriſt, the *manna* that came down from heaven in a corrupt and unclean heart? Lord, cleanſe my heart from ſin, and furniſh it with grace, that it may be fit for thy reſidence. O that by taſting of the manna, I may find my ſoul ſtrengthned, and luſts weakned. O that by touching the border of Chriſt's garment, I may feel a ſecret virtue gone out of him, to ſtop the running iſſue of my corruption, and heal all my ſoul diſeaſes.

Jonathan's eyes were enlightned after he had eaten a little honey dropping in a wood: But I have been eating honey dropping from the rock of ſalvation Jeſus Chriſt; O that I may find the eyes of my underſtanding illuminated therewith, that I may clearly perceive the vanity of the world, and excellency of Chriſt; the deformity of ſin and beauty of holineſs; the emptineſs of my own righteouſneſs, and the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt's merits.

Men admire Abraham's happineſs, in that he lodged angels; but how far greater is my happineſs, lodging him whom the angels adore, and in whoſe preſence they all cover their faces with their wings, and cry, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,* &c. O that I had ſuitable room and entertainment for ſo glorious a gueſt! Lord, thou muſt both fit the room, and bring the entertainment with thee.

O be not a ſtranger unto me, or a way-faring man that only turns aſide to lodge for a night; but let Chriſt dwell in my heart by faith. O that he may ſay of my heart, *This is my reſt for ever, here will I dwell, for I have deſired it.* Lord, ſay this alſo of thy Zion in our land, and eſtabliſh thy throne amongſt us.

Lord, thou haſt promiſed many ſpecial bleſſings to the utmoſt ends of the earth, and to the iſles afar off in the ſea, among whom we in this land are; O haſten the accompliſhment of thy promiſes to theſe remote parts of the eartth, and make the Spirit of errour, ſuperſtition and formality wholly paſs out of them, that thy name may be great among us, and in every place incenſe may be offered to thee, and a pure offering.

Lord, ſend the news of Chriſt to the heathen nations, who have long dwelt in the region of darkneſs. How ſad is it, that God who made all the world, ſhould have ſo little of its ſervice; and that the devil who ruined mankind, ſhould have the far greateſt part of the world to adore and ſerve him! Alas, that he ſhould have ſo much to juſtify that uſurped title of his, ‘The God of this world.’ Lord, deſtroy his kingdom, and haſten the downfall of Babylon; when ſhall the forty and two months be expired. Let the hills melt, and the mountains flow at the preſence of the Lord, and the ſeven hills among the reſt. O why is his chariot ſo long a coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?

Lord, remember the poor blinded Jews, the poſterity of Abraham thy friend. Oh, we are many a prayer behind with them, they oft minded the little ſiſter, when ſhe had no breaſts: And now the elder ſiſter hath none, O what ſhall be done to her in her deſolate caſe! O that the Redeemer would come to Zion, *and turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob.* Lord, lift up thy feet to theſe perpetual deſolations, and let the receiving of them be as life from the dead.

Lord, plead for thy perſecuted people all the world over, let their enemies know that their Redeemer is mighty, and will hear the ſighs of the oppreſſed. Let the earth diſcloſe her blood, and no more cover her ſlain.

MEDITATION IV.

O that I could wonder at the glorious Son of God, who deſcended from the higheſt heavens; and took not on him the nature of angels, but the nature of man, and hath crowned it with glory and immortality; yea, hath carried it above all heavens, above the ſeats of angels, beyond the Cherubims and Seraphims, and hath placed it on the right-hand of his eternal Father! And hath likewiſe promiſed to exalt believers (whom he hath united to himſelf, as members of his body) unto the ſame honour and dignity! Lord, what is man that thou art thus mindful of him: And what am I, the worſt of men, that I ſhould be admitted to ſhare in theſe glorious privileges which Chriſt hath purchaſed!

O that I could ſing a ſong of praiſe to my well-beloved, a ſong of his eternal love and glorious undertaking, a ſong of his paſſing through the Red-ſea, and fighting the red dragon; a ſong of his bruiſing the ſerpents head, and unſtinging the king of terrours; a ſong of his victorious reſurrection, triumphant aſcenſion, and glorious return. Lord, cheer up and tune my heart to ſing a ſong of Zion, and rejoice in Chriſt as my portion. Let me ſpeak of the glorious honour of his majeſty, and declare his wondrous works.

Lord, revive the ſpirits and enlarge the hearts of all thy people, give them high and exalted thoughts of Chriſt, that their ſouls may glorify thy name. Open thou their lips that their mouths may ſhew forth thy praiſe. O! ſhall the wicked go ſinging and rejoicing to hell, and thy people go always drooping and ſorrowing to heaven? Is there any maſter like Chriſt, and can any give wages like to his. Let me never by my carriage, bring up a bad report (as the unfaithful ſpies) upon Chriſt's way, or the land that is afar off. Thou haſt recorded many encouraging words for thy people's comfort. Thou haſt ſaid, That *light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart.* “O for a ſhower from heaven to make that feed to ſpring. Bleſſed be thy name, God's ſeed will not rot beneath the clods, it will ſpring up ſooner or later. Let me ſupport myſelf with the Pſalmiſt's cordial, *The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my rock.* Why ſhould believers look like dead men, while their Lord liveth, and their rock ſtandeth? Their hopes may die, their comforts die, their frames die, their relations, their gifts and outward means may all die; but good news, their Lord will not die, their rock will not fall. No wonder tho' the diſciples drooped and looked as dead men, when Chriſt was dead and lying in the grave. But bleſſed be God, he is riſen, he liveth, and will die no more. I have theſe good news from his own mouth, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold “I am alive for evermore, *Amen;* and have the keys of hell and death.” Is my Redeemer jaylor of the priſon of hell and the grave? Good news! he will not lock in any of his friends or lovers: None but his enemies and haters ſhall be made priſoners there.

Many are the comforts thou giveſt, Lord, unto thy people; but let me not adore thy comforts more than thyſelf, or love the apples of life more than the tree of life; let Chriſt himſelf have ſtill the chief room in my ſoul.

MEDITATION V.

WHO can utter the mighty acts of the Lord; who can ſhew forth all his praiſe? from all eternity, thou didſt mercifully foreſee man's miſery, and contrived a remedy for it: Thou providedſt a ſurety for him before the debt was contracted, and a Saviour before he was loſt. Thy wrath ſoon broke out againſt the angels that fell; thou waitedſt not for their repentance, but preſently condemned them to everlaſting chains of darkneſs. But long haſt thou waited on me; yea, followed me with mercy, and that even after I had many times undervalued and trampled upon the greateſt gift and richeſt jewel of heaven, Jeſus Chriſt.

Heavenly Father, tho' I have been a prodigal and run-away from thy houſe, yet graciouſly own me again, upon my return, for thy child. I am a poor deſtitute orphan, that can do nothing for myſelf, but in thee the fatherleſs findeth mercy. I am a helpleſs and needy child hanging at the breaſts of ordinances. O let them not prove dry breaſts to me, nor let me ſuck wind or poiſon from them, as many do to their deſtruction: But let me ſuck the ſincere milk of the word, for my growth and enlargement in thy ways.

Lord thou haſt directed thy people, "in malice to be children, but in underſtanding to be men;" many, alas, are found the very reverſe of this, "in underſtanding they are children, but in malice they are men." Lord free me from the leaven of malice, of pride, and envy. A child I am, alas, in knowledge, O that I were ſuch in duty and affection. Lord, make me like a little child, meek and humble, obedient and tractable, affectionate and full of regard to thee my heavenly Father. O that I were born again, and had the Spirit of adoption in me, enabling me to cry *Abba Father;* and inclining me to be much about my Father's hand. My needs are very great, but bleſſed be thy name, thou haſt erected a throne of grace for me to come to, in the time of need.

Many are the needs, which thou haſt left upon me, that I might have the more errands to thy throne, and thou mayſt the oftner hear my voice. Lord, pour out upon me a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication, and cauſe me to delight in approaching to thee.

Lord help me to remember the vows and ſolemn engagements I have been taking on. I have been giving thee my bond at a communion-table, for thankfulneſs, love, and obedience; O let me have Chriſt's back-bond for my relief, that he will ſtrengthen me by his powerful grace, to pay my vows to God; for I do entirely diſtruſt my own ſtrength. O that my obedience may be univerſal, cheerful, conſtant, and growing like the morning-light.

Give me grace always to believe and remember the end of my creation, and the vanity of this world, the ſhortneſs of my life, and the uncertainty of the time of my death; the miſeries of ſuch as die in their ſins, and the unſpeakable joys of of thoſe who die in the Lord.

MEDITATION VI.

I Have been ſwearing allegiance to the king of heaven over the broken body, and ſhed blood of his dear Son. And ſeeing I have now opened my mouth unto the Lord, O ſave me from going back. Yea, I have been liſting myſelf as a ſoldier to fight under the banner of Jeſus Chriſt, as the captain of my ſalvation; and my captain has been giving me a feaſt to hearten and encourage me againſt all difficulties. O that I may be ſtrengthned by it, to fight manfully againſt all his and my enemies; Yea, to prevail over them, and put to flight the armies of the *aliens*. Alas, I muſt confeſs to my ſhame, that I have often fainted and turned back in the day of battle, I have gone from Chriſt's ſtandard into the enemy's camp. O for the ſhield of faith! O for grace to depend more upon my captain for ſtrength and furniture, whether for work or warfare, duty or difficulty. Lord, leave me not to tug at the oar of unaſſiſted endeavours, or to ſtruggle with duty in my own ſtrength; but help me always to look to my covenanted Lord for covenanted ſtrength. O let covenanted grace be ſufficient for me.

May I now be going on from ſtrength to ſtrength from one degree of grace to another; from one evidence, experience, and manifeſtation to another, till at length I appear before God in *Zion*. Let me forget theſe things that are behind, and reach forth to theſe things which are before, and ſo preſs on toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. And let me count all things but dung and loſs, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having my own righteouſneſs, but his, to clothe me.

My days are flying away as a ſwift poſt, eternity is haſting on with wings; much of my handbreadth of days is worn away, and ſoon will my ſun be turned, and be very low. O that I may be near my lodging againſt night. The blaſt of the laſt trumpet is at hand, and a proclamation will ſhortly be made by one ſtanding in the clouds, that time ſhall be no more. O that I may improve precious time well while it laſts, and run faſt, with my eyes toward heaven as my home and everlaſting lodging place. It is an encouragement to run, that Chriſt is in heaven before me: God ſend us a joyful meeting. Lord give me the traveller's charges by the way ſomething to ſweeten my journey, and make it lightſome. O where are the grapes of Eſhcol, the cordials of faith, the proſpects of Canaan from Piſgahhill? O that I were frequently ſending faith and hope, theſe two faithful ſpies, to ſurvey the promiſed land, or at leaſt to viſit the borders, and outter coaſt of my Lord's country; that they might bring me back ſome encouraging reports, to ſupport and cheer my heart in the wilderneſs.

Lord, my wants are many, and I need daily ſupplies from thee, but bleſſed be God, that I have ſuch an agent in heaven, as Chriſt to preſent my bills, petitions and ſupplications. I put all my requeſts in his hand, and leave them to his care and management, who knows the fit time to preſent them, and ſend me an anſwer of them. I deſire to put him on all my ſecrets, and truſt him with all my concerns.

Lord, ſtay not away from me, but let me have ſome gracious viſits now and then in thy ordinances. Give me thy holy Spirit to teach me, when I am ignorant; to quicken me when I am dull; to awaken me, when I am ſecure; to revive me, when I am faint. Let thy good Spirit be ſtill ſuggeſting things to me, and bringing thy word and promiſes to my remembrance, that my hard heart may now and then, guſh forth in ſtreams of love and deſire toward thee. O divine ſhepherd, thou haſt refreſhment for my wearineſs, guidance for my wanderings, and balm for my wounds. O lead me into the pleaſant paſtures, that are watered by the fruitful ſtreams of thy Spirit, that ſo this tempeſt beaten ſoul may at laſt be brought into the harbour of reſt, and be laid up ſecurely with thee.

MEDITATION VII.

GLORY to God, that hath not withheld his Son, even his only Son from me, but hath given him to be a propitiation for my ſins, yea, and to be the life and food of my ſoul. Bleſſed be his name, that he who offered himſelf for me upon the croſs, doth alſo offer himſelf for me at his table. O that the ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, which he offered on the croſs and which I have been commemorating at his table, may atone, for all the failings and miſcarriages both in my preparations and performances. O bleſſed for ever be the Lord Jeſus for the wounds which he received on the croſs for my ſins. O print them deeply on my heart, that I may ſtill remember them, and continually bear about with me *the dying of the Lord Jeſus*, that the life alſo of Jeſus may be manifeſted in me.

I have been eating the bread of my Father's houſe, O let me not return to feed on the huſks of the world and ſin. But as I have the Lord Jeſus, ſo help me to walk in him. Uphold me by the right hand, and let none pluck me out of it: And according to the well ordered covenant, O put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee. O thou that giveſt power to the faint, and increaſeth ſtrength to them that have no might, and who art only able to keep me from falling; O eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle me. Lord, never leave nor abandon me to myſelf, otherwiſe I will be as a reed ſhaken with the wind, and a leaf driven to and fro. Alas, my heart is like Reuben, unſtable as water; O if it were liquid as water, that I might like Hannah pour it out in prayer before the Lord.

Lord preſerve any degree of ſoftneſs of heart, or livelineſs of frame which thou haſt wrought in me by thy own ordinance, and help me to improve it, otherwiſe the devil and the world will ſoon come and lull me aſleep, take away the living child, and leave a dead one in its room. Skreen me from the cold chilling blaſts, that come from the devil and the world, that my love be not frozen up: But let the ſouth winds of the Spirit come, and kindly breathe upon any ſpark of grace thou haſt kindled, cheriſh convictions, preſerve good motions, and encourage deſires. O maintain the fire of thy love in me, by the oil of thy gracious influences. Let the name of Jeſus be always to me as precious ointment poured forth, that I may remember his love more than wine. And let the remembrance of his love be ſtill efficacious to melt my hard heart, enliven my dead ſoul, and enflame my cold breaſt with a burning affection to him. O let the charms of my Redeemer's love triumph over all the charms of ſin's pleaſures, and Satan's devices and cauſe me reject all their ſolicitations with diſdain and abhorrence. I have ſeen Chriſt's love in bleeding to death on the curſed tree, to deliver me from lying in hell; O let me never again wilfully walk in the road that leads to it. I have ſeen him wreſtling in an agony to open heaven's gates for me, let me never turn back on heaven, and tell him by my unworthy carriage, he might have ſaved his labours. O let me never requit the kindneſs of my glorious friend at this rate.

O that I could ſpend my life in admiring Chriſt's love, and contemplating his beauty! Surely he is the *roſe of Sharon*, yea the moſt beautiful roſe in all the garden of God, and that roſe that beautifies all the flowers in the garden. How charming is his beauty, and how fragrant is his ſmell! One leaf of this fragrant roſe is ſufficient to perfume the whole creation. O let the roſe come and perfume my ill-ſmelled heart, and ill favoured performances, that God may not reject both me and them. Let the ſweet ſavour of Chriſt's ſacrifice, and the odour of his interceſſion, ſo diffuſe itſelf and fill heaven, that the evil ſavour of my ſins, and my duties may not enter. Surely if it were not for that ſweet perfume, God would not ſuffer ſuch a ſtinking dung-hill as I am, to approach ſo near him, and be as a ſmoke in his noſtrils all the day. O if the wind of the Spirit would but blow the ſweet ſmell of Sharon's roſe on my unſavoury affections and withered ſoul, it would ſoon revive and bloſſom as the roſe, and the ſcent thereof be as the wine of Lebanon.

MEDITATION VIII.

HOW marvellous is it, that the glorious Bridegroom Chriſt, whoſe beauty is ſurpaſſing, his kingdom mighty, and his riches infinite, that ſuch an one ſhould offer to match with uncomely ſouls, and court a bride naturally as black as hell; Yea, ſeek her thro' a ſea of blood, thro' the pains of death, the torments of hell, and horrors of the grave: That he ſhould follow me in my wandrings, thro' the wilderneſs of ſin, with his alluring invitations and goſpel offers, Yea, preſent me with rings and bracelets of his precious promiſes and Spirit's conſolations, and all to win my heart, and gain my conſent to him. *He is my Lord and my God.* Can my heart be but raviſhed with his love; he took ſhame, and gave me glory; he took the curſe, and gave me the bleſſing: he took death, and gave me life, he took my ſins, and gave his righteouſneſs. O wonderful and happy exchange for my ſoul, that was ready to periſh; my ſoul's bleſſing be evermore upon his head, that made this exchange with me. O that I may be more and more acquainted with him, and the way of ſalvation through his righteouſneſs and ſtrength. Let me ſtill deſire to go out of myſelf that I may be found in him, not having my own righteouſneſs, but that which is through the faith of him. Let me always ſit under the ſhadow of this tree of life, which yields the richeſt fruits, and O let theſe fruits be ſweet to my taſte. Bleſſed Jeſus, thou art my life, my ſtrength, my wiſdom, my riches, my light, my health, my joy, my glory, and my all. Be thou never far from me; but give me faith always to live in thee, and depend on thee.

Lord pity theſe poor ſouls who have been watching on the Son of David as he paſſed by in the ordinances; and yet are complaining, their eyes have not ſeen the King in his beauty; O draw by the vail, and ſhew thyſelf to them. Lord when thou ſheweſt thyſelf, let me love thee; and when thou withdraweſt thyſelf let me follow thee, and lament after thee.

Lord, multiply the children of Zion, the ſons born in thy houſe, even theſe who are begotten again to a lively hope. And when the Lord ſhall count and write up the people, may it be written of many in this land, this man, and that woman was born there.

Alas, for the unſucceſsfulneſs of ſermons and ſacraments in this age! O where is the power and life that uſed to accompany ſolemn ordinances? Where are theſe breathings, pantings, mournings, meltings, longings and heavenly frames that were wont to be ſeen at ſuch occaſions. The day was, that one ſermon hath pricked ſome thouſands to the heart; but now many ſermons are preached and ſacraments diſpenſed, and ſcarce any pricked to the heart for ſin.

Lord, haſten Antichriſt's downfal: Remove that mother and miſtreſs of abominations in the earth. Take graven images and ſuperſtition out of the way, and bring in the *Jews* in troops. Let the time come when this church ſhall ſing for joy, the ſun, and her ſun like the light of ſeven days in one. Come and lay her ſtones with fair colours, and her foundations with ſaphires: Make her windows of agates, and her gates carbuncles. Let the name of our cities be, *Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there*: and the inſcription of the people's lives be, *Holineſs to the Lord*. O that the pleaſant flowers may appear, and the time of the ſinging of birds may come. *Amen*,

An ACTION SERMON and SACRAMENTAL SPEECHES, before, at, and after ſerving the tables.

Let him that is a-thirſt ſay, Come: And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely, Rev. xxii. 17.

WE have here Chriſt in the cloſe of this book owning himſelf to be the author thereof, verſe 16. Moreover he gives a deſcription of himſelf, *the root and offspring of David*; the firſt, as he is God; the ſecond, as he is Man; alſo *the bright and Morning Star*. As the morning ſtar firſt brings light to the world, ſo Chriſt is the light of the world, the firſt publiſher of the light of the goſpel. And now, by this revelation he gives a ſuperadded light to his people, informing them what ſhall befal his church till his coming to judgment.——He is the Morning Star that will ſhine bright in the morning of the reſurrection, when he comes to gather all his ſaints, as ſo many ſtars, round about him. And he hath twice told already in this chapter, verſes 7, 12. and the third time he cloſes with it, aſſuring us that he was coming quickly. Here in verſe 17, we have the Spirit and church anſwering, ſaying, Come. The Spirit or Holy Ghoſt in the bride, and the bride by the Spirit, bids Chriſt welcome.

Obſervation. All true believers long for Chriſt's ſecond coming, for finiſhing the days of ſinning, deſtroying the works of ſatan, accompliſhing the number of the elect, manifeſting the glory of juſtice and mercy, and putting ſaints into the full and final poſſeſſion of the kingdom. 2dly, We have a command to every one that hears and believes theſe things, to ſay, Come: we ſhould all be in caſe to deſire it. Every chaſte ſpouſe will long for her huſband's coming. 3dly, We have Chriſt's call to us, in order to prepare us for his coming, and to put us in caſe to deſire it, *i. e.* firſt to come to him: We muſt firſt come to Chriſt by faith, ere we can on good grounds deſire and invite Chriſt to come in the clouds; and if ye once do this, ye need not care though his coming were to be this very day, but ye might chearfully anſwer, as John doth verſe 20. *Amen*, &c.

In theſe words we have a free and gracious invitation given, and welcome offered to all poor ſinners to come to Chriſt for mercy: Where we have, 1ſt, The mercy offered, and that is *the water of life*, i. e. Chriſt and all his benefits.

2dly, The perſons invited, 1. *The thirſty*, i. e. thoſe who are ſenſible of their wants and neceſſities, and have an earneſt deſire to come. 2. *Whoſoever will*, which makes the offer more large and extenſive. Some poor ſoul might ſay, Alas! I am not thirſty, my deſires are not vehement. Well then, are you but willing? O haſt thou will? Come away. Ye muſt be willing. Salvation and mercy is not to be forced upon you againſt your wills.

3dly, We have the terms upon which this offer is made to us, upon our coming and *taking freely*. Chriſt is not ſelling himſelf and his purchaſe; for if he did, ſuch is our poverty and want that we could never buy them: Wherefore he ſays, Come, and take freely, pay nothing, I am ſeeking no work or merit in you only take it freely. O could the terms be contrived eaſier, when he ſays not, take of the water, but *take the water*, as if he had ſaid, it is all at your will.

Doctrine. That it is the royal will and pleaſure of God, that Chriſt, and all the rich bleſſings of his covenant revealed in the goſpel, ſhould be freely offered to all needy ſinners, that will come to take them. See Iſaiah lv. 1.

Method. 1. I ſhall give a glance of theſe benefits and bleſſings here offered freely in the goſpel. 2. Why they are called the *water of life*. 3. What the goſpel would have us to do, in order to our having a right to them. 4. Give reaſons. 5. Apply.

As to the firſt; O! the bleſſings are unſpeakable, tho' we could ſpeak with the tongues of men and angels. Conſider 1. The ſame bleſſings that ever were beſtowed on any ſaint ſince Adam's time, the ſame eſſential bleſſings offered to Abraham, Iſaac, Jacob, David, Peter, Paul, &c. are offered to you; the ſame God that was Abraham's God, ſhall be your God, the ſame Chriſt, the ſame Spirit, the ſame covenant, the ſame heaven ſhall be yours: Ye ſhall come up to Abraham's boſom, and ſit down to the ſame table and food with him. O it is in your offer, poor beggar, to be as rich, great and happy as Abraham.

2. There are here in your offer all the bleſſings and benefits which are comprehended in the wide boſom of God's promiſes, which are rich, great and precious. O we cannot number or weigh them; time would fail to repeat them; we cannot tell how to begin; or if begun, where to make an end. Read the ſcriptures from end to end, and behold a dazzling and glorious ſight: As the heaven is beſpangled with ſtars in a winter night, ſo is the word with ſhining promiſes: and we may allude to that paſſage in God's covenant with Abraham, *If theſe ſtars can be numbered, ſo may thy ſeed be numbered*. So may I ſay, if the promiſes can be numbered or weighed, ſo can the bleſſings here offered.

3. All that the blood and merits of the eternal Son of God could purchaſe and obtain, is here offered; and you may gueſs at the greatneſs of the benefits, by the greatneſs of the ſum paid for them. They muſt needs be rich, for Chriſt beſpoke them for us very ear

ly, even in the morning of eternity: and O dear have they coſt him! he muſt come down from his throne, cover himſelf with our duſt, ſweat blood, ſhed blood, ſuffer hell's torments, and die. Sure all this was not for a thing of nought; no, there is a great purchaſe like the price, called here *the water of life;* there is everlaſting righteouſneſs, deliverance from hell, pardon, reconciliation, acceſs to God, peace of conſcience, adoption into God's family, grace for renovation and ſanctification. There is a heavenly kingdom, the uninterrupted viſion and fruition of God to all eternity; there is Chiſt's purchaſe all offered here: yea, he offers not only his purchaſe, but his perſon; you have Chriſt himſelf in your offer, and with him all things.

Finally, In Chriſt you have all the perſons of the bleſſed Trinity in your offer, and that is more than heaven and earth: and all is included in *the water of life.* God the Father is hereby underſtood; we find him ſo calling himſelf, Jer. ii. 13. *a fountain of living waters;* where he ſummons heaven and earth to wonder at the diſtraction of men in forſaking him.——Jeſus Chriſt is alſo *a fountain opened,* Zech. 13. 1. He is the rock ſmitten by the ſword of juſtice, that the water of life might guſh out.——The Holy Ghoſt is alſo called a *river of water of life,* Rev. xxii. 1. So that here in this water of life, we have God Jehovah in our offer, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and what can ye wiſh for more? You have God himſelf to be your God; ſo ſtands the covenant, Jer. xxxii. 33, *I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.* You have God to be your God, your inheritance, your ſtock, your portion; and may not ye ſay as David, Pſal. xvi. *I have got a goodly heritage?* God ſhall be your Father, your friend, your counſellor thy Maker is thy huſband, and every thing thou canſt deſire.

As to the ſecond head, Why called *the water of life? Anſ. 1ſt.* Becauſe of its properties and qualifications; 1. Water hath a purging and cleanſing virtue, for taking away filth and pollution.—O, but the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin.

2. Water is of a cooling and refreſhing nature to the poor ſcorched traveller; O, but the benefits of Chriſt's death are refreſhing to the poor thirſty ſoul, that is ſaying, I pant, I languiſh, and die without thee. See Pſal xlii. 1.

3. Water is good to quench fire; ſo this blood quenches the fire of God's wrath, alſo of luſt, pride, paſſion, *&c.*

4. Water is a ſoftening thing to the hardened earth: O, but many a hard heart has been mollified into tears, and melted into compliance with God's will, ſaying with Paul, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

5. Water is of a fructifying nature; it makes the dry withered herbs to be green and fragrant. O, how many barren withered ſouls have been made hereby to bring forth the fruit of righteouſneſs? Without water nothing would grow; what made Egypt ſo fruitful but the inundation of the Nile? And what makes a ſoul a watered garden, and a field the Lord hath bleſſed, but this water of life? O that there were many ſuch in this place.

6. Water is the moſt neceſſary thing in the world, without it we could not live. O how miſerably would we periſh, if we wanted the water of life.

7. Water is cheap and free to both poor and rich, it coſts us nothing, all are welcome. So here, come without money and without price.

2dly, It is called *the water of life,* either, 1. Becauſe it affords ſpiritual life to dead ſouls; 'tis the wine that makes the lips of thoſe that are aſleep to ſpeak. Yea, and it nouriſhes and preſerves the ſoul to eternal life. Eternal life is a ſure effect of it; the ſoul that drinks here ſhall never die. 2. 'Tis ſo called, becauſe it far excells all other water. Why? 'Tis better than common water, it is *fountain water,* as called Rev. xxi. 6. *The fountain of the water of life.* O what a choice fountain is it? O it has a noble vent, many pleaſant paſſages and conduits. O, the ſide, head, heart and hands of Chriſt, were pierced to let this water diſtil more freely and plentifully to the world It hath choice conduits and pipes. O do not miſtake them, it runs only in the conduit of the promiſes, the channels of the ſanctuary. O how pleaſantly doth it flow between the banks of ordinances? But mind theſe are only the ordinances of his own appointment. See Joel iii. 18. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the mountains ſhall drop down new wine, and the hills ſhall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah ſhall flow with waters, and a fountain ſhall come forth of the houſe of the Lord, and ſhall water the valley of Shittim.* It comes only from *the houſe of the Lord.* 2. It hath many pleaſant chryſtal ſtreams that make glad the city of God, Pſal. xlvi. 4. reviving, purifying, ſoftning, ſanctifying, fructifying and medicinal ſtreams, for healing all diſeaſes and plagues whatſomever. Are there any diſeaſed ſouls? come to theſe medicinal ſtreams and bathe. What is your diſorder and wound, and it ſhall be cured? Is it ſpiritual blindneſs? O this opens the eyes of thoſe who are born blind. Is it deafneſs? it makes a man quick to hear God's call and counſel. Is it lameneſs? it cauſes the lame man leap as an hart. Is it weakneſs of hands, feebleneſs of knees? O this endows with life, ſtrength and courage for duty. Is it a tympany, a ſwelling of pride? O it makes him low in his own eyes. Is it a ſpiritual conſumption and decay of faith, love, repentance, zeal, *&c.* Is it the plague of the heart, earthly mindedneſs, backſliding, wandering, deadneſs? Is it hardneſs of heart? O come here, this water will ſoften the flinty rock, and make the hard heart tender and pliable. O come lay open all your wounds aud ſores, and you ſhall be healed. 3. Other fountains may be locked or dry up, but here the wells of ſalvation never run dry in any ſeaſon, and are open continually. Chriſt hath taken the ſtone away from the well's mouth, ſo that we may take of the water of life freely. 4. Other fountains are meaſurable and fathomable; but this is a deep, everflowing and overflowing fountain, like the water in Ezek. xlvii. 5.

As to third head, how ſhall we get this water of life? See what is required here, *come and take,* that is the condition required, faith in Chriſt. Conſider, 1. When we ſay this is a condition required, we do not mean there is any thing neceſſary in point of worth and merit, but only in point of order and of means. This is not a covenant of works, but of grace, a free covenant, all things are given here freely. And who will ſay he pays any thing for water, when he comes to the well to take it, gets it for the taking, or putting out the hand? Will a beggar ſay he merits any thing by putting out his hand for his alms? Acceptance is a neceſſary and intrinſick condition in all gifts; if I take not a gift, it can never be mine. 2. This condition of coming on our part, doth not denote any power or grace in us to ſtretch out our hand, or open our mouth: no, tho' God requires it of us, yet it is his ſpecial grace that enables us; and he requires it to let us know what is our duty, and to make us ſenſible of our inſufficiency.

To *come and take*, denotes and implies ſeveral things. 1. Our natural diſtance from this water. Some folks look on themſelves as having theſe things by birth-right; but ye are all miſtaken; for naturally you are ſtrangers and enemies to God, and heirs of hell, aliens to the commonwealth of Iſrael, having no intereſt in Chriſt.

2. It denotes our ſenſe of that diſtance and loſt caſe by nature without Chriſt; that we are undone without this water. O did you ever ſee your diſtance, danger, and ruin, by reaſon of clouds of guilt and wrath hanging over your head? O mind Chriſt came to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt.

3. It ſuppoſes that the way now is patent to the tree of life. No angel with a flaming ſword to keep the way. Chriſt now is not a well ſhut up or ſealed; no, the fountains of life are broke up, the wells of ſalvation are now opened, the ſtone rolled from the well's mouth. The well is deep, but here is a bucket to draw with; the breaſts of conſolation are drawn out, wiſdom's gates are caſt wide open: O there is a free market of grace proclaimed, if ye hinder not yourſelves, there is no hindrance on Chriſt's part. O needy ſouls will ye ſtarve in the houſe, and the market ſo near, and a free market too? O will ye periſh for thirſt, and the well at hand?

4. It imports a diſcovery of the fitneſs and excellency of Chriſt for the ſoul; he is able, ſufficient, ſuitable, and willing. You will never come till you ſee this, that Chriſt can ſatisfy all your wants, and anſwer all your objections. Art thou deeply indebted to juſtice, even drowned in debt? Chriſt hath a ranſom, that can ſatisfy. Art thou under the heavy curſe of God? Chriſt has become a curſe. Art thou condemned to die? O here is ſufficient righteouſneſs to juſtify you. Art thou filthy and polluted with ſin? O here is an open fountain for thy waſhing. Art thou poor? here is fine gold, the riches of grace and glory. Art thou ſtarving? here is wine and milk, manna, the fatted calf, a full feaſt. Art thou blind? here is eye ſalve. Art thou naked? here is white raiment. Art thou ſick? here is a phyſician. Wounded? here is the balm of Gilead. Art thou a ſlave? O here is the Redeemer and Ranſomer. Art thou in priſon? here is the jailor that hath the keys of David that opens priſon doors. Art thou under iron fetters? Here is the mighty lion, that can break the iron fetters, and cut aſunder the gates of braſs. O what canſt thou ſay more? *Object.* I am a poor vile ſinner, will he accept of me? I have no confidence to think he will. O he anſwers, *I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. Object.* My ſins are red as crimſon. *Anſ.* I will make them white as wool. *Object.* I am a leper and full of plagues? *Anſ. The whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. Object.* O there is little hope of me, I am quite loſt and undone. *Anſ.* I came to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt. *Object.* O there is no hope, for I ſeem to be paſt cure, I am dead in ſin, rotten in the grave. *Anſ. I am the reſurrection and the life; he that believes on me, tho' he were dead, yet ſhall he live. Object.* I have lain long at the pool, *Anſ.* Did not he heal an impotent man, that had an infirmity 38 Years? Tho' you have lain bound under ſin not only theſe 38 years, but even theſe 80 years, yet come, tho' it were at the laſt hour, as the thief on the croſs, and he will heal you, and not caſt you out. *Object.* O but I have raiſed many high mountains in Chriſt's way. *Anſ.* I am he that comes ſkipping upon the mountains. *Object.* I am deaf, I cannot hear his voice. *Anſ.* I will open thine ears, and cauſe thee to hear the voice of thy Beloved. *Object.* I am lame, I'll never be able to walk. *Anſ.* The covenant runs thus, I'll write my laws in thy heart and cauſe thee to walk in my ways. *Object.* But his ways are difficult, I cannot keep his laws. *Anſ. Take my yoke upon you,—for my yoke is eaſy and my burden is light.* Mat. xi. 29. 30. *Wiſdom's ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.* Prov. iii. 19. *Object.* I will break the covenant, and apoſtatize from Chriſt. *Anſ.* The covenant runs, Jer. iii. 19. *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father, and ſhalt not turn away from me. Object.* O but I will never hold out againſt ſatan. *Anſ.* My grace is ſufficient for thee. *Object.* But I will periſh in the wilderneſs. *Anſ.* I am given to be thy leader, and thou ſhalt go up through it leaning on me.

5. It imports the going out of the ſoul after the water of life, with ſpiritual deſires and longings, ſaying as David, O for a drink of the water of Bethel well, who will fetch me it? O who will bring me into the ſtrong city! O when wilt thou come unto me? O that I knew where to find him. O my ſoul follows hard after him. O where will the well ſpring up in this dry valley of Baca.—None but Chriſt can ſatisfy the deſires of my ſoul.

6. The ſoul turns its back upon every thing inconſiſtent with Chriſt; particularly, on our ſins, the world, and their pleaſures. O, ſaith the ſoul, there is no happineſs there for me, theſe muddy puddles will not quench my thirſt, it is the water of life only can do it.—Alſo on our own righteouſneſs, duties, prayers, tears, repentance, reformation. O theſe will not do my buſineſs with the juſtice of God. My eye is only on Chriſt: this is his name, *The Lord our righteouſneſs;* In the Lord have I only righteouſneſs and ſtrength.

7. It implies a man's activity in beſtirring himſelf in the uſe of all commanded means, to win at the water of life. O beſtir yourſelves, let not Chriſt complain of you, as Iſa. lxiv. 7. *There is none that calleth on my name, or ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of me.* O cry, Awake faith! *Awake, O north wind, come thou ſouth wind: Awake O arm of the Lord!*

8. It mainly implies a going beyond all means and ordinances, and taking hold of Chriſt himſelf, the ſoul's receiving and embracing this bleeding High Prieſt on a croſs, as our ſurety and propitiation, taking his bleſſed ſacrifice in our arms, ſprinkling our ſouls with the blood, dipping our guilty ſouls in the fountain, pleading this with God, and preſenting it to juſtice, as our only ſhield and ſhelter. O come now under the covert of this blood, and ſhadow of this rock. Comply with and acquieſce in this noble device. O where is the eye of faith to look to the water! O where the wings of faith to carry it! Where the hand of faith to reach it! The bucket of faith, the mouth of faith opened wide!

O communicants, you muſt this day come near the foot of the croſs, the clefts of the rock, cloſe by the wounds; you muſt do as Thomas did, *Reach hither your hand, feel the prints of the nails;* thruſt it into his ſide, into the fountain, and cry with him, My Lord, and my God; and with Paul, My Chriſt, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.

There muſt be particular appropriating and applying acts of faith this day, like the ſpouſe, My beloved is mine, and I am his. This bargain muſt be tranſacted covenant ways; it muſt be ſealed and confirmed with heaven's broad ſeal, and with a ſolemn oath in the ſacrament.——You muſt take Chriſt as a prieſt and atoning ſacrifice, and alſo as a maſter whom ye will ſerve.

As to the *fourth* head, Why is the water of life offered to all freely?

Anſw. It is offered to all, to ſhew that it is the duty of all to accept. The goſpel trumpet ſounds a jubilee to all that will accept. This general offer is like a rope let down among drowning men, all are called to grip to it, and he that lays hold on it ſhall be pulled up. He offers to them freely, 1. To make all unwilling perſons wholly inexcuſable. It is without money and without price: what can you object againſt it? 2. The goſpel market is free, becauſe all things are the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood; Chriſt has bought all theſe things at the adequate price; Chriſt has been at the market before us, and that makes all things the cheaper to us. 3. Becauſe we are wholly unable to buy, we can give nothing for them; if there were nothing but one good word or thought required of us to purchaſe ſalvation, we could not perform it; we have totally loſt our ſtock, and turned bankrupt. 4. To exclude all boaſting or glory in the creature, Rom. iii. 27. *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.* 5. To glorify God's grace hereby. God will have believers in heaven for ever to exalt free grace, and cry, All is free, glory to free grace for all, our election, regeneration, ſanctification, juſtification, communion, ordinances, ſacraments, heaven, *&c.* All is free. Praiſe to none but God for theſe ineſtimable bleſſings.

Application. 1. Let us fall in a rapture of wonder and admiration, becauſe of the adorable myſteries and miracles of free love diſcovered here in the goſpel. O worſhip and adore this contrivance! Do as the Iſraelites did, Exod. iv. 31. When they heard that a Saviour was come among them, *They bowed their heads and worſhipped.* So do ye this day, O communicants. Do as Moſes commanded the Iſraelites; Exod. xiv. 13. *Stand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, which he will ſhew to you to day.* O ſee it with wonder. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, but far more fearfully and wonderfully redeemed. O glorify him for the contrivance of ſalvation, for the eternal purpoſes of love, for the covenant of grace, and the revelation of it in the goſpel. The terms of the covenant are wondrous, reaſonable and eaſy. The treaſures of the covenant are wondrous, rich and valuable. The whole covenant is wonderfully well ordered and ſure. But for the glory of God, and comfort of believers, here God ſhews his marvellous loving kindneſs, Pſal. xvii. 7. Wonderful to poor rebel worms, traitor duſt and aſhes. O it might have been expected, that God, after the fall, would have ſent a fearful meſſage to the world, like that Rev. viii. *ult.* *Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth.* But behold a ſurpriſing meſſage, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent. And whoſoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely.*

Exhortation to come: Here I offer to you, the worſt of ſinners, the water of life, the blood of Chriſt, and all his purchaſe. Here I make a general proclamation, in the King of Glory's name, of the freedom of his grace, *Ho, every one that thirſteth come ye to the waters.* And *whoſoever* will, communicants, and ſpectators, be what ye will, as if I did call every man and woman's name.

1. O carnal earthly ſoul, that has been a drudge to the world all thy days, come to the *water.* 2. O profane drunkard, ſwearer, ſabbath-breaker, unclean ſinner, black as hell! O will ye come to the water of life, and be cleanſed? O are ye minded to die in your polluted caſe, and be purged no other way than by hell's flames? *O turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* O liars, cheaters, railers, revengeful, malicious, backbiters, that have been wallowing in ſin's puddle, O will ye die in your ſins, and the fountain ſo near! 3. O blind ſoul, born blind, that never ſaw thy ſins, loſt ſtate, and ſinking condition, and all the heavy curſes of the law hanging over your head, O come to the healing and enlightning waters. O cry, with the poor blind men, Matth. xx. 31, 32, 33. *Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou ſon of David. And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and called them, and ſaid, What will ye that I ſhall do unto you? They ſay unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.* See how importunate and ſenſible their complaint is in their mouth, their petition in their hand, they tell their diſtreſs. 5. O prayerleſs ſinner, that never ſought God's grace in earneſt, ſcarce bowed a knee, or read a chapter, O will ye come? O ye that never had any ſerious deſire after Chriſt before, ye that never had any concern for heaven and ſalvation before, I invite you to come. 6. O careleſs ſinner, that never had any heart-love to God or his ordinances, to his way and ſervice, O will ye come? 7. O ſinners, that have ſlighted Chriſt all your days, and the calls of the goſpel; refuſed all his offers, and trampled on his blood hitherto, *Come to the water.* 8. O obſtinate ſinners, that would never be prevailed with to leave ſin, that would never be perſuaded by all the calls, warnings and pains, God has uſed to reclaim you, by his rod, conſcience, afflictions, *&c.* O will ye come? I call you once more to come. 9. O condemned rebels, in the hands of Juſtice, ſentenced to die; will ye come?

10. O ſlaves to ſin and ſatan, that have been drudging after him all your lives, will ye come? 11. O ye that never kept one word to God ſince ye came into the world, tho' ye have ſworn to him at baptiſm, in ſickneſs, and at the Lord's table, will ye come? 12. O poor dry withered ſouls, that have been long watered by the ordinances, and yet bring forth no fruit, O come here, get your roots and branches watered. 13. O poor dead-hearted ſouls, that have long laboured under deadneſs, O come with your cold, lifeleſs, benummed ſouls to the water of life. 14. O diſeaſed ſoul, that has many heart plagues, here is healing. 15. Poor formal ſouls, lame ſinner, that could not

walk, unbelieving ſouls, backſliders, hypocrites, O come for once and deal ſincerely with God, and your own ſouls. O take of the water of life.

Motive. 1. O conſider what is this day in your offer, all that the blood and merits of the eternal Son of God could purchaſe, everlaſting righteouſneſs, pardon, reconciliation, acceſs to God, peace of conſcience, ſanctifying grace, adoption into God's family, a heavenly kingdom, and the viſion and fruition of God for ever. In a word, you have all that can make you good, all that can make you great, and all that can make you happy. Some are ſo rich they know not what they have. O believer, you know not how rich you are, and how great your privileges are.

2. Conſider the extreme need you ſtand in of Chriſt. O poor ſoul, the fire of God's wrath is burning againſt thee, if you get not this water to quench it, you muſt be a faggot for this fire thro' eternity, and *Who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* What will you do at a judgment ſeat? You will ſtand ſpeechleſs and Chriſtleſs, helpleſs and hopeleſs, the executioner will drag thee to the pit without mercy. It will be in vain then to cry, Lord, mercy, mercy, if the blood of Chriſt be now deſpiſed. O if thou haſt no need, come not: But a ſtarving man needs not meat ſo much, a wounded man a phyſician, a dying man breath ſo much as thou needs the water of life. O for a ſtream to polluted ſouls.

3. Conſider how fit and ſuitable Chriſt is for you. Art thou ſcorched and thirſty? Here is drink. Art thou poor, miſerable, blind and naked? Here is blood to juſtify and water to cleanſe. Haſt thou plagues, leproſy, *&c?* Here are noble baths. O ye need not ſay, Who will aſcend to heaven and bring the water? 'Tis here on earth, in this church. Say not who will roll away the ſtone? For the fountain is opened. O here is water that will reſtore thy ſoul again, renew thy youth like the eagles, heal all thy diſeaſes, and cure all thy wounds. O will ye be ſo near the well's mouth, and not ſtep in? O will ye come to this healing water?

4. There is an offer made to you that was never made to fallen angels, Heb. i. 16. *He took not on him the nature of angels:* Originally it may be rendered, he took not hold of them when falling, as a man takes hold of a glaſs, or any brittle thing falling, and keeps it from deſtruction. O put not yourſelves, by your refuſal, in the ſame caſe with them. If ye loſe this opportunity, conſider, the remembrance of loſt opportunities will be terrible to you in hell, like oil to your flames. O what would damned ſpirits give for this offer?

5. If ye come not preſently, a ſentence may be paſſed which ſhall not be altered, as Luke xiv. 24. *For I ſay unto you, that none of theſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.* Ye ſhall not taſte of the water of life, but drink of the cup of wrath. Perhaps many that ſaw the laſt communion here, and would not come to Chriſt, are now ſinking or ſwimming in the brimleſs and bottomleſs ocean of God's wrath. And ſome who joined with us formerly, are now drinking it new with Chriſt in his kingdom. O what a ſweet ſong are they preſently ſinging, and will continue to ſing eternally, Rev. i. 5 *Unto him that loved us and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.* O will ye chuſe to ſing this ſong, or howl in the ocean of wrath. 'Tis like many of you will never ſee another communion here, and many never get another offer of the water of life. O chuſe preſently what ye will do. The offer comes cloſe home to you, ye muſt either ſay, ye will take Chriſt or reject him.

6. Conſider the vanity of all other fountains; the world is a poor rent ciſtern. Why will ye forſake the fountain of living waters that will never fail you?

7. Conſider what way the offer is made to you, by loud and open proclamation, with great earneſtneſs, repeating his offers frequently, he is laying out all his wares to tempt you, his wounds are ſpeaking to and pleading with you, he is commending the waters of life to you, telling, that they are good and ſuitable for you. Oh! we are unſkilful factors for Chriſt, O that he would commend himſelf to you, and ſay, *I am the roſe of Sharon and the lilly of the valley.* O conſider now, Chriſt is ready, the Maſter is calling, and he has ſent me out to call, *All things are ready.* Come, Chriſt is juſt now waiting for an anſwer, I am peremptory with you, I cannot give you a day, or an hour longer to adviſe. *'Tis to day you muſt hear his voice:* What then ſayeſt thou? O give your anſwer preſently. Whether will you come to the water of life, or ly in the puddle of ſin? In Chriſt my Maſter's name, I charge you, man, woman, old and young, to give a preſent anſwer. O what ſhall I report to my maſter? O are there ſome ſaying, I will not anſwer thee, but Chriſt himſelf. Well you deal kindly with my maſter. O do I ſee any thirſting, coming, flightering with deſire, and ſaying, Lord give me Chriſt, or elſe I die: none but Chriſt. On the other hand, will ye make light of it, and ſay, we care not for the water of life; then we may ſtop, ſit down, and cauſe draw the table. O but I am ſure you cannot find in your heart to treat your Redeemer ſo, that hath come ſo far, and paid ſo dear for this water. Well, do as you will, I take God to record, and call heaven and earth to witneſs againſt you, that I have offered Chriſt freely, and ſet life and death before you. Chuſe whom ye will ſerve, and what pool ye will drink of. If ye accept not the offer, it had been better for you, ye had never heard of it, for it will witneſs againſt you. You'll ſay curſed be the day, that ever I heard a goſpel ſermon. Curſed be the day, that ever I witneſſed a communion. Would to God, I had been the ſon of a Pagan; would to God I had been the daughter of a Mahometan.

Direction. O ſay ye, ſhall I win? and how ſhall I come to this fountain? The ſtreams are running cloſe by my door, O I am fear'd I miſs.

Anſ. 1. Come humbly, under a deep ſenſe of your pollution. Say that ye are the chief of ſinners, and leaſt of ſaints. *He ſends the ſprings into the valleys,* Pſal. civ. 10. O humble yourſelves very low, take a back look of all your breaches of vows and old ſins, how numerous and black they are; and O behold their colour and hue in the red glaſs of Chriſt's ſufferings, and then the water of life will be welcome to you.

2. Cry that the Spirit of God may move on the water, that ye may ſtep in and be healed. Cry that the water of life may riſe, and overflow all its banks, that multitudes may be cured.

3. Come thirſting and panting for the water of life; *let every one that is a-thirſt come.* O are there any

ſaying, I'll die if I get not a drink, one ſtream of this water, for Chriſt's ſake: Then you ſhall be ſure of this water, for you have the word of a king for it here, and Pſal. lxxxi. 10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

4. Come with raiſed expectations; you need not fear that theſe waters, when you come thirſty to them, will prove like the ſummer brooks which diſappoint the weary traveller, Job vi. 15. They are not like the flattering empty ciſterns of the creature, that perform not what they promiſe; No, theſe are inexauſtible fountains of living waters, that never can run dry. O mind he is a great and rich King thou art coming to, he gives liberally and grudges not. O raiſe your expectations, not on account of any thing in yourſelves, but on account only of Chriſt's merits, and God's mercy; then you have a good foundation.——As we oft wrong ourſelves by expecting too much from the world; ſo we oft wrong ourſelves, by expecting too little from God, *whoſe mercy is upon us according as we hope in him,* Pſal. xxxiii. *ult.* Chriſt in conferring his goods, ſtill ſaith, *According to your faith, ſo be it unto you.* The king of Iſrael loſt his advantage againſt the Syrians, by ſmiting thrice, and then ſtaying, when he ſhould have ſmitten five or ſix times, 2 Kings xiii. So we oft prejudge ourſelves by the weakneſs of our faith; we receive little, becauſe we expect little; and are like thoſe among whom Chriſt would not do many mighty works, becauſe of their unbelief.

5. Come with joy and praiſe. O ſinner, die not for thirſt, when there is ſuch a fountain of living water ſo near thee: but come with joy, and draw water out of the wells of ſalvation, Iſa xii. 3. Do as David did, when he went to the altar of God, he went to God as his exceeding joy, Pſal. xliii. 4. O this is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice, and be glad in it. O bleſs God for Chriſt, bleſs him for his ordinances; bleſs him for the feaſt, the invitation you have to it, that you have not a feaſt of eternal torments in hell; that you are not among Pagans on earth, or the damned in hell: Bleſs God that has made you willing to come, and has ſet ſo great things in your offer and view, and that he is willing to beſtow them on ſuch worms. Raiſe your hearts, O communicants, and ſay with David, Pſal. ciii. 1. 2. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.*

Object. 1. Alas! I am a ſinful creature, ſhall I come? *Anſ.* The greater is thy need, O come with thy crimſon ſins. *Object.* 2. I have ſlighted theſe waters ſo long, I have no confidence. *Anſ.* Be humbled for it, and make a preſent mends by coming. *Object.* 3. I am feared I be diſappointed though I come. *Anſ.* No, you have the word of a king for it; theſe *that come to me, I'll in nowiſe caſt out.* *Object.* 4. Alas! I have no ſtrength to come, I have a dead heart. *Anſ.* O come, make a mint; groan under thy deadneſs, lay a dead ſoul before God's promiſes. O hoiſe up the ſails, and wait for the gales; look up to God for the accompliſhment of his promiſe. O plead it, and put him to his word; act faith in God's promiſe in the text, and look up. Do as the Iſraelites did in the wilderneſs, Num. xxi. 16, 17, 18. God had called them to the place, and promiſed them water which was very welcome in that dry deſart. Well, did they ſit ſtill and wait till it ſprung? No, they digged, put to their ſtaves, in expectation of God's accompliſhing his promiſe, and ſang, *Spring up, O well.* So do ye; O come, make the mint, put to your ſtaves, weak and ſhort as they are, and dig in expectation, and look up, pray and ſing, *Spring O well.* Come, bring all your empty veſſels to this fountain, in expectation of a fill. Do as the poor widow did, 2 Kings iv. Bring not a few; have ye not many wants to be ſupplied? And I am perſuaded the veſſel will fail, ere ever the oil fail. *Object.* 5. Alas! I am blind, I cannot ſee the well ſpringing, and O it is high time now. *Anſ.* It may be, poor ſoul, the well is nearer than you apprehend; you may be like Hagar ready to fall on a deſperate reſolution, when the well was juſt at hand, Gen. xxi. The Lord *opened her eyes, and ſhe ſaw a well of water,* &c. O that God may do ſo with you. O poor ſoul, take courage, rely on God's promiſe, and come thirſty, with raiſed expectations, and there is no fear. See that word, Iſa. xli. 17, 18. *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them.* And mind that other word, Pſal. ix. 18. *For the needy ſhall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever.* O come with faith and hope, and God will be as good as his word.

SPEECH before going down to the TABLE.

NOW we come to offer you the water of life, not only doctrinally, but in a viſible ſacramental manner: And ye are now to approach to the fountain of the water of life in this ordinance, which is the moſt ſolemn and auguſt ordinance under heaven, and requires the moſt profound awe and reverence from us: But before we go about it, we ſhall read our warrant from the eternal God for doing it, that ſo we may ſhew that it is no invention of men or angels: And that we may keep as cloſs to Chriſt's inſtitution as we can, read with me, 1 Cor. ix. 23. *For I have received of the Lord, that which I alſo delivered unto you, That the Lord Jeſus, the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the ſame manner alſo he took the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.*

Here we have one of heaven's broad ſeals appended to the covenant of grace, wherein you have not only Chriſt crucified, ſignified and repreſented to your view, but alſo exhibited, offered, ſealed and applied to your ſouls, with all the purchaſe of his croſs, and benefits of his blood. Chriſt left this ordinance as a ſpecial love token behind him, when he was to die and leave us. Obſerve the time when he did it, in the ſame night in which he was betrayed, even the laſt night of his life, when he ſaw his all at the ſtake; when he ſaw heaven, earth and hell combining, juſtice, wicked men and devils ready to fall upon him, and the black cloud of his Father's wrath juſt at the breaking over his head, and his bitter agony in the garden and on the croſs juſt at hand: Was it not high time now to be providing for his own ſafety, when he had ſo ſhort time for it? O, but in the firſt place, he will mind believers, and prepare a feaſt and a cordial for them to the world's end, when he was gone.——O, a famous night never to be forgot; a ſad night to Chriſt, but a ſweet night to us; without which the day light of the goſpel and eternal glory, had never dawned upon us. Chriſt would have you never forget that night; wherefore he leaves us theſe love-tokens and memorials of himſelf, to keep us in mind, bread and wine, which you are to eat and drink. Theſe are no coſtly things; Chriſt would not be burdenſome to his people with any of his ordinances. Theſe fitly reſemble the body and blood of our Redeemer, in reſpect of their qualities and effects. Bread, ere it be fit to nouriſh us, muſt be firſt ſown and die in the earth; then it muſt be threſhen, grinded, baked in the oven, broken and eaten; and O it is a moſt nouriſhing thing for us. 'Tis bread that ſtrengthens man's heart, Pſal. civ. 15. So Chriſt's body ſtrengthens and nouriſhes the believing ſoul. Wine, ere it be fit for uſe, it muſt be ſqueezed out of the grape, troden and bruiſed in the wine preſs; and there is no liquor ſo fit for cheering of fainting ſpirits: So with Chriſt crucified, his blood cheers the drooping ſoul.——This bread muſt be broken, that ye may ſee his wounds, the print of the nails and the ſpear, and may ſee into Chriſt's bleeding heart, and yearning bowels of tender mercy, and hear them ſounding towards you; and alſo ſee the clefts of the rock opened, which can only ſhelter you——Again, this wine muſt be poured forth that ye may ſee the fountain of the water of life opened, his blood running freely to ſave you. O the wells of ſalvation are now opened, and the ſtone rolled away, Come dead, hard hearted, blind, lame, diſeaſed ſouls to the healing waters.——Again this bread and wine are to be offered to you, *Take, eat, drink,* to let you ſee that Chriſt is not only to be repreſented, but to be offered and accepted. You muſt now ſtrip yourſelves to take hold of him, receive Chriſt and all his benefits. O now is the time when you muſt flee in to Chriſt crucified, and cloſe with him, and grip faſt to him. O this is the main work of communicating. When ye hear theſe words; *Take, eat, drink,* think with yourſelves that ye ſee Chriſt at the head of the table, and ye hear him ſaying, Take me and all my benefits. O, if ye do not this, ye will eat and drink damnation. This is your main work, come believing, confiding in, and relying on Jeſus Chriſt for life and ſalvation. Come confiding in his authority, ability, and promiſe to ſave. O come leaning and ſtaying yourſelves upon this rock. O come weary ſoul, and caſt thy burden here, and he ſhall ſuſtain thee. O ſhelterleſs ſinner, come thou and all thy concerns into this ark, and here ſhalt thou be ſafe when the deluge comes. O feared and purſued ſoul, flee to this city of refuge, and thou ſhalt be ſecured from the avenger of blood. O quit all other ſhelters and refuges, poor trembling dove, and take to the clefts of the rock alone, for there is no ſalvation in any other. O faithleſs ſoul, wilt thou come here, reach hither thy finger, and in this ordinance behold his hands, reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into his ſide, and feel the print of the nails, and the mark of the ſpear, and then ſay with *Thomas, My Lord and my God.* Here I caſt my anchor, here I reſt my ſoul, *'Tis Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again,* to him I give up myſelf, as my Prophet, Prieſt and King. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. And thus ſay to thy ſoul, O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, He is my God; O then return, O my ſoul, unto thy reſt, and be eaſy and ſafe.——O communicants, conſider that you are (if ye would communicate worthily) to caſt your guilty ſinful ſouls into the open bleeding arms of a crucified Saviour, and give up yourſelves, ſoul and body, to him to be ſaved, taught, and ruled by him. You are to cloſe a bargain and ſeal a covenant with him before angels and men. You muſt receive Chriſt to ſave, and give up yourſelves to be ſaved by him, and to ſerve him. God offering the elements, and Chriſt in them, is a ſeal on God's part: and your taking them is a ſeal on your part.——Now mind, when ye take the elements, that ye, with the arms of your faith, embrace and claſp about the bleeding high Prieſt, reſt and rely wholly on his merits and ranſom, apply his blood for waſhing away all your guilt; preſent it in faith's hand, and plead it with God. Say, Lord, I deſerve to be ſent to hell from this table. But, Lord, here is a ranſom, a righteouſneſs; a loud ſpeaking meritorious blood. When you are eating and drinking, thankfully remember his dying love, and ſuffering for your ſins. And look on him whom ye have pierced; and here covenant, vow and reſolve, that ye will pierce and grieve him no more, and my ſoul for yours, ye ſhall not be unworthy communicants:. Think with yourſelves, in communicating, that ye hear Chriſt ſaying, *Do this in remembrance of me.* O now think on me, your beſt friend in the world, who remembered you in your low eſtate, when there was none to do it. Think on me that came down from my glorious throne, and laid down my head on a block, for you a poor rebellious worm. Think on me who paid all your debt, ſuffered death for you, and left you my inheritance. Think on me that am now abſent from you, but am negotiating your affairs, pleading your cauſe, and preparing your manſion. Think on me that am coming quickly again in the clouds to meet you, and take you to my palace, and put you in poſſeſſion of all. O remember me, who am ſtill remembering you, and have engraven you on the palms of my hands, and have you ſtill in my heart and eye. And O when ye thus mind, ſee that it be with grief for, and abhorrence of your ſins, that pierced and ſlew the Lord of life; and with love and thankfulneſs to him that came ſo chearfully to be your ranſomer. *Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me; to do thy will I take delight.* O bleſſed be he that conſented to the work. O had he refuſed, none other would have accepted, and we had all been ſinking in the ocean of wrath. O bleſs him, bleſs him, O my ſoul, he had no better to give than himſelf, and his heart's blood. O ſinner, will that do thee good, thou ſhalt not want a drop of it. O communicants, come, take. Chriſt crucified is now ready for you; all things are ready, come away to the marriage, and to the marriage-feaſt. The bridegroom is ready, the ſervants and friends of the bridegroom are ready to attend you, the bleſſing to the feaſt is ready, the marriage robes are ready, Chriſt's righteouſneſs; the maſter of the feaſt is ready to bid you welcome; yea, the whole proviſion is ready. The ſpirit is ready to apply the benefits, a pardon is ready, a laver for ſanctification is ready, the wells of conſolation are ready, our high Prieſt is ready to atone, our advocate ready to plead, the manſions are ready to receive us, the crown is ready, the angels ready to convey us, all things are ready but your hearts and ſouls. O will ye make ready and come, the Spirit ſaith, Come, the Bride ſaith, Come, Rev. xxii. 17. Come firſt to Chriſt, and then come to the ſacrament. The table of the great God is covered, the water of life is ready, the fountain of life is broke up, the well is open, the ſtone is rolled away, the breaſts of conſolation are drawn out, O for hungering and thirſting this day. O for many a long piercing look through theſe clouds, that the maſter of the feaſt may come and feed us with the heavenly manna, and water of life.—He is the heavenly Pelican that feeds his young ones with his blood, and we are ſtarving ſupplicants, Lord, about thy hand. May we therefore come forward exerciſing faith and love, that ſo we may be made partakers of Chriſt's broken body and ſhed blood, with all his benefits, to our ſpiritual nouriſhment and growth in grace.

But, my friends, I muſt firſt ſet a rail about the table, that none, who have no right to the table and childrens bread, may come near it. And therefore I, in Chriſt's name, my maſter, and the maſter of this feaſt, excommunicate and debar from this holy table, 1. All ſtrangers to God, and enemies to Chriſt, all thoſe who are not content with the way contrived of ſalvation through a Redeemer; all who are not willing to accept of Chriſt as a Prophet, Prieſt and King, and give up themſelves to be ſaved, taught and ruled by him. All who are living in any known ſin, againſt light, and reſolve not to part with it.——Particularly, all Atheiſts, who deny God in heart or life.——All ignorant perſons, who know not God, their loſt ſtate by nature, their need of Chriſt, and what he has done for them.——All prayerleſs perſons, who worſhip not God in their families, nor in ſecret.——Ye who forget Chriſt all the year over, are not fit to remember him a at communion-table.——All who are ſlaves to the world, and put it in God's room.—All who are in compact with the devil, witches, charmers, and all theſe who deny God's providence I debar.

2. All worſhippers of images, or theſe who do invent any other way of worſhip than God has appointed, or approve of corruptions in God's worſhip, ordinances and ſacraments, which Chriſt the great King of his church hath not inſtituted.

3. All blaſphemers and prophaners of God's name, all curſers, ſwearers, tearers of God's name, whether in oaths or vain prayers, all who invocate the devil in imprecating againſt themſelves or neighbours, habitual ſwearers by faith, conſcience, or their ſouls, preſume not to take the bread of God in your polluted lips.——All mockers of religion, or the ſcriptures, all perjurers, covenant-breakers, hypocrites and apoſtates from God, come not near.

4. All open and avowed ſabbath-breakers, who obſtinately continue to do unneceſſary things on this day, walking unneceſſarily in the fields, ſitting and ſtanding in the ſtreets, when ye might be better employed in the church, or your houſes.

5. All perſons diſobedient to lawful magiſtrates, to parents and miniſters; all who diſregard their parents, and give them no reverence, nor maintenance, when they are poor, *&c.* All parents who take no care of their childrens education, and learn them not to read, pray, *&c.*

6. All murderers, envious, malicious, and revengeful perſons.

7. All gluttons, drunkards. All adulterers, fornicators, unclean perſons; all who have an immodeſt carriage, who ſpeak obſcene language.

8. All thieves, robbers, oppreſſors, unjuſt perſons, cheaters of their neighbours.

9. All liars, backbiters, and ſlanderers.

10. All theſe who are not content with the lot God has carved out to them, but grudge at their neighbour's proſperity, *&c.* Any who live in theſe ſins unrepented of, I debar from the Lord's table.

On the other hand I, in the ſame name and authority, invite all that are ſincerely willing to part with their ſins, turn their back on the devil and hell, and take on with a new maſter, Jeſus Chriſt, and join in covenant with him. 2. All who are truly ſenſible of their loſt and periſhing ſtate without him, and ſee a burden of ſin and wrath ready to ſink them. O drowning men, take hold of this plank of mercy, and come ſafe to land. All thirſty panting ſouls for Chriſt, that would give all the world for Chriſt, that would rather have an intereſt in his blood, and a blink of his face, than the beſt eſtates or dwellings on earth. All that truly love Chriſt, whoſe ſouls deſires are towards him, and the remembrance of his name, come away. 3. All poor cloudy believers, who have many doubts and fears, come away to your own Lord and Saviour. Reach hither your finger with Thomas, fear not ye, for I know ye ſeek Jeſus. 4. All who are groaning under heart-plagues, and ſoul diſeaſes, come away to the Phyſician. All ſhelterleſs ſouls, come away to the ark. All heavy loaden ſouls come to your reſt. All humble beggars come away to the king's feaſt; all that would have more ſtrength of grace, faith, love, repentance, deſires, thankfulneſs. All that would have their ſins and luſts killed. O here is a feaſt and medicine; come to it, for it will prove life to your ſouls, ſtrength to your graces, poiſon to your ſins, and death to your luſts. In a word, all that are heartily willing to take Chriſt for their only ſaviour, and bleeding high prieſt, to ranſom you from hell and wrath, and are willing to give up yourſelves to the bleſſed Son of God, to be ſaved, ruled, and taught by him, and to take Chriſt and his croſs, with a reſolution, that life nor death ſhall never part him and you. O come, come, lift up faith's hands, and the doors of your ſouls, to let in the King of glory, with the voice of joy and priaſe. O let your hearts flighter with deſire and joy, and make him a welcome gueſt.

SPEECH I. at the TABLES.

YOU have ſeen our commiſſion and warrant, and now we are come to our Redeemer's table; bread and wine are now ſet before us: but before they can be made uſe of, they muſt be ſolemnly ſet apart, and conſecrate by prayer and thankſgiving, as our Saviour did. And that we may hold cloſe to the inſtitution, we, after our Saviour's example, firſt take the bread And now let us join in our addreſs to the King of heaven for the bleſſing thereon.

"Glorious Jehovah, we do here own ourſelves, by Adam's fall, to be ſunk in ſin, and miſerable heirs of wrath, ſlaves to ſatan, and enemies to thee. Mountains of guilt and wrath ly heavy on us, the devils were waiting, and hell gaping for us, and none could help us in our miſery. Yea, we have ſtill been going on in rebellion againſt thee ſince we were born, ſo that the hotteſt place in hell is our due. We have forfeited all happineſs and favour: But glory to free grace and redeeming love, that tho' we have deſtroyed ourſelves, in thee is our help; that God has found out a way for ſatisfying juſtice, and ſaving ſinners, by the incarnation and death of his dear Son. Glory to God the Son, for undertaking to be our ſurety, and to leave his throne, to wade through a ſea of wrath, a ſea of blood, a ſea of ſufferings, yea, through hell, to ſave us from periſhing. O the height, O the depth, breadth and length of the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth all knowledge. Glory to God that hath both ſent the news and offer of this glorious ſalvation to us, and by this ſacrament hath ſet his bow in the clouds, as a token he will not drown us in the ſea of wrath. O what would damned ſouls and fallen angels give for ſuch a day as we have? Thou art raining manna on us, while thou art raining fire and brimſtone on them. Glory to thee this day, that we are not among Pagans on earth, or the damned in hell. What ſhall we render to thee, O Lord, for all thy benefits? O Lord, we do here profeſs before heaven and earth, angels and men, the hearty acquieſcence of our ſouls in this wiſe and noble contrivance of redemption, and look to be ſaved by no other name than that of Jeſus. Lord, we are content to take him as our Surety and Saviour as offered; and to give up ourſelves to him. Lord, come here and ſeal the covenant with us, poor loſt ſinners, and backſliding wretches. Lord, come to thy own table, and bleſs our proviſion. Sanctify theſe elements of bread and wine, (which thou took, bleſſed, and brake, and diſtributed to thy diſciples) that they may be the ſymbols of thy body and blood. O that we in receiving them, may partake of Chriſt's body and blood, and ſhare in all his benefits. Lord, ſtamp and conſecrate theſe creatures of bread and wine, that they may be the means of conveying life and ſalvation to our ſouls. Lord, grant that this ordinance may be a glaſs to let us ſee the evil of ſin, the terribleneſs of divine wrath, and the love of Chriſt, and the worth of our ſouls. Lord, let it be a knock to waken the ſleepy, a ſpur to quicken the ſecure, a cordial to revive the faint, and food to ſtrengthen the weak, phyſic to cure the ſick, and a plaiſter to heal the wounded. Lord, bleſs the ordinance, and let wondrous changes be made on all: Let here the empty ſoul be filled, the ſtarving creature fed, the poor beggar enriched, the hard heart ſoftened, the cold heart inflamed, the dead ſoul quickened, the paralytick hand cured, the blind eye enlightened, the thirſty heart ſatisfied, the feeble knees ſtrengthened, the ſtraitened heart enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping deſires elevated, the cloudy ſoul brightened, and the doubting ſoul reſolved. Lord, let it be a bleſſed meal, let it prove life to our Souls, death to our ſins, ſtrength to our graces, and poiſon to our luſts. Let here the ſmoaking flax be kindled into a flame, and the bruiſed reed find ſupport. Let our ſouls be hereby fortified and prepared for trials and ſufferings for Chriſt. Let us be fitted and prepared for paſſing through the valley of the ſhadow of death. Lord, let us meet with Chriſt in this ordinance, otherwiſe it will be a heartleſs feaſt. O there will be no life among us, unleſs the Lord of life be preſent. Lord, what better will we be than a company of dead carcaſſes about thy table without thee? Lord, come into our hearts, King of glory come in. We here throw out of doors all the nails, thorns, gall, and vinegar, that afflicted Chriſt. Lord come in, and make a rid houſe, room for thyſelf. Had we ten thouſand hearts, they were all too little. Lord, help us to plead the body and blood of Chriſt, with thee. Lord, we are undone if thou mark iniquity, thou mayſt juſtly ſend us from thy table to hell, or pour out a flood of curſes upon us. Lord we have no ſcreen but Chriſt, we offer Chriſt to thee, and preſent thy beloved Son in whom thou art well pleaſed. O Lord, how ſhall ſuch wretches as we, dare to approach this holy table? We are dogs, how ſhall we preſume to take the childrens bread? We have been feeding on luſts with the ſwine, how ſhall we preſume to take the ſpiritual manna, this food of angels? We have trampled theſe pearls under our feet, and yet are they in our offer. O Lord, our fearful guiltineſs makes us tremble to come, and yet it alſo makes us not dare to ſtay away; for whither ſhall the ſick come, but to the Phyſician, who has promiſed, that him that cometh, (be who he will) thou wilt in noways caſt out? ——But, Lord, who ſo leprous and polluted as we? O will Chriſt come and feaſt with the like of us? Lord, we are not worthy or fit that thou ſhouldſt come under the roof of the houſe of our hearts, 'tis ſo ſhattered, ruinous and defiled. Thou haſt not a fit place with us to lay thy head. But O thou who didſt not diſdain to ly in a manger among beaſts, and to be entertained in the houſe of Simeon the leper, Lord, come into our ſouls, and there repair and prepare an upper room for thyſelf, that we may keep the paſſover with thee. Speak the word, and thy ſervants hearts ſhall be healed, cleanſed, and made lively, ſoft and pliable. Lord, cloath all the gueſts with the wedding garment, and let them be accepted, that they do not eat and drink their own damnation, but that our pardon may be ſealed, our weakneſs repaired, our wants ſupplied, our corruptions ſubdued, and our ſouls ſo inſeparably united to thee, that neither temptations nor death may ever be able to diſſolve the union. Lord, grant that in theſe holy myſteries we may not only commemorate, but effectually receive Chriſt and all his benefits. O let Chriſt's infinite love in dying on a croſs for us, kindle in our frozen hearts that ſacred fire of love to him, that no waters may quench, no floods drown, and ſuch as may burn up all our luſts and idols.

SPEECH II.

O Communicants, I would aſk, where are you? *Anſ*. At the table of the Lord. *Queſt*. What are you come for? what is your errand? O forget not this. Are you come to ſubſcribe and ſeal a marriage covenant with Chriſt, before the glorious Trinity and elect angels? Are ye come to join hands with him? O remember then, ye are juſt now upon the moſt awful and ſolemn tranſaction that ever paſſed betwixt God and the creature. And if ever you was in a concerned frame, now ſhould be the time of it. Eternity depends on what ye are doing. O be as ſerious, as if ye were juſt going to death and judgment; as if the trumpet were ſounding, and your heart-ſtrings breaking. O what would ye do, if God ſhould cry from heaven juſt now, Riſe, man or woman, come before my tribunal, and get your ſentence? O what would ye do? Would not tears run down? Would not your groans pierce heaven? Would ye not ſay, now if I want Chriſt's frendſhip, his blood to plead, I am loſt and undone for ever? If I want faith, if I get not a ſprinkling of Chriſt's blood for my pardon, and paying my debt, I muſt preſently go with the damned and devils, and be barred up in hell's priſon. In ſuch a caſe, what would be the ſin ye would moſt bitterly bewail? would it be long ſlighting of Chriſt, giving the world his room, your forgetting eternity, and praying ſo ſeldom, and ſo formally? What mercy would you beg from God? Would it not be faith, an intereſt in Chriſt, pardon, evidence of grace, aſſurance of his love, a title to the kingdom? O would ye not cry, O that God would pardon me, and tell me, that he hath pardoned my ſins? O that he would take me into his covenant, and tell me, that he is my covenanted God? O mourn and cry with the ſame earneſtneſs now, as if you were immediately to paſs into eternity.——Or what would ye do, if God ſhould cry, I'll ſtrike down every unworthy communicant, with the bread in his mouth, and the cup in his hand? I'll make them monuments of my wrath where they ſit. Would not every one cry, Lord forbid I be the perſon? God ſave me from communicating unworthily. O ſirs, if your hearts be dead, dull and formal; if they be hard, carnal, wandering, filled with luſts, the nails that pierced Chriſt, ye will be unworthy, and ſo be guilty of Chriſt's blood, and eat and drink damnation. O ſay ye, how ſhall I be a worthy communicant? O cry to your graces, *Awake O north wind, and come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden*, &c. Are your graces awake, are your hearts flaming with love? Are the arms of faith ſtretched wide out to claſp hard and faſt about a crucified Redeemer? and are you willing and ready to throw yourſelves into his open bleeding arms? Are you clear to make and cloſe the bargain, to give and receive; and ſay, *My beloved is mine and I am his?* Let us put heaven's broad ſeal to the contract, before heaven and earth, angels and men, witneſſing the ſame.

Bread given.—Believing ſoul, I now deliver to thee the body of Chriſt, O now receive a broken Chriſt, and apply him by faith. Behold his wounds opened, and deep clefts made in the rock of our ſalvation, to hide and ſhelter a purſued trembling dove, that had no place for the ſole of her foot, either in heaven or earth to reſt upon. O poor dove come into the ark, that the floods drown thee not: Mercy has opened a window in the ſide of the ark, and is putting out a hand to pull thee in. O ſtay not out now, leſt a wave of vengeance waſh you from the ſides thereof, and ye plunge in hell for ever.

Cup given.——O ſee as the fountain runs, and follows poor ſinners. O, are ye not deſirous to be bathed therein? O have ye no pollutions, no plagues, ſoul diſeaſes? Is there no blind or cripple here; weak hands, or feeble knees; no cold or hard hearts? Is there any doubting ſinner here? O come, drink and bathe, and be made whole: thou haſt now a cure for all thy diſeaſes and wants. O it is your own fault if ye miſs a cure. O will ye not claſp about the Phyſician, when he is within reach of you; you'll perhaps never be ſo near him again; hold faſt grips, and quit him not: tell him all that ails you; table all your complaints before him: put up your requeſts: have ye no luſts that ye would have killed? no weak grace to be ſtrengthned? your King will not deny you any thing. Deep calleth unto deep, the depth of our miſery for the depth of thy mercy.—O now communicants, ye have dedicate yourſelves to the Lord; ye are now conſecrate, as well as the elements were; ye are conſecrate by Chriſt's body and blood, Chriſt has now taken infeftment of your ſoul and body, as his conſecrated temple, for his ſervice and reſidence. O keep his temple clean. You know how Solomon conſecrated the temple of Jeruſalem. Think with yourſelves, what if Solomon, after his ſolemn prayer, and God's taking infeftment of it by the bright cloud, had driven in a herd of ſwine? O how provoking would this have been? So it is, if ye bring a herd of ſwine, devils and luſts into Chriſt's temple. O watch againſt temptations; ye will meet with many, but may God's grace be ſufficient for you.

SPEECH. III.

O Communicants, what brings you here? What came ye forth for to ſee? I ſuppoſe, ſome will anſwer with the Greeks that came up to worſhip at the temple, John xii. 21. *We would ſee Jeſus.* 'Tis a good errand, I make you ſincerely welcome. I give you an anſwer in Pilate's words, John xix. 5. *Behold the man.* O here a glaſs to let you ſee him. O behold a crucified Jeſus, buffeted, ſcourged Jeſus, a bleeding, wounded Jeſus; ſee him ſmitten and bruiſed for your iniquities. Behold the great gaſh and wide breach God made in his ſoul, and poured in a whole ocean of wrath upon him. He prays once, he prayed again, he prays a third time, 'till covered all over with his own blood in the garden. But for all this he muſt die; his enemies apprehend him, ſcourge him with iron chains, pierce his temples with thorns, bind a heavy croſs upon his back; he bears till his ſtrength is ſpent, and he faints under the burden of it, and another muſt help. O wonderful! he that upholds the univerſe, ſtrengthens his people, overcomes his enemies, and doth valiantly, is now become ſo weak! O communicants, mourn and weep bitterly for the heavy croſs ye laid on his back; your ſins were the curſed load and dead weight. O behold how he bears till he faints, and at length muſt bow his head and give up the ghoſt. The ſtorm was great, and this tall cedar muſt fall. Why? God broke him with breach upon breach, with one wave upon the back of another, 'till the whole ſea billows of his wrath went over him: and your Lord was ſo mindful of you, O believing communicants, he would leave nothing for you to ſuffer. Had there been but one drop left in the cup for you, it would have poiſoned and deſtroyed you all. *O behold the man,* this living and lovely Jeſus.—I doubt not but there are ſeveral ſorts of eyes here, 1. Some carnal eyes, like the Jews, who beheld him, reviled, and cried, crucify him. Some like Herod and his men of war, who deſired to ſee Chriſt; but when they ſaw him, they vilify and ſet him at nought. So I fear ſome of you think nothing of Chriſt when you ſee him, and are ſaying as Iſaiah liii. You ſee no beauty in him why he ſhould be deſired. O ſee ye no love nor lovelineſs in Chriſt? then you ſhould not be here; ye are unfit gueſts. 2. There are eyes of faith that ſome have opened to ſee his beauty and lovelineſs and their eye affects their heart, their ſouls are full of love and deſire to him; ye are the welcome ones. O behold him with an eye of faith; and there are many things ye may ſee in him: ye may ſee a flame of love to ſinners in his breaſt. I remember it was a very pleaſant reflection the Jews had on Chriſt's carriage at Lazarus's ſepulchre, *He wept*. And O, ſay they, *Behold how he loved him*. Chriſt's tears were a ſign of his love; and if it be ſo, how much more is the ſhedding his heart's blood a ſign of his love; O may not we cry, behold how he loved us, in taking his body and blood to quench the raging flames that would devour us? O do ye ſee his heart panting with love, and his affection ſtreaming out in blood? and are ye wondering, prizing, loving and adoring him for it, and ſaying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Then this feaſt is appointed for you, and ſo receive Chriſt and all his purchaſe.

Bread given.—Now take hold of the covenant and embrace Chriſt in it. Accept of a bruiſed Lord, a bruiſed friend: open your hearts to him, as he opened his ſide to you. O keep him not at the door now, when he knocks with his nailed hands, and his croſs upon his back, and ſaying to you, look to my hands, my head, my feet; look to my wounded body and bruiſed ſoul; look to my bowels laid open; look into my panting heart; look what juſtice hath done, what thy ſins and the devil have done; look what the Romans, Jews, and bloody butchers have done; look what my own diſciples have done, one betrayed me, another denied me, and all the reſt forſook me. And O, wilt thou not give me harbour in thy heart, when I am thus uſed for thee?

Cup given.—Will you ſee his blood ſhed? You are now upon mount Calvary, at the foot of the croſs, near the wounds: He is ſaying, Pray believing ſoul, reach hither thy hand, feel the prints of the nails; yea, thruſt into my pierced ſide, and feel my warm bleeding heart, and ſee if I love you not. Do it, and cry out with Thomas, my Lord and my God; and with Paul, This is Chriſt, the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me. O how ſhall I expreſs my love to thee; O angels and ſaints bleſs him. O, if ye now get faith's ſight of him, there is another eye wherewith ye ſhall behold the man ere long, an eye of immediate viſion. Thus the angels and ſaints ſee him, even as he is. O believer, it doth not appear now what he is; but ye ſhall one day ſee him as he is, and how mightily ſurpriſed will ye be with the ſight? Ye will ſay as the Queen of Sheba ſaid of Solomon, The half was not told me when in my own country. O long for this ſight, and now live and walk as thoſe who are daily looking for the coming of the Lord, and improve the preſent view for ſtrengthening grace, and nouriſhing your ſoul. Elijah is twice wakened to take a double meal; ſo ſhould you feed plentifully, ye know not what a journey ye have, and what ſtorms ye muſt meet with; ye know not but the wind may blow to winnow the corn, and blow away the chaff. O flee to covenanted grace, to uphold and ſtrengthen you in your pilgrimage thro' this wilderneſs, to the heavenly Canaan above, where the weary are at reſt, and the wicked ceaſe from troubling the juſt.

SPEECH IV.

O Communicant, you are ſet down at the table of God, mind the place where you are is holy; O do as Moſes did, when he ſaw the buſh burning, Exod. iii. 3. *Turn aſide and ſee this great ſight*, ye cannot ſee a greater. See the rock of your ſalvation ſmitten by the rod of juſtice; behold the ſpear piercing into his heart. O rock of ages, what made thee to rent and cleave ſo? O brightneſs of thy Father's glory, who hath thus disfigured thee? Alas! my ſins are the tormentors, my pride, covetouſneſs, malice, lying, ſwearing, *&c.* When he was ſmitten, it was I ſhould have been pierced. Alas! for my hard heart and dry eyes, ſhall the rocks rent, and not I? I, the guilty criminal that ſhould have ſuffered all! and ſhall I ſee my Saviour ſmitten and not mourn? Shall I ſee his heart ſtreaming with blood, and my eyes not ſtream with tears? O curſed ſin! and O hard heart! that will not break nor kindle into a flame of love to Chriſt. O take a view of what he has done; he has quenched the flames of hell for you, ſtopt the lions mouth, pulled out the ſerpent's ſting, ſilenced the claim of the law, paid your debt, delivered you out of priſon. O ſee that promiſe made by Jehovah to the Mediator, Zech. ix. 11. *As for thee alſo, by the blood of thy covenant, I have ſent forth thy priſonors out of the pit wherein is no water.* This promiſe is accompliſhed on all the elect who believe. O communicant, do you think this promiſe is yet accompliſhed in you or not? Have you got the blood of the covenant applied to you, to draw you out of the pit, which is a ſtate of nature, wrath and damnation? O if ye be not drawn out, if ye have not laid hold on the Lord of free grace, and on the blood of the covenant, ye are not fit to be here. O but ſay ye, How ſhall we know if we be theſe priſoners that are brought out of the pit? 1. Waſt thou ever a priſoner in thy own eyes? Did you ever feel your bonds, and was weary of your ſlavery? 2. Did ye ever experience a ſtrong power, determining you to ſhake off the yoke of ſin, and take on Chriſt's yoke? 3. Did ye ever give longing looks to Chriſt thro' your priſon gates for relief? Did you cry, Who will deliver me? 4. Is your deliverance precious to you? Do you highly value the blood of ſprinkling that has opened the priſon doors? 5. Did you ever embrace and lay hold on your deliverer by the arms of faith?

6 Did you ever devote yourſelves to him and his ſervice and obedience, upon the looſing of your bonds? as Pſal. cxvi. 16, 17. 7. Do ye ſing the praiſes of your deliverer? 8. Are ye willing to ſuffer outward captivity and bondage for him? 9. Do ye long for an eternal and complete deliverance from captivity?

SPEECH V.

O Communicants, bleſs God that has ſet you down at this table; bleſs him for a covenant of grace, and bleſs him for this ſeal of it. O be glad and rejoice to ſee the rainbow in the clouds, which was a ſign of his covenant and promiſe to ſecure the world againſt a deſtructive deluge. O, ſhall we not joy to ſee the ſign of God confirming his covenant? If it ſtill rained, and a rainbow never appeared, we might have reaſon to fear. So if we never ſaw this ordinance and ſeal, we might have reaſon to be afraid. Well, you ſee God is willing to keep covenant, there is the rainbow appearing, are you willing to enter into covenant, or renew covenant, and take hold of the Mediator and Surety of it? Are your ſouls burning with deſire to ſeal the covenant, and to get Chriſt in your arms like old Simeon? What hinders our concluding this bargain? O young communicants, this is the day of your eſpouſals to the Lord Jeſus; now are ye to join hands, and to be married to him. O happy day! O ſtretch out the hand of faith to him, and ſay, Even ſo I take him, *my Lord and my God. My beloved is mine and I am his.* O let the marriage knot be caſt ſure, that death may not diſſolve it. O, the Bridegroom is ready, and waiting for your hearty conſent, and if ye grant it, it will be a day of the gladneſs of his heart; yea there will be gladneſs in heaven for it. I hope there are ſome ſinners ſaying with Rebekah, when they called her to know her mind, with reſpect to her matching with Iſaac, Gen. xxiv. 58. *And they called, and ſaid unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And ſhe ſaid, I will go.* If ye be willing to go with him, then he is willing to take you: and in token of his willingneſs and faithfulneſs, here he has ſent you his ſeal from heaven, whereon is written LOVE. Come, take the ſeal, and Chriſt with it.

Bread given.—Heaven and earth, angels and men are witneſſes, the ſubſcribers to this marriage contract, and ſealing this bargain. O, with this bread receive a broken Chriſt, and open your hearts to your bruiſed friend, that met with all this for you. O here is brave food, excellent nouriſhment; here bread that ſtrengthens man's heart. Bread is called the ſtaff of bread: This is indeed the ſtaff of bread; a ſtaff that ſupports you, a ſtaff that will defend you, a ſtaff that will beat your enemies, if eaten by faith; it will be life to your ſouls, and poiſon to your luſts; yea, it will rout them, and put them all to flight. Cry with theſe, John vi. 34. *Lord, evermore give us this bread.* I mind a ſtrange dream that one of the Midianitiſh hoſt had, Judg. vii. 13. when God was coming on them, *Behold a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the hoſt of Midian, and ſmote a tent.* Strange! a piece of bread overturn a tent! Lo! here that dream interprete in this ſacrament; here a piece of bread, if eaten by faith, that will tumble into the hoſt of thy enemies, ſtrike down all their tents, and put them to flight. Surely a ſight by faith of Chriſt's body, pierced and nailed by ſin, will turn a believer's heart againſt it: Let ſin flatter as it will, he will never forget what it has done to his dear Saviour. O believers, will ye have any further evidence of Chriſt's love? Well, here is his blood. *In like manner, after ſupper, he took the cup, ſaying, This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood, drink ye all of it.*

Cup given.—O behold the water of life run, and follows poor ſinners. O believers, come and drink, and live for evermore. O, is not this a rare feaſt. Be buſy while you have it. O now be applying Chriſt's blood for ſtrengthening weak graces, killing ſtrong luſts, curing diſeaſes, removing plagues. Ye have a wilderneſs to go through, and know not what trials are before you. Would you have ſtrength for your journey, and preparation for ſuffering and trials; O here you may have it. Here is food more ſubſtantial, durable and nouriſhing, than Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and his cruſe of water, who went in the ſtrength of it forty days and forty nights, till he came to Horeb the mount of God; of which, ſee 1 Kings xix. 6, 8. Elijah was twice wakened there to take a double meal. So ſhould ye feed plentifully; ye know not if ever ye get another feaſt like this, till ye come to the mount of God above; and ye know not what winds and ſtorms may blow by the way.—A feaſt time is a time of granting requeſts. Have ye nothing to table before Chriſt at this feaſt? See what Ahaſuerus ſaid to Eſther at the banquet of wine, Eſth. v 3. *What wilt thou, Queen Eſther? and what is thy requeſt, it ſhall be given thee?* Have ye no luſt to kill, nor grace to cheriſh. O table your complaints, your ails before Chriſt. Seek a caſt of grace for your own friends, and a caſt of power to this corner of the land, and relief to the poor churches abroad, that want ſuch a covered table. Mind the afflictions of Joſeph: O put up a groan for Zion, *Lord, wilt thou yet ariſe, and have mercy on Zion, pity her rubbiſh, favour her ſtones.*

O young communicants, mind what ye have been doing; ye have ratified your baptiſmal vows; ye are Chriſtians by your own conſent. It has been put to your own choice whom ye will ſerve. And ye have ſaid, Nay, but we will ſerve the Lord. Ye have given up your names to Chriſt, and liſted yourſelves under his banner. O it is a ſweet banner, a love banner. O deſert not your captain, draw not back. Tell ſatan and ſin when they tempt you, that ye have changed maſters; ye are no more what ye was, ye have opened your mouth to the Lord, and ye can't go back. Ye cannot ſwear, get drunk, lie, break the Sabbath, neglect prayer. No, that is the devil's drudgery, ye have choſen a new maſter. O communicants, ye have the ſweeteſt work, the greateſt wages, and the beſt of maſters. O lean on his ſtrength, and plead for covenanted grace to bear you up through the wilderneſs, that at laſt you may enter into the promiſed land, and receive the reward of inheritance.

SPEECH VI.

CHRIST has undertaken a long journey to purchaſe ſalvation to you, dear hath it coſt him, and now hath he brought it to your door. Can ye refuſe him? O is he knocking at my door? 1. Whoſe door is it? That of a poor naſty beggar, as full of filthy ulcers and boils as Lazarus's body was, whoſe ſores the dogs licked, or Job's body, when he ſat in aſhes, and ſcraped himſelf. O is he come to his mortal enemy, who hates him, and has lodged traitors in his room? yea, a mean creature, a worm, a moth, a graſhopper, worth nothing, and worſe than nothing; poor, deformed, hated of all, rebels, and ſatan's ſlaves?

2. Who is it that ſtands and knocks? The King of glory the Sun of righteouſneſs, and brightneſs of his Father's glory, who is infintely happy, ſelf-ſufficient, and needs us not; has all power in heaven and earth, has the keys of hell and death, in compariſon of whom the ſun is a lump of darkneſs, the heavens are but a ſpan; and the inhabitans are but as graſhoppers. A word, a

look from him, could ſend us to nothing or hell.

3. What doth he offer? He offers his precious blood, his blood that is more than crowns, his blood and all the purchaſe of it. It anſwers all thy complaints and grievances. Is wrath kindled againſt thee? My blood ſhall quench it. Is Juſtice incenſed? My blood ſhall pacify it. Is heaven ſhut againſt thee? My blood ſhall open it. Is conſcience a terrour to thee? My blood ſhall ſprinkle and ſpeak peace to it. Feareſt thou any thing? My blood ſhall ſecure thee. Wanteſt thou any thing? My blood ſhall procure it for thee. Yea, if his blood be not enough, he offers himſelf to thee, and that's more than ten thouſand worlds, to be thine in covenant, thy God, thy Friend, thy Huſband, thy Jeſus, thy Saviour, thy Chriſt, thy King, thy Prince, thy Phyſician, thy Shepherd, thy Captain, thy Cautioner, thy Advocate. Art thou poor? The Owner of heaven and earth will be thine to enrich thee. Art thou deſpicable? The King of glory will be thine to honour thee. Art thou deformed? The Son of righteouſneſs will be thine to beautify thee. Art thou diſtreſſed? He will be thy Redeemer to relieve thee. Art thou weak? The Lord of hoſts will be thine to ſtrengthen thee. Art thou diſeaſed? The great Phyſician will be thine to cure thee. Art thou diſconſolate? The God of all conſolation will be thine to comfort thee. Art thou in darkneſs? The bright morning ſtar will be thine to enlighten thee. Art thou miſerable? The fountain of bliſs will be thine to make thee happy. Art thou dead? The fountain of life will enliven thee. Thou ſhalt not only be his ſervant, but his ſon; not only ſit at his table, but ſit on his throne.

4. How offers he himſelf? With great patience and long ſuffering. Some ſhift him, and others deny him, and yet he ſtands and knocks. How wonderful! He that has a throne of glory to ſit on, to ſtand at your door, he to whom angels and ſaints bow their knees, caſt down their crowns.—To ſtand at your door, and you ſitting in ſatan's ſeat, yea lying in the boſom of your luſts, and ſleeping ſecurely in the ways of ſin.—Yea, ſtanding without, while luſts and Chriſt's enemies are welcomed in.——Standing at the door, while ſatan has the beſt room; yea, ſtanding after many repulſes and affronts, till his locks be wet with dew. Wonder at Chriſt's patience, that he fires not the houſe about your ears. Mind, he is ſtanding on his feet, ready to depart. 2. He is ſtanding with great compaſſion. He lift up his voice and wept over obſtinate Jeruſalem, bewailed their unkindneſs to him, and cruelty to their own ſouls, Luke xix. 41. O if one ſhould have aſked Chriſt, as he did the woman, John xx. 15. Bleſſed Lord, what ſeekeſt thou? Why weepeſt thou? He might poſſibly have anſwered, 'I ſeek not myſelf, I 'weep not for myſelf, I ſhall be infinitely and eternally 'glorious, tho' ſinners be not gathered; but this is my 'grief, that ſinners will rather caſt themſelves into hell 'than into my arms, and rather part with me, than part 'with their luſts; it is bitter to me, becauſe I ſee it will 'be more bitter to them in the end. I weep, becauſe it 'will coſt them weeping and gnaſhing of teeth for ever.' 3. He offers importunately, and ſtoops (as it were) on his knee, to beſeech and intreat them to accept of pardon, ſalvation and happineſs, 2 Cor. v. 20. He repeats his intreaties, Luke xiii. 54. *How often would I have gathered thy children, and ye would not?* He is loth finally to give us up, he knows not how to do it, Hoſ. xi. 8. *How ſhall I give thee up,* Ephraim? *How ſhall I deliver thee,* Iſrael? *How ſhall I make thee as* Admah? *How ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.*

5. Conſider the danger of not opening to Chriſt. 1. Till then, ye are ſhut up in darkneſs, the next room to hell. 2. Till then, the heart is in poſſeſſion of ſatan. 3. The wrath of God is ſhut in, the houſe is on fire, and Chriſt ſhut out, who only can quench it. 4. If you open not to Chriſt now, he will ſhut you out hereafter.

6. Conſider the advantage of opening to Chriſt. He will come in, for what end? 1. To marry thee. 2. To expreſs his love to thee. 3. To ſhine in the ſoul; the ſoul is but a dark dungeon, while Chriſt is ſhut out. 4. To adorn the ſoul; lothſome is thy ſoul while Chriſt is ſhut out. 5. To enrich the ſoul. Chriſt comes not empty handed; for *Length of days is in his right hand, and in his left hand riches and honour,* Prov. iii. 16. He would come in to pour out his treaſures into the ſinner's boſom; and his treaſures are better than riches, and all the things that may be deſired, are not to be compared to them. 6. To reign in the ſoul, to erect his throne there, and expel the tyrants who have ſo long oppreſſed the ſoul with cruel bondage. 7. To abide there, and dwell with thee for ever. 8. To feaſt with thee; and behold he brings his entertainment along with him.

7. Conſider what a feaſt it is that Chriſt provides for his gueſts, it is not ordinary fare, it is not only ſatisfying, but begets ſtomach; it not only preſerves life where it is, but begets it where it is not; it is hidden manna, angels food, bread from heaven, even the fruit of the tree of life, that grows in midſt of the paradiſe of God. This tree is himſelf, he that eats of it ſhall never die ſpiritually nor eternally. He is alſo the water of life, if ye get but a drop of it, it ſhall prove an everlaſting ſpring in your ſoul, you need not thirſt after creature-comforts, nor carnal refreſhments. You ſhall get the grapes of Canaan, the fruits that grow in the land of promiſe. Behold cluſters of theſe grapes at this table. Indeed they are hidden manna to natural perſons, ſtrangers intermeddle not with their joy, Rev. ii. 17. Here the earneſt of the Spirit, the peace of God, the riches of aſſurance, that joy that is unſpeakable and full of glory, the hidden manna and water of life; and theſe enjoyments differ but in degree from heaven ——You are now ſet at the table with Chriſt. O what ſaith Mephiboſheth of ſuch a Saviour, 2 Sam. 9. 8. *And he bowed himſelf, and ſaid, What is thy ſervant, that thou ſhouldſt look on ſuch a dead dog as I am?*——O what bleſt intimacy and familiarity does Chriſt allow his people, like his beloved diſciple, John xv. 23. You may lay your head in Chriſt's boſom.

8. Make Chriſt welcome into your ſoul, rejoice in him, as Hannah did, 1 Sam. xi. 1. *Mine heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord, my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, becauſe I rejoice in thy ſalvation.* O entertain Chriſt with that which he loves. 1. With a humble heart. O theſe that are vile in their own eyes, ſhall be exalted. 2. With a broken heart; a heart broken from ſin, and broke for ſin, a heart that melts and bleeds, when it remembers how it has wounded and diſhonoured Chriſt. A heart

ſtony, inſenſible, and hard againſt the word, is an abomination to God. 3. With a loving heart. 4. With a ſincere heart, Pſal. li. 6. Chriſt loves not a divided heart.

9. Let him have good attendance, be not careleſs nor diſreſpectful of him, depart not from his preſence, wander not after others, let him always have your company, leſt he depart from you. Let your mind be with him, your thoughts be of him, your inclinations towards him, your affections on him, as the moſt lovely, deſireable, and delightful object. Walk with him in your daily converſe, and entertain ſweet thoughts of ſweet Jeſus. O give him your heart.

O communicants, ye are to ſay, I am the Lord's, and to ſubſcribe this with your hand. O ſee that ye put on Chriſt. O that God would give commiſſion now to take off your filthy garments, and give you change of raiment. Are ye returning prodigals, that were once loſt, and now are found? O then the beſt robe will be brought forth to you. O there is great entertainment here, not only the wedding garment, but the fatted calf killed; alſo a ring to your finger, which is the manifeſtation of his love; he will put it on your finger, and ye may look to it when he is abſent from you. Not only ſo, but there are ſhoes brought forth, the preparation of the goſpel of peace, ye know not what rough ſteps ye have to go through; and not only ſo, but you ſhall have the whole armour of God, the girdle of truth, the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, the ſhield of faith, the helmet of ſalvation, and the ſword of the Spirit, that ye may be able to ſtand in the evil day, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

SPEECH VII.

O Communicant, thou art now come to the communion table, I would aſk thee, Haſt thou a communion frame? And you will readily ſay, what is that frame? I anſwer, 1. It is a humble frame. 2. A wondering frame. 3. A believing frame, aſſenting to the truth of the goſpel, looking to Chriſt crucified for healing, fleeing to Chriſt's wounds for ſhelter, waſhing in his blood for cleanſing, pleading his blood for pardon, and ſitting down under his ſhadow. 4. A mourning penitential frame, for piercing Chriſt by your ſins, and eſpecially thoſe againſt light. 5. A covenanting frame, firmly reſolving to take hold of the covenant of free grace. *Queſt.* What is a true covenanting frame? *Anſ.* 1. Are ye grieved for long diſtance and eſtrangement from Chriſt, and for long ſlighting his calls and offers, and for preferring ſatan's drudgery to Chriſt's ſervice? 2. Have you got a diſcovery of your ſinking periſhing ſtate, while on the bottom of the covenant of works, and reſting on ſelf-righteouſneſs; and ſeen an abſolute need of a borrowed righteouſneſs; and that this is the only foundation of your hope? Have ye fled from the one bottom to the other? 3. Are ye ſenſible of your treacherous dealing in the matter of your baptiſmal covenant; and that ye have left Chriſt's colours, and gone over to the devil's camp? 4. Are ye now come to an open rupture with all God's enemies? 5. Do ye now accept of Chriſt in all his offices? Do ye accept of the propitiation and atonement ſet forth, as the only ground of your juſtification, pardon and acceptance? 6. Do ye come to give up yourſelves to the Lord, all that you are and have? 7. Are ye come to engage in Chriſt's ſtrength, to walk in newneſs of life all your days? Well, if this be the diſpoſition of your ſoul, you may aſſure yourſelf that you are coming to the table of the Lord in a right covenanting frame.

I put it to thy choice, O communicant, O young man, young woman, as Joſhua did to the children of Iſrael, *Chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve.* Chuſe ye whom ye will take for your maſter, Chriſt or the devil, and whoſe diſciples ye will be. Both are courting your hearts, which of them will you yield to? Lay your hands to your hearts, and conſider whither you'll grant Chriſt's or the devil's deſire? Whether ſhall the devil have you, ſoul and body, to all eternity; or ſhall Chriſt have you? O are there any here ſo fooliſh or mad, as to halt betwixt two opinions in this caſe? Any ſo mad as to ſtand in doubt, or heſitate whether to dwell with Chriſt or the devil for ever? whether to ſing hallelujahs to the Lamb, or roar with the devils forever? Now Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels are fighting about your hearts. A cunning devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing. Which of them do you incline to? The eyes of God and Chriſt are on you, the eyes of men and angels are on you, to ſee what will be the iſſue. O precious ſouls, never dying ſouls, I ſummon you to yield to Chriſt; open the doors, lift up the gates of your hearts to the King of Glory, who is ready to enter; open your mouths wide, and Chriſt is ready to fill them.

SPEECH after the TABLES.

I Shall addreſs myſelf to ſeveral ſorts of perſons. 1. To thoſe who have ſlighted the ordinance, and Chriſt's dying charge. Conſider what ye have done, ye have ſlighted the blood of ſprinkling, and deſpiſed the richeſt and choiceſt feaſt in the world; ye have been a grief to Chriſt's heart, and ye have given him cauſe to lament over you, as over poor Jeruſalem, Luke xix 41. You have loſt an excellent opportunity. It may be you'll never ſee another communion again, nor never get another call or knock like this again. And ye may fear he paſs that ſentence on you, Hoſea iv. 17. *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.—He that is filthy let him be filthy ſtill;* and that he ſay unto you, as to his drowſy diſciples, *Sleep on.* The goſpel ſhall enter into your ear, but never into your heart. Well, you have ſitten this call, but there is another call you ſhall not be able to ſit. O, but ſay ſome, we are not prepared for it. *Anſ.* Neither are ye prepared for dying; and will ye wilfully go on in ſin, and make your ſin your excuſe? O, ſay they, 'tis dangerous to come unworthily. But is there no danger in ſtaying away? Conſider that threatening, Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18, 19. againſt contemners of the feaſt of tabernacles, that is goſpel-feaſts.

2. To theſe who, I fear, have been profaning the ordinance, and wounding Chriſt, by unworthy communicating; who have been pretending to join in covenant with God, while they are faſt in league with the devil and the world. O your guilt is greater than ever it was, you have added this to the former, you have been drawing down more plagues on your head. O mourn and repent for piercing Chriſt. Can ye weep

for the loſs of worldly goods and enjoyments, and not weep for the loſs of your ſoul, and your Saviour? O flee ſtraight to that blood which ye ſhed, and plead mercy for the ſake of it.

3. To thoſe diſcouraged ſouls, who came to the table, but are ſaying, Alas, I was not taken into the banqueting houſe, I have not met with Jeſus, as I expected. *Anſ.* 1. Blame not Chriſt for it, but yourſelves. He is perhaps chaſtiſing you for ſome ſecret ſins which ye are not humbled for. You have been either defective in preparation, or have ſlighted former calls. For theſe reaſons he now hides himſelf, that you may ſeek him more earneſtly. O ly ſtill at his feet, and ſay, I will not go away, I will not let thee go till thou bleſs me. Haſt thou but one bleſſing, O my Father? nay thou haſt many. 2. Wait on all the after diets, the banqueting houſe is not yet ſhut, your feaſt may be coming this evening, or to-morrow; or ye may find the advantage of this feaſt ſome days hereafter. 3. You may be miſtaken, and ſay, ye have not got an alms, when ye have really got it. Do not think ye get nothing, but when ye get ſenſible joy, peace and ſmiles of his face. Have ye got a greater ſight of the evil of ſin, than ye had? Have ye got any more ſorrow for it? Any more eſteem of Chriſt, or hunger after him? Can ye ſay, when ye came to the table, I was very dead, and had but little ſenſe of my wants, but I came away hungry, and pained for my want. Then it is a good ſign; a fill of hunger and thirſt is excellent communion-chear: The Lord bleſs that hunger. O that ye may never be at reſt, till ye get a fill. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.*

4. To theſe who have been taken into the banqueting houſe, have got a Benjamin's meal, a ſight of Chriſt, and taſted that the Lord is gracious, a word to you. 1. Wonder at God's kindneſs in treating an enemy and child of ſatan ſo. 2. Bleſs God for it, that he hath viſited you, and taken you in, when others were kept at the door. 3. Endeavour to keep what ye have gotten, walk humbly, watch againſt Satan and the world that will ſeek to rob you. O go to Chriſt, to be ſurety for you, and beg that your hearts cool not, that ye fall not into a dull and ſleepy frame. 4. Be putting in a word for others that have not win your length, be filled with compaſſion for them; and be inviting and encouraging ſtrangers to come to Chriſt, by ſaying, Come, taſte and ſee that the Lord is good. 5. Sit not down ſatisfied in what ye have got, but be longing for heaven, where the full feaſt is; theſe are but the firſt fruits and foretaſtes. 6. Ye muſt work for Chriſt in the ſtrength of this feaſt. Go on in duty more vigorouſly, in ſtrength of this meal; be more active in his ſervice, and fight more courageouſly.

Remember all of you that have been at the table the vows of God are upon you; you have entered into an oath and curſe to walk in God's way, as in Neh. x. 29. You have all ſwore allegiance to the King of heaven, over the broken body and ſhed blood of Chriſt; ſo that if ye perjure yourſelves, you will incur all the curſes of the law, and vengeance of the goſpel alſo. If ye return to your ways, and ſay, Welcome drunken cups, bloody oaths, lying, backbiting, neglect of prayer, *&c.* O ye will ſink deeper in hell than many others; you'll bring the curſe of God and the Lamb upon you, it will make you ſay, Would to God I had been the ſon of a Pagan. O when will ye mind your vows, and walk worthy of the Lord. Let there be ſuch a ſhining brightneſs in your life and converſation, that all may take knowledge of you, that ye have been with Jeſus. Remember ye have covenanted againſt ſwearing, drunkenneſs, ſabbath breaking, neglect of prayer and family worſhip. Remember your engagements to prayer. Mind the eyes of men and devils are upon you, and that more is expected from you than from others; and that if you join hands again with the wicked, you'll thereby harden them the more in their ſinful courſes.

I would recommend to all of you to remember the ſights ye have ſeen this day of the love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledge. And the influence it ſhould have on you, is to think, How I ſhall requite it? The queſtion that all of you ſhould be putting up to God at this time on the back of a communion, is that, Pſal. cxi. 12. *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* How ſhall I walk ſuitable to this love? O I am jealous I be unthankful. O baſe wretch, wilt thou forget his goodneſs? O what ſhall I render unto the Lord? I have David's anſwer and reſolves to that queſtion in that pſalm, which I hope are yours. What ſaith David?

1. He ſaith, verſe 1. *I will love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplication.* The world and ſin ſhall never have my love any more. *Whom have I in heaven but thee?*

2. *Return unto God as your reſt,* verſe 7. O let your ſouls center in God as your portion and reſt: be well ſatisfied and contented herewith.

3. Reſolve to *walk before God in the land of the living,* verſe 9. Quicken your ſoul to the performance of every known duty, and abſtain from every known ſin. Walk always under the ſenſe of divine omniſcience.

4. Reſolve to *call upon the name of the Lord,* ver. 13. Aſſoon as ye can get occaſion, O retire for ſolemn prayer, and continue in prayer. O what ſhall we pray for now? Can God give any more than what he hath given in the ſacrament? *Anſ.* Pray that God may fulfil all the promiſes, and beſtow all the privileges and bleſſings he hath ſealed to you in this ordinance. So does David, 1 Chron. xvii. 23. *Now therefore, Lord, let the things that thou haſt ſpoken concerning thy ſervant, and concerning his houſe, be eſtabliſhed for ever, and do as thou haſt ſaid.* Alſo pray that God would enable you to keep your promiſe to God, and keep the ſenſe of your vows and obligation on your ſpirits, and preſerve your preſent frame, motions, and reſolutions, as David prays, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. *O Lord God of Abraham, Iſaac, and of Iſrael, our fathers keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people.* Satan has a deſign upon you; you had need to pray.

5. Render yourſelves wholly to God, as his ſervants, verſe 16. *O Lord truly, I am thy ſervant.* He repeats, *I am thy ſervant;* I give up myſelf, ſoul, body, time, ſtrength, talents, means, *&c.* all to ſerve thee.

6. Offer *the ſacrifice of thankſgiving,* verſe 17. Say with David to your ſoul, *Bleſs the Lord, O may ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name.* 1. Admire God's condeſcenſion to thee who art a worm, that he ſhould give thee angel's food; and tho' thou art a vile worm, that ſhould be ſent to hell with devils, art yet

ſet at the table with his children. 2. Let the high praiſes of God be in your mouths, as Deut. viii. 10. *When thou haſt eaten and art full, then thou ſhalt bleſs the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.* Allude to it, bleſs him for a Goſhen on earth, that ye have a land of light, and valley of viſion to dwell in, and bleſs him for the proſpect of a Canaan above. The ſong above is, *To him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood,* Rev. i. 5. O begin this ſong here. 3. Be encouraged to go on cheerfully in your Chriſtian courſe, and go about all duties with pleaſure.

7. Pay your vows, as in Verſe 18. Ye have vowed againſt ſwearing, drinking, ſabbath-breaking, neglect of prayer, *&c.* diſhonour not God, by proving perfidious to him.

8. Set the Lord always before you as your Judge, your Pattern, your Witneſs and your Portion, Pſal. xvi. 8.

9. Watch againſt Satan's wiles and temptations. 10. Long for heaven to be with Chriſt. 11. Guard againſt diviſions, love one another as brethren, and baniſh malice. Mind Chriſt praying on the croſs for his enemies. 12. Be more charitable to the poor.

AN
EXAMPLE
OF
PLAIN CATECHISING
UPON THE
ASSEMBLY'S SHORTER CATECHISM
FOR INSTRUCTING
The YOUNG and IGNORANT, &c.

THE PREFACE.

IN Scotland, the miniſters are obliged, by their church rules and conſtitutions, to be much employed in the work of catechiſing; and the good fruits of it do appear, for there the people (comparatively ſpeaking) are generally knowing and orthodox: Whereas, in thoſe places where catechiſing is neglected, ignorance and errour do wofully prevail. It is found by experience, that there is more knowledge diffuſed among the ignorant and younger ſort by one hour's catechiſing, than by many hours preaching: for, by the method of catechiſing, the attention is provoked, as well as the underſtanding inſtructed, and memory gratified; whilſt many excellent ſermons are loſt through the non-attention of the hearers, or the weakneſs of their memories.

In the primitive church, catechiſing was very much their work. They had many miniſters ſet apart for it, called Catechiſts; and ſundry of their moſt eminent lights were ſo called, for their excelling and diligence in this good work. Before perſons were admitted to the full communion of the church, they were from time to time to be catechiſed, and kept under trial; and, till ſuch time as they were judged fit to partake of the ſacrament, they were called *Catechumeni.*

Our Lord doth enjoin all his miniſters to be careful to feed the lambs of his flock, as well as the older ſheep, John xxi. 15. And accordingly we find his apoſtles took care to feed the babes with milk before they were able to receive ſtronger meat, 1 Cor. 3. 1. 2 Heb. 5. 12. As we have our catechiſms, ſo they had forms of inſtruction in which the young and weak were catechiſed, called a *Form of knowledge*, Rom. 2. 20. *a form of doctrine*, Rom. 6. 17. *the form of ſound words* 2 Tim. 1. 13 the *firſt principles of the oracles of God*, Heb. 5. 12. and *the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt*, Heb. vi. 1. In theſe were both Theophilus and Apollos catechiſed. Luke i. 4. Acts xviij. 25. in both which texts, the word in the Greek is catechiſed, which we have here rendered inſtructed. The apoſtle Paul doth require the people of Galatia to give all encouragement and ſupport to theſe who laboured in the work of catechiſing among them, Gal. vi. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things*. In the original it is, let him that is catechiſed, communicate to him that catechiſeth. This office is not below the moſt learned divines, ſeeing Chriſt ſets himſelf a pattern to us in it, by catechiſing his diſciples, Matt. xvi. 15. 16.

We in this national church, through the Lord's mercy, are provided with excellent catechiſms both Larger and Shorter, for our help in catechiſing. And the Aſſembly's Shorter Catechiſm, eſtabliſhed in this church about ninety years ago, (which both we and the body of Proteſtant diſſenters in our neighbour nations do receive and teach our children by) is judged the moſt excellent ſummary we ever had, in ſo ſmall a compaſs, of the great principles of the Chriſtian religion extracted from the word of God. It hath been greatly eſteemed in foreign parts alſo, and upon that account hath been tranſlated both into Latin and Greek. In the hand of divine providence, it proves a noble fence againſt errour, wherever it is received; and therefore the adverſaries of truth are not a little diſpleaſed with it.

There was a very wild attempt lately made by an anonymous author to alter our Shorter Catechiſm, which was printed at London in the year 1735, under the title of, *The Aſſembly's Shorter Catechiſm reviſed*. But the alterations therein made, being viſibly deſigned to favour ſeveral errours now ſpread among us, ſeverals of the judicatories of this church judged themſelves bound to give warning againſt the poiſon of it. Beſides, there were remarks made upon it by a very judicious author at London (to whom we ſtand much obliged) which have been diſperſed both there and here as an antidote againſt it.

By the foreſaid attempt I have been excited to conſider our Shorter Catechiſm more cloſely than before, and muſt now own, the more I view it, I am the better pleaſed with it, and deſire to bleſs God for raiſing up ſuch noble inſtruments in the laſt age to frame it for us, and ſettle it among us; and do reckon it a great mercy, that we have not a catechiſm of this kind to frame and ſettle among us in this degenerate and licentious age.

This Shorter Catechiſm being evidently founded upon the word of God, and a part of our ſtandards to which we ſtand ſolemnly engaged; it becomes the lovers of truth to adhere firmly to it, and contend for it, as a moſt valuable attainment in our reformation, and always to wiſh and pray that it may be preſerved entire to us and our poſterity, and that generations to come may be trained up in the uſe of it to the lateſt ages.

We have had many Explanatory Catechiſms upon it publiſhed, which have been moſt uſeful for increaſing knowledge among us: but having obſerved in theſe which I have ſeen, that either the anſwers are too prolix for the memories of learners, or elſe too ſhort to explain the nature and reaſon of things, I have humbly made an eſſay in the following Catechiſm, to obſerve a medium between the foreſaid extreams, and likewiſe to take in many things omitted by others.

It is highly the concern of us all to be well ſeen in the knowledge, and fixed in the belief, of the great truths of our holy religion, ſumm'd up in the Shorter Catechiſm; eſpecially in this ſhaking time, when the winds of errour are blowing, and the moſt ſacred fundamental truths are openly attacked by Deiſts, Socinians, Arians, and others. As it is ſurpriſing to obſerve how faſt erroneous books are ſpread and bought up at this day, ſo it is aſtoniſhing to behold to what height infidelity and damnable hereſies are arrived in our age; while we who profeſs Chriſtianity do wrangle with one another, alas, infidelity doth prevail againſt us all! and it may cauſe us tremble to think what ſhall be the iſſue, if the God of truth do not in mercy ariſe and ſtop its career.

Whence is it that infidelity abounds, and the Chriſtian revelation hath ſo many enemies? Alas! many are ſo bent to indulge themſelves in vicious practices, that they can't endure Chriſt's holy laws which check them therein, and therefore ſtudy by all means to darken theſe truths and facts upon which theſe laws are founded, that they may render revelation doubtful and uncertain; and further, that they may make it quite needleſs, they labour to advance reaſon as a ſufficient guide in matters of religion, and as that which may conduct us in the way to happineſs.

But if the biaſs of ſuch perſons to ſenſual luſts and pleaſures would allow them freely to think upon this ſubject, and impartially to view the noble deſign and convincing proofs of Chriſtianity, the more fully would they be ſatisfied of the neceſſity and excellency, as well as of the truth and certainty of the goſpel-revelation, and of its divine original. And, if my teſtimony thereunto could have any weight, I can ſay, after the moſt ſerious enquiry, I have full freedom to give it, and which I here offer with all humility upon the following grounds:

Altho' my natural light or reaſon be ſadly corrupted, yet the remains of it tell me that there is a God, and that he ought to be believed in what he ſaith, and obeyed in what he commands. And by the cleareſt evidences I am aſſured that the mind of God, with reſpect to my ſalvation is only now diſcovered to me in the Chriſtian revelation, which I ſee is the completion of the Jewiſh inſtitution. And this revelation, I find, doth confirm and perfect the religion of nature, ſeeing it correſponds with the dictates of natural reaſon and religion, and comes ſeaſonably unto me to ſupply the great defects thereof.

Tho' the light of nature intimates to me, that my life ſhould be juſt and virtuous, and that I ſhould ſhun what is offenſive to God, and that he ought to be worſhipped and glorified by me his creature, yet it leaves me ignorant of the right way and manner of doing it: But the Chriſtian revelation doth both inform me how God is to be worſhipped and ſerved, and alſo with the ſtrongeſt arguments inforces that which is the deſign of natural religion, *namely*, the abandoning of ſin and vice, and the practice of virtue and piety. This is the ſcope and aim of all its myſteries, precepts, promiſes, threatenings, examples, miracles, *&c.*

I find theſe who have had no more but *reaſon* to guide them, had but faint diſcoveries of divine things, and theſe notices had but ſmall influence on their minds and practices; hence they generally entertained unworthy notions of God, and run into groſs idolatry, and the practice of the greateſt abominations: But the Chriſtian revelation gives us a noble deſcription of the perfections of God, and of the worſhip and ſervice he requires as ſuitable thereunto; and withal offers us grace to conform our ſouls unto them.

Natural reaſon can give no ſatisfying account of the creation of the world, the original of mankind, nor in what ſtate our firſt parents came out of their Maker's hands; nor can it tell us how human nature fell from its original rectitude into the preſent ſtate of guilt and impurity, nor how it can be recovered from it; nor can it account for the conduct of divine providence in the government of the world: But in the Chriſtian revelation we find all theſe duly accounted for.

Natural religion, which is altogether founded upon *reaſon* or the light of nature, can't find out a way to eaſe the conſcience of a convinced ſinner, nor can it aſſure us that there is *forgiveneſs with God* for criminal creatures: It cannot ſhew us how God may exerciſe *mercy* to them without the violation of his *juſtice;* nor point out any thing that can be a proper propitiation to God's juſtice when injured and provoked by men: Nature's light cannot tell how to make the pardon of ſin conſiſt with the wiſdom of his government, the honour of his laws, and his hatred of ſin. But we ſee how all this can be done by the Chriſtian inſtitution.

Again, it is but dark and uncertain views which *natural religion* gives us of the immortality of the ſoul, and of a future life. Senſe and reaſon bring us to the grave, but cannot penetrate into the regions beyond it: But the *goſpel-revelation* diſcovers to us the eternal manſions prepared in the heavens for the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, and alſo the way leading to them.

In the Bible, which contains this Revelation, we ſee the defects of natural religion nobly made up: We have a great Mediator ſet forth, that ſatisfies offended juſtice, removes the guilt and power of ſin, and brings ſinners into favour with God, and to eternal felicity; and in him all men are called to believe and truſt for obtaining theſe bleſſed ends. And this is the LORD JESUS CHRIST. In the Old Teſtament he is foretold and promiſed as the Meſſiah that was to come; in the New Teſtament he is revealed as come, and the time and manner of his coming narrated. He came in due time, according to the Old Teſtament predictions, exactly anſwering all its types, prophecies, and promiſes, in his divinity and humanity; in his threefold office of prophet, prieſt, and king; and in his twofold ſtate of humiliation and exaltation. So that, if Jeſus Chriſt were not the true Meſſiah and Saviour of men, the glorious promiſes of the Old Teſtament, concerning the Meſſiah, muſt be all deluſion, ſeeing their fulfilment was limited within periods of time which are long ſince paſt.

Our Meſſiah came not in the grandeur of an earthly monarch, as the carnal Jews expected, but as King of Zion, intending a ſpiritual monarchy in the world; and to inſtruct his ſovereignty and power in the kingdom of grace, he ſhewed his dominion in the kingdom of nature, (which earthly kings cannot do) by opening the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, and the mouth of the dumb; by raiſing the dead, caſting out devils, and miraculouſly healing all ſorts of diſeaſes: Yea, he gave power to his diſciples to do the like, and to ſpeak all languages of a ſudden, without learning them; and to preach in them with ſuch promptneſs and convincing energy, that their words pierced the conſcience, and changed the minds and lives of men. Their doctrine did not favour the luſts and corruptions of men, nor had the force of human laws or arms to promote it, like the Mahometan religion; but, on the contrary, Chriſtianity had all theſe againſt it: Yet, in oppoſition to all theſe, it ſpread with aſtoniſhing ſucceſs and rapidity through the world, ſo that, before the death of the apoſtles, there was not a corner of the Roman empire; but had ſtore of its profeſſors. And though all the powers of earth and hell contended with fire and ſword againſt the Chriſtian religion, yet within leſs than three hundred years, the whole known world was conquered by it. And ſeeing this triumphant ſucceſs was not owing to the might, art, or eloquence of man, we muſt conclude it was brought about by the extraordinary power of that mighty God, who is the Author of this holy religion.

Such was the evidence of the apoſtles teſtimony and their ſucceſſors in the primitive times, that not only the vulgar, but many of the beſt ſenſe, wiſdom and learning, were overcome by it, and heartily embraced their doctrine, even when they had no proſpect but of the greateſt ſufferings for ſo doing: Such were Dionyſius, Polycarp, Juſtin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, and many others. Surely nothing but the power of truth, which they evidently ſaw was countenanced by heaven, and confirmed by miracles, could have prevailed with ſuch learned and curious enquirers, to hazard the loſs of all things dear unto them, by embracing Chriſtianity.

But, that I may come more cloſely to that proof which is moſt convincing of all, let it be conſidered, that the truth and verity of the Chriſtian religion (of which our catechiſm is a compound) doth depend on the truth of a matter of fact, which (bleſſed be God) is better vouched and atteſted to us, than any fact in the world, that we have not ſeen with our eyes. Wherefore, if the fact be true and certain, that ſuch a perſon as Jeſus Chriſt was born at Bethlehem in the reign of Auguſtus the Roman emperor, when the ſceptre of power was departing from Judah; and that about thirty years afterwards, in the reign of the emperor Tiberius, this perſon Jeſus Chriſt began to preach in Judea, where he travelled ſome years, lived a moſt holy life, wrought great miracles, foretold many events, and amongſt others his own death and reſurrection; and, according as he ſaid, ſo he died, and roſe again upon the third day: I ſay, if all this be certain fact, what reaſon have we to queſtion but this perſon had a divine miſſion, and was the very perſon he gave out himſelf to be, and that the doctrine he taught, and inſtructed his diſciples to teach, was the very truth?

That the facts above related are certain, we have the beſt evidence: for they are atteſted by many perſons of great probity and candour, who were eye-witneſſes to what they aſſert; and theſe witneſſes all agree in the ſame teſtimony, and continued adhering thereto unto their laſt breath, notwithſtanding of the ſufferings and cruel deaths they were expoſed to for owning theſe things. And not only they, but alſo ſeveral Jewiſh and Pagan writers, who lived in or near theſe times, do confirm the truth of the principal facts concerning Jeſus Chriſt which we have recorded in the New Teſtament: nay, the fierceſt enemies of Chriſt in the ancient ages never preſumed to deny the facts. So that for any perſon to call in queſtion the truth of facts ſo well atteſted, would be to deſtroy the truth and credibility of all hiſtory.

As the facts contained in the New Teſtament have the fulleſt teſtimony that any ancient hiſtory can have, ſo it is very confirming to us, that all the eight writers of the New Teſtament do agree ſo exactly in their teſtimony without variation or contradiction. Tho' theſe of them who write the hiſtorical part do relate different circumſtances of facts and of miracles not mentioned by others (which only ſhews they did not write by concert) yet they all agree in the matter: they give all the ſame account of Chriſt's birth, life, death, reſurrection and aſcenſion: They agree with all the reſt in their accounts of Chriſt's doctrine, and of the way of ſinners ſalvation by faith in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and by the virtue of his blood.

To confirm this doctrine, many miracles were wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles; and, that there might be no ſuſpicion of fraud, theſe were done openly in ſight of all the people, and in preſence of learned men, Chriſt's enemies: and theſe miracles were oft repeated, and that for many years, and had laſting effects on theſe upon whom they were wrought. And as for that great confirming miracle which Chriſt frequently referred to in his life for proof of his Meſſiahſhip, *viz.* his riſing from the dead; it was well atteſted by his many appearances after it to his diſciples aſſembled together, yea, to five hundred of them at once, to whom the Apoſtle Paul in his writings appealed for the truth of it, whilſt moſt of them were alive. Yea, he not only appeared to them, but alſo taught them after his reſurrection; and, for their fuller ſatisfaction, he ate and drank with them, nay, he ſhew'd them the print of his wounds, and cauſed them to touch and handle his body.

It is to be obſerved, that Chriſt's diſciples began openly to preach his reſurrection, within a few weeks thereafter, in that very city where it happened, and even in face of thoſe who put him to death; and no man attempted to diſprove what they ſaid, which his violent enemies wanted not will to do if they could. Nay, the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection was ſo notour in that country, that many thouſands preſently believed the diſciples teſtimony, embraced their doctrine, and became Chriſtians. And as the diſciples proclaimed Chriſt's reſurrection every where, ſo they confirmed the truth of it with miracles wherever they came, and kept always the firſt day of the week in remembrance of it. Theſe things, being certain facts, do clearly demonſtrate to me, not only the truth of Chriſtianity, but alſo the amazing unreaſonableneſs of infidelity; and that inſtead of free or juſt thinking, it doth argue the greateſt thoughtleſneſs in theſe who give place to it.

Object. We in this age never ſaw Chriſt or his apoſtles, nor any of their miracles; no man now hath the gift of tongues; we have none of theſe miracles now repeated for our confirmation.

Anſ. 1. The only wiſe God thought Chriſt's bodily preſence and theſe miracles to be neceſſary at the firſt planting of Chriſtianity, when its doctrines were new to the world, and things oppoſite to it were to be aboliſhed; but doth not think fit to continue them now, when no new doctrine or way of worſhip is propoſed, but only the very ſame inculcated which Chriſt and his apoſtles had taught.

2. If miracles were ordinarily repeated, they would loſe the uſe and force of miracles, which lies in their being extraordinary; for, if they were frequently repeated, they would become God's ordinary works, and not be much regarded by us.

3. Tho' Chriſt at his aſcenſion left the earth, and his apoſtles are gone, ſo that we ſee them not, nor the miracles they wrought for the confirmation of our faith; yet, by the evidences which remain, we may be as well aſſured of them as if we had ſeen them: and, in regard we are ſo much attached to things viſible, our aſcended Jeſus, in his gracious condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of our faith, hath left us ſeven or eight viſible teſtimonies or ocular demonſtrations of the truth and certainty of theſe doctrines and facts which are the foundations of our faith; as Chriſt's *incarnation, his living and teaching in this world, with his crucifixion and reſurrection.* And, to confirm us the more in the belief of theſe bleſſed truths, God in his mercy continues ſtill before our eyes ſeveral ſtanding witneſſes of them, namely, 1. The writings of the apoſtles and Evangeliſts, who were eye and ear wtineſſes of what they teſtify.——2. The honourable name which we bear of CHRISTIANS, being that which the followers of Chriſt ſoon got after his leaving the world——3. The beginning of the Chriſtian æra, or computation of years from the incarnation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is directed by wiſe providence to put us in mind, every time we write, read or mention the preſent year 1744 or any other year, that it is juſt ſo many years ſince our glorious Redeemer came in the fleſh to ſave loſt ſinners:——4. The continuance of a goſpel-miniſtry, according to Chriſt's inſtitution, to declare the foreſaid truths and facts to the world.——5. The frequent diſpenſing of baptiſm, for the initiation of his diſciples, as Chriſt hath appointed.——6. The adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper, in commemoration of his death and ſufferings——7. The weekly obſervation of the Lord's day, in remembrance of his reſurrection.——Theſe ſeven laſting monuments, being as old as the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, have continued by the providence of God, deſcending thro' all ages for theſe ſeventeen hundred years paſt, as viſible witneſſes of the truth of it, that all men, having them daily before their eyes, may conſider them as ſo many pledges of the facts, doctrines, and inſtitutions of the New Teſtament.*

To all which I may add an eighth viſible witneſs; *viz.*

the preſent ſcattered condition of the Jewiſh nation over all the world, and yet never mixed with other nations ſo as to be loſt among them. This ſtrange preſervation of them theſe 1700 years as a diſtinct people, amidſt their many direful calamities, ſufferings and ſcatterings, is a wonderful inſtance of the interpoſition of divine providence, that keeps them as a ſtanding memorial every where to the world, of the certainty of ſcripture prophecies and miracles, and particularly, of the New-Teſtament hiſtory of the incarnation, life and death of Jeſus Chriſt, and of the truth of his prediction concerning that people.——Likewiſe, the long continuance of the Jewiſh nation, in ſuch a diſmal diſtinguiſhed ſituation, do point them out to the world as a laſting monument of the divine anger for their woful rejecting and crucifying of the bleſſed Meſſiah and Saviour of the world. Now, all theſe outward viſible things God in his wiſdom and mercy hath placed before our eyes, to confirm us the more in the belief of the facts and doctrines contained in the books of the New Tteſtament.

Queſt. How do we know that the books of the New-Teſtament are written by the apoſtles and evangeliſts, and that they are ſtill the ſame as they wrote them, without alteration?

Anſ. We are well aſſured theſe books are written by theſe whoſe names they bear, and that they are ſtill the ſame they were at firſt, not only becauſe of God's watchful providence over them, but in regard of theſe clear evidences; 1. The writers of the firſt and ſecond centuries, as Juſtine, Iraeneus, Clemens, *&c.* do cite theſe books under the names they ſtill bear; they quote texts from them as they ſtand in our bibles, and make uſe of them in the ſame ſenſe that we do; yea, Tertullian ſometimes appeals to the original manuſcripts of theſe books, which were preſerved to his time (being then about the two hundredth year of Chriſt) and long after, as other writers atteſt. 2. Theſe books could not be altered, becauſe of the vaſt number of copies that were tranſcribed, and that in different languages, and ſoon diſperſed with Chriſtianity itſelf through all parts of the known world; and yet ſtill we find all theſe copies, however diſtant in place, or different in language, exactly agreeing together in ſenſe. 3. Soon after the Apoſtles death, there aroſe many different ſects of Chriſtians of oppoſite ſentiments, who yet all appealed to theſe writings for the ſupport of their opinions: And to be ſure theſe would never agree together to falſify them; neither did one ſide ever accuſe the other of doing it.

And for the books of the Old Teſtament, which greatly ſupport the facts and doctrines of the New, and were themſelves alſo confirmed by miracles; the Jews were careful, even to ſuperſtition, to preſerve theſe pure and uncorrupted, placing much of their religion in numbering how oft ſuch and ſuch words and letters recurred in the particular books. And tho' Chriſt reproved that people for many things wrong among them, yet he never accuſed them of falſifying any thing in theſe writings.

Moreover, we have ſuch viſible marks of the divine original of the whole bible, in the antiquity of its hiſtories, the accompliſhment of its prophecies, the purity of its precepts, the harmony of its different parts, and the excellency of its deſign, as cannot but be very convincing and ſatisfying to all thinking perſons. Whence could we have had ſuch a book as the Bible, written by ſo many different hands, and yet all aiming at the ſame deſign, namely, to glorify God, to lead ſouls to Chriſt, to promote holineſs, and to root out all ſin and vice? Who elſe but God could be its author? A bad man or angel it could not be, ſeeing all the books and parts of it declare moſt warmly for truth and virtue, and againſt all lying and diſſimulation: A good man or good angel it could not be, ſeeing it could never conſiſt with their grace and goodneſs to diſſemble, and counterfeit God's name in ſuch a way, by putting *Thus ſaith the Lord* to a book of their own deviſing.

Laſtly, Beſides theſe convincing external evidences, there are many thouſands in the world who have ſatiſfying inward evidence, and experimental demonſtration of the truth and excellency of the goſpel revelation, from the effects of it in their ſouls, thro' the concurrence of the Spirit of God: For thereby their proud minds have been made humble, their revengeful ſpirits made meek and forgiving, their carnal hearts made to love God and mind heaven above all things, their looſe and uncircumſpect lives have become juſt, holy, pions and devont; and, in attending upon Chriſt's inſtitutions, they have attained to great peace and joy in believing on him. And, for my own part, I would not exchange the inward ſatisfaction and complacency I have ſometimes had in going in with the goſpel method of ſalvation, and reſting my ſoul upon a crucified Jeſus, with any king's crown in the world. And what can be more confirming than feeling or taſte? It will not be eaſy to perſuade a man that honey is not ſweet, who hath taſted it once and again. If the holy Spirit would pleaſe to come and concur with the goſpel-revelation by his gracious operations on the ſoul, it would be the moſt effectual way to eſtabliſh us in the belief of the truth of the Chriſtian religion, and to fortify us againſt all temptations to infidelity. Wherefore, that truth may prevail and error evaniſh, may the Spirit be poured out fom on high, as in former times! *Amen.*

A WORD *to* CHRISTIAN PARENTS *and all who have the charge of children or ſervants, eſpecially thoſe in* Dundee.

My dear Friends,

THE care of precious ſouls is a great truſt committed to you by God, and to him you are accountable for it. The inſtruction of youth is not to be left wholly to miniſters, to ſchool maſters or miſtreſſes. No, parents ought to be inſtilling good principles into children, and maſters into ſervants, as they have occaſion, which might ſerve to leave abiding impreſſions on them many years thereafter; and ſo ye would become *fellow-helpers of the truth*, as in 3 John viii. Pray don't think this is left to your option, to do it or not as you pleaſe: No, you are under an expreſs divine command, O Parents, to bring up your children *in the admonition of the Lord*, that is, in teaching them the knowledge of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Eph. vi. 4. The word, tranſlated *admonition*, properly ſignifies *catechiſing*. Likewiſe the word which is rendered *train up*, Prov. xxii. 6. ſignifies to *catechiſe* a child when he is young. The command which God gave to the Iſraelites, to teach his will and ſtatutes to their children, is ſtill binding on you, Deut. vi. 7. *Thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up.* Abraham had a ſtrong ſenſe of his duty in this reſpect; and therefore he not only taught, but commanded, both his children and ſervants to keep the ways of the Lord, Gen. xviii. 19. And can we expect to land in Abraham's boſom, if we tread not in Abraham's footſteps?

O Fellow-chriſtians! Your liſting yourſelves and your children at baptiſm under Chriſt's banner, obligeth you to uſe your beſt endeavours to enlarge the borders of his kingdom, and to ruin the empire of darkneſs. You pray that his kingdom may come; and this binds you to chooſe the beſt means to obtain what you pray for, namely, To inſtruct the riſing generation in the knowledge of Chriſt. This would make your piety extend to ages to come; for your example herein may be a motive to them to tread in the ſame ſteps, and ſo one generation will thus teach another. Do you yourſelves know the joyful ſound of ſalvation thro' our glorious Surety, and will ye not deſire to make others know it too? You ought to ſay with the four lepers, when they found plenty in the Syrian camp, *It is a day of good tidings, we do not well to hold our peace,* 2 Kings vii. 9. This is a Godlike diſpoſition, and would make you reſemble God himſelf; for, when he ſaw the world periſhing in darkneſs, he pitied them, and came himſelf in our nature to teach them the way of ſalvation.

For your help in this work you have the Shorter Catechiſm of this church, which contains an excellent ſcheme, both of the principles of religion which you are to believe, and of the duties of religion which you are to practiſe. And tho' the ſmaller one, ſuch as the Mother's Catechiſm, may be uſeful as introductory to it; yet, when children and ſervants are capable, it is neceſſary that they get our Shorter Catechiſm by heart; which you may cauſe them to do, by preſcribing ſo much of it to them every week, until they come to have it throughout. And, becauſe it is ſhort and moſt comprehenſive, I have framed the following Explanatory Catechiſm upon it, for your aſſiſtance in catechiſing theſe under your charge, whereby you may be helped to open up to them at large the precious truths of our holy religion, and ſo prepare them the better for the public catechiſing, which would make the work of miniſters pleaſant and delightful to them.

And, becauſe the anſwers in the following Catechiſm are generally ſhort, it will not be a very had taſk for young perſons of good memories to get the moſt of them by heart, and to repeat them. And for theſe whoſe memories are weaker, it would be very inſtructing to them frequently to read over this book; for thereby they might ſoon be capable to anſwer ſatisfyingly moſt of the queſtions in it, tho' in other words than theſe in the book. It would alſo make children better acquainted with the ſcriptures, if their teachers would require them to give account of ſome of theſe texts cited therein, which have not the words ſet down.

If heads of families would conveen their children and ſervants every Sabbath-evening, and make uſe of this book or the like explication, going over at one time two queſtions of the Shorter-Catechiſm or thereby, with the explanatory catechiſing thereupon, you would go over the whole book thus once every year: And the following method may be obſerved. Let the maſter or the miſtreſs of the family aſk the queſtion of the Shorter-Catechiſm, and let the anſwer be returned without book by one of the family; and then let that perſon take the book, and aſk the firſt explanatory queſtion upon it at his next neighbour, who may read the anſwer from the book if he can't repeat it; and then let him who anſwered aſk the ſecond explanatory queſtion at his neighbour, who is to anſwer it as before; and then aſk the next queſtion at his neighbour, and ſo on; the reſt in the mean time attending and going alongſt with the perſon reading or repeating, with their ſeveral books if they have them, or elſe making uſe of their neighbour's, by which means their thoughts, which are apt to wander, will be the more fixed and intent upon what they are about.

And, to conclude, let me likewiſe humbly intreat young perſons diligently to improve all ſuch helps and means of inſtruction in the ſeaſon of youth, and carefully to prepare for and attend all diets of catechiſing whether in private or public, and hearken with delight to parents, maſters, or miniſters, who would teach them the things which concern their everlaſting peace. O conſider how many young people are hurried into eternity before they know and lay theſe things to heart! Believe it, dear ſirs, there is no heaven without Chriſt, no intereſt in Chriſt without faith, and no faith without knowledge. May therefore *the earth be filled with the knowledge of Chriſt, as the waters cover the ſea!* Amen.

QUESTION I.

Queſtion. W*HAT is the chief end of man?*

Anſwer. Man's chief end is, to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Q. What do ye mean by man's chief end?

A. The main thing which a man ſhould intend and aim at in his living in the world, and look upon as the great deſign of his creation.

Q. What is that great and chief end?

A. In the anſwer, it is branched out into two parts, the principal end being to glorify God, and the leſs principal to enjoy him for ever.

Q. Can any man add any thing to God's eſſential glory?

A. No; for, that being infinite, no addition can be made to it.

Q. How then can we glorify God?

A. By declaring and ſhewing forth his glory before the world.

Q. How may we do that?

A. By acknowledging God's perfections; by adoring and truſting in him; by praiſing him with our lips, and ordering our converſation according to his word, Pſalm l. 23.

Q. How are we ſaid to give glory to God by confeſſing our ſins? as in Joſh. vii. 19.

A. Becauſe, by ſo doing, we own God to be infinite in knowledge, from whom no ſecrets can be hid, and in juſtice, tho' he ſhould proceed to puniſh us for our ſins.

Q. Wherefore ſhould we make it our chief end to glorify God?

A. Becauſe of the infinite obligations we are under to God, as being our almighty Creator, our gracious Preſerver, and merciful Redeemer.

Q. When is it that we eat and drink for the glory of God? as the apoſtle directs, 1 Cor. x. 31.

A. When we do it in obedience to God's command, for preſerving life and health, that we may be capable to honour and ſerve God here below.

Q. May not other creatures declare the glory of God, as well as man?

A. Yes, the heavens do it, Pſal. xix. 1. as they ſhew forth the glory of God's wiſdom and power in an objective and paſſive manner; but none can do it actively but rational creatures.

Q. Do all men make it their chief end to glorify God?

A. No; for many men, inſtead of glorifying God, do wofully diſhonour him.

Q. Who are theſe?

A. Theſe who forget God, or diſobey his laws.

Q. Who are they that forget God?

A. They who do not pray to God, nor praiſe him for his mercies; and they who are formal in his worſhip, and do not remember his word.

Q. What will become of theſe who forget God?

A. It is ſaid, Pſal. ix. 17. They *ſhall be turned into hell.*

Q. Did God make all things for his own glory?

A. Yes.

Q. If men do not make this their end, will God loſe his end of making them?

A. No; for if God be not glorified by them, he will glorify himſelf upon them, even his juſtice in their deſtruction, Prov. xvi. 4.

Q. Is it not lawful to aim at lower ends than God's glory, as for a man to be diligent in his calling, for the end that he may provide for himſelf and his family?

A. Yes; but theſe lower ends muſt be intended in ſubordination to man's chief and ultimate end, the glory of God.

Q. Do we promote our own happineſs, by making God's glory our chief end?

A. Yes; and therefore glorifying God, and enjoying him for ever, are connected in the anſwer.

Q. Muſt we ſtudy to glorify God on earth, if we would enjoy him in heaven? A. Yes.

Q. Are we able of ourſelves to glorify God?

A. No, the fall hath diſabled us; but by Chriſt and his grace we may be ſtrengthened to do it in ſome meaſure.

Q. What is it to enjoy God?

A. It is to poſſeſs God's love and favour, or to be bleſſed with his gracious preſence.

Q. What doth man's true happineſs ly in this?

A. Yes.

Q. May not a man thus enjoy God upon earth?

A. Yes; the Saints have God's gracious preſence in ſome meaſure in his ordinances here below, but they will enjoy God in another manner in heaven.

Q. What is the difference betwixt our enjoying God here, and hereafter?

A. Our enjoyment of God here is very ſhort and imperfect; but in heaven it will be everlaſting, full and immediate. It is there the ſaints ſhall *ſee him as he is,* and *be like him,* and *be ever with the Lord,* 1 John iii. 2. 1 Theſ. iv. 17.

Q. Why doth our chief happineſs ly in the enjoying of God?

A. Becauſe God being the chiefeſt good, and infinite in his perfections, can only ſatisfy the boundleſs deſires of our immortal ſouls. He is a portion that ſuits both their ſpiritual nature, and perpetual duration, Pſal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

Q. How ſhall we attain to the enjoyment of God?

A. We muſt receive Chriſt the Mediator, live the life of faith and ſelf-denial, ſtudy purity of heart and life, and be much in the exerciſe of prayer and praiſe.

Q. What is the chief end or deſign of wicked men?

A. To gratify their ſenſual appetites, and to enjoy the beſt things this world affords.

Q. Can the enjoyment of the world's good things make us happy?

A. No; for, as they ſuit not the ſoul's demands, ſo they are too ſhort and uncertain to afford us any ſolid ſatisfaction.

Q. Can wicked men expect to enjoy God hereafter?

A. No; for they who ſhall enjoy God above muſt be made meet for it here below.

Q. Who are meet to enjoy God?

A. Theſe who are ſanctified.

Q. What will become of thoſe who miſs the enjoyment of God in heaven?

A. Their portion will be in hell with hypocrites and unbelievers.

Q. When ſhould a man begin to think ſeriouſly of his chief end?

A. In the days of youth, Eccl. xii. 1.

Q. May we not delay it until ſome convenient time afterwards?

No, for there is no time ſo convenient; and the time which we propoſe may never come, ſeeing death ſurpriſeth very many, Luke xii. 20.

Q. When muſt we have done glorifying God?

A. Never.

Q. Will that ever be thought a tedious taſk?

A. No; for it is the delight of gracious ſouls to do the will of God: and therefore in the moſt happy place, it is ſaid, *his ſervants ſhall ſerve him*, Pſal. xl. 8. Rev. xxii. 3.

QUEST. II.

Q. *What rule hath God given to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

A. The word of God (which is contained in the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament,) is the only rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q. How is this queſtion connected with the preceeding?

A. As the former ſhews the end of our creation, ſo this points out the rule or means for attaining to that end, *to wit*, the Scriptures.

Q. Why do we call the word of God the Scriptures?

A. We call God's word, the Scriptures, *that is*, writings, by way of eminence; becauſe they are the moſt valuable and uſeful writings in the world.

Q. Why are theſe writings called the word of God?

A. Becauſe God either ſpake them himſelf, or ordered men to write them.

Q. Is not Chriſt called the Word likewiſe?

A. Yes; but Chriſt is the eſſential Word of God, and the Bible is only the written Word of God.

Q. Why is Chriſt called the Word of God?

A. Becauſe he is the expreſs image of the Father, as our words are the image or picture of our hearts.

Q. Seeing the Bible is moſtly ſpoken and written by men, is it not more properly the words of men, than of God?

A. No; for though it be ſpoken and written by holy men, yet they did it, not according to their own will or wiſdom, but as they were inſpired and moved thereto by the Holy Ghoſt, 2 Pet. 1. 21.

Q. Who was the firſt penman of the holy Scriptures?

A. Moſes.

Q. What part of them did he write?

A. The firſt five books, to wit, Geneſis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Q. What remarkable things doth his firſt book contain?

A. The hiſtory of the creation of the world, of man's fall, of the world's deſtruction by the flood, and many ſignal tranſactions with reſpect to the church for above two thouſand years before Moſes was born.

Q. If there were no writings before him, how could he be certified of the truth of theſe things?

A. By divine revelation, as well as human tradition.

Q. Why did God order his word to be written?

A. That his church might have a fixed and ſtanding rule of faith and practice for all future ages, and might not be impoſed on by uncertain traditions.

Q. How could the church ſubſiſt, and religion be kept pure for ſo long a time before Moſes, when there was no written word?

A. By reaſon of the few families to which the church was then confined, the long lives of the godly patriarchs, and the frequent appearances of God unto them in dreams, viſions, and audible voices; and alſo by ſending his angels unto them.

Q. By what arguments do you prove that the ſcriptures are the word of God, and that they were written by divine inſpiration?

A. By the holineſs of the matter of them, the heavenlineſs of the ſtile, the harmony of the different parts, the efficacy of the doctrine on the ſoul, the many miracles wrought in confirmation of them, and the joyful ſufferings of martyrs for them.

Q. Is there not ſomething elſe, that is more effectual to perſuade us of the divinity of the ſcriptures than all theſe arguments?

A. Though theſe be ſufficient to convince men of reaſon, and to ſtop the mouths of gainſayers; yet it is the Spirit of God bearing witneſs by and with the ſcriptures in our hearts, that only can eſtabliſh us in the belief of the ſcriptures being the very word of God, John xvi. 13.

Q. How are the ſcriptures divided?

A. Into two parts, to wit, the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament.

Q. Why are they called a Teſtament?

A. Becauſe they contain God's will concerning the ſalvation of ſinners, as it was revealed and confirmed by Chriſt the Teſtator. And this will is either called a Teſtament or Covenant.

Q. Do the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament contain two different teſtaments or covenants?

A. No; they both hold forth one and the ſame covenant of grace for ſubſtance, ſeeing we find the ſame Mediator, and the ſame way of ſalvation through faith in him, pointed at in both. But the circumſtances and forms of adminiſtring this covenant being ſo very different, it is diſtinguiſhed into the Old and New Teſtament, or the Old and New Covenant of Grace.

Q. Why are the ſcriptures in the former part of the bible called the Old Teſtament?

A. Becauſe they contain the old diſpenſation of the covenant of grace before Chriſt's coming in the fleſh, which was by manifold rites, prophecies, types and ſacrifices, all prefiguring the Meſſiah then to come.

Q. Why are the ſcriptures in the latter part of the bible called the New Teſtament?

A. Becauſe they ſet forth the new diſpenſation of the covenant, by Chriſt's coming in the fleſh to fulfil the types and figures of the Old Teſtament, and inſtituting a more ſpiritual worſhip in the room thereof, and revealing his grace more clearly and extenſively to the world.

Q. How could the firſt part of the bible have the force of a Teſtament, while it was not confirmed by the death of the Teſtator?

A. It was confirmed by Chriſt's death typically in ſlain ſacrifices, on which account Chriſt is called the *Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.* And the bleſſings of the Old Teſtament, being diſponed to believers in view of the actual death of the Teſtator prefigured by the ſlaying of the ſacrifices, were upon their believing made good to them.

Q. Are the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament a part of our rule, as well as the New?

A. Yes, for they expreſs much of Chriſt and his goſpel; they contain the moral law, and are often cited in the New Teſtament, Matth. xxii. 29, *&c.* John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11. Rom. xv. 4. 1 Cor. x. 6. Heb. iv. 2. Gal. iii. 8.

Q. Are the writings in the Apocrypha books to be read and received as the word of God?

A. No; for though they are uſeful, as many other human writings, yet they are no part of holy ſcripture; ſeeing we find they are not written in the original language of the Old Teſtament, nor by any of the inſpired Prophets, but after Malachi that was the laſt of them: Nor were they owned as canonical by the Jews, to whom of old were committed the oracles of God.

Q. Doth the authority of the ſcriptures depend upon the teſtimony of the church?

A. No; for the church herſelf is buillt on the ſcriptures as her foundation, and whatever the church teaches is to be tried by them, Eph. ii. 19, 20. Iſa. viii. 20. Acts xvii. 11.

Q. Is there nothing elſe to be received as a rule to direct us in the way to happineſs, but the Holy Scriptures?

A. No; not our natural reaſon, as Deiſts aſſert; not unwritten traditions, as Papiſts teach; not the light within, or ſpirit without the ſcriptures, as Quakers and Enthuſiaſts pretend to, Iſa. viii. 10. Gal. vi. 16. 1 John iv. 1, 6.

Q. Why is not the light of nature or reaſon ſufficient to direct us in the way to happineſs?

A. Becauſe, though it teach us that there is a God, and that he is to be worſhipped; yet it cannot diſcover to us the wonderful work of redemption through Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. But is the word of God ſufficiently plain, full and perfect to be a rule to us?

A. Whatever Papiſts object againſt it, to make way for their traditions and papal decrees; yet the rule of God's word is ſufficiently plain and complete, as it contains the whole counſel of God concerning all things neceſſary for us to know or believe for promoting God's glory and our ſalvation. And this we have either in expreſs words, or in juſt and neceſſary conſequences, obivous to the weakeſt underſtanding, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. Pſal. xvi. 7, 8, 9. Pſal. cxix. 105, 130.

Q. Do the ſcriptures then contain the whole revealed will of God to the world?

A. Yes.

Q. Are we to believe nothing but what we have written in the word of God?

A. Yes, many things, tho' not ſo neceſſary to ſalvation.

Q. Is the word of God to be obſerved as our rule of worſhip, as well as of faith?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it not lawful for us to add ſome decent inventions to the worſhip of God, as the ſign of the croſs in baptiſm, kneeling at the Lord's ſupper, bowing to the altar, the organ in praiſe *&c.*

A. No; not a pin ſhould be added to the tabernacle but what is of God's own appointment, Heb. viii. 5.

Q. What doth the Apoſtle call ſuch inventions and additions?

A. Beggarly elements, and will-worſhip, Gal. iv. 9. Col. ii. 23.

Q. What will God ſay to theſe who add them?

A. He will ſay to them as to the Jews, Iſa. i. 12. *Who hath required theſe things at your hands?*

Q. How ſhould we value the ſcriptures?

A. We ſhould reckon it a great mercy and privilege that we have God's will revealed in them, as a light to guide us in the way to heaven; and therefore we ſhould dearly love them, and daily uſe them.

Q. Are they not in a miſerable caſe who want the ſcriptures?

A. Yes; for, where there is no viſion the people periſh, Prov. xxix. 18.

Q. Will the word ſave any without the Spirit's influence?

A. No.

Q. What will become of thoſe who have the word, and yet deſpiſe it?

A. They will be deſtroyed, Prov. xiii. 13.

QUEST III.

Q. *What do the ſcriptures principally teach?*

A. The ſcriptures principally teath, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q. What are the two great leſſons which the ſcriptures teach us?

A. The ſcriptures teach us, *firſt*, The truths we muſt believe. 2*dly*, The duties we muſt perform.

Q. Why is faith put before obedience?

A. Becauſe faith is the ſpring and principle of all true obedience, and no duty can be performed acceptably without it, Heb. xi, 6.

Q. What do the ſcriptures teach us to believe concerning God?

A. Three things: as, 1. That God is, 2. What God is: 3. What God doth. And therefore we ſhould aim to grow in the knowledge and belief of the Being, the nature, and the works of God.

Q. Ought we not in the firſt place to ſtudy to be eſtabliſhed in the belief of the being of a God?

A. Yes.

Q. How doth it appear that there is a God?

A. This is evident, not only from the bible, but alſo from the light of nature, the works of creation, the being of the heavens, earth, and ſea, with the various creatures therein; the beautiful order and motion of the luminaries of heaven, the regular ebbing and flowing of the ſea, the wonderful frame of man's body and ſoul, the miracles which have been wrought, the prophecies which have be fulfilled, the conſent of all nations to this truth, and the conſcience of man, which accuſes him when guilty, and excuſes him when innocent: All theſe do plainly declare the being of God, to the confounding of all theſe who would oppoſe this moſt clear and evident truth.

Q. How do we call theſe who think there is no God?

A. We call them Atheiſts.

Q. What doth the Spirit of God call them?

A. Fools, Pſal. xiv. 1.

Q. Why are they called fools?

A. Becauſe what they imagine is contrary to the rational dictates of their own ſouls, and the common ſentiments of all the wiſe and ſober part of mankind, and alſo againſt the teſtimony of every creature; ſeeing the being and wiſdom of God may evidently be ſeen in every thing we ſet our eyes upon, as a bird, a fly, a tree, a flower, and every pile of graſs.

QUEST. IV.

Q. *What is God?*

A. God is a Spirit infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs and truth.

Q. Is it poſſible for creatures to give any perfect definition of God? A. No.

Q. Are all our uptakings of the nature and eſſence of God moſt imperfect? A. Yes.

Q. Why are they ſo?

A. Becauſe the nature of God, being ſpiritual and infinite, is ſo exalted above us, that he cannot be declared by human ſpeech, perceived by human ſenſe, or conceived by human underſtanding, Job xi. 7. 8. 9.

Q. What ſort of ſubſtance is God?

A. God is a Spirit, John 4. 24.

Q. What is a ſpirit?

A. An inviſible being or ſubſtance, that hath underſtanding, and will, without a body or bodily parts, Luke 24. 39.

Q. Are not angels and the ſouls of men ſpirits too?

A. Yes.

Q. What difference is there between God and theſe ſpirits?

A. Theſe are but finite ſpirits, created by God, and dependent upon him; but God is an uncreated ſpirit, infinite and independent, who made all things according to his pleaſure.

Q. If God be a Spirit, how doth the ſcripture aſcribe face, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and other bodily parts unto God?

A. Theſe are not proper, but only figurative expreſſions of God: for if God ſhould ſpeak in his own language, and deſcribe himſelf to us, as he really is, we could not underſtand him; therefore he is pleaſed to ſpeak of himſelf to us after the manner of men, in condeſcenſion to our weak capacities, who cannot conceive of the divine perfections and operations without ſuch ſhadows and reſemblances. Wherefore we muſt underſtand all theſe bodily parts in a ſpiritual ſenſe.

Q. What ought we to underſtand by them?

A. By the face of God, we are to underſtand the manifeſtation of his favour; by his eyes, his omniſcience and watchful providence; by his ears, his readineſs to hear our prayers; by his mouth, the revelation of his will; by his hand or arm, the greatneſs of his power; by his heart, the ſincerity of his affection; by his bowels, the tenderneſs of his compaſſions; by his feet, the ubiquity of his preſence.

Q. If God be a Spirit, how was man ſaid to be created after the image of God?

A. The image of God in man did not conſiſt in any bodily ſhape or likeneſs, but in the ſpiritual faculties and excellencies of his ſoul, in regard of its being a ſpirit, inviſible, immortal, knowing, righteous and holy.

Q. Is it lawful to repreſent God, who is a Spirit, by any image or picture, as the papiſts pretend to do for an help in worſhip?

A. No: For, as it is impoſſible to do it, ſo it is moſt ſinful to attempt it; ſeeing ſuch mean repreſentations are a great diſparagement to the majeſty of an infinitely glorious God, and alſo a manifeſt contempt of his laws, which ſtrictly forbid any ſuch practice, Deut. 4. 15. 16. Iſa. 40. 18. Acts 17. 29.

Q. How is it that God is deſcribed to us in the catechiſm?

A. By his eſſential properties, or excellencies which we find aſcribed to God in ſcripture, commonly called his attributes.

Q. How are the attributes of God divided?

A. Into two ſorts; ſome being incommunicable, and others called communicable.

Q. What are the incommunicable attributes of God mentioned in the anſwer?

A. They are three, to wit, his infinity, eternity, an unchangeableneſs.

Q. Why are theſe called incommunicable?

A. Becauſe they cannot be communicated to any creature; and there is no reſemblance of them to be found in creatures.

Q. What are theſe attributes of God which are called communicable?

A. They are ſix, to wit, his wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and truth.

Q. Why are theſe called communicable?

A. Becauſe there are ſome faint rays or reſemblances of them to be ſeen in ſome creatures, as in good men and good angels; and hence they are called wiſe, holy, juſt, good, *&c.*

Q. What is it to be infinite?

A. It is to be without all meaſure, bounds, or limits.

Q. In what reſpect is God ſaid to be infinite?

A. 1. In reſpect of his eſſence, greatneſs and glory; and ſo he is immenſe, unſearchable and incomprehenſible. 2. He is infinite in his wiſdom, power, and all the other perfections of his nature; no bounds can be ſet unto them. 3. In reſpect of place, being every where preſent, and unbounded by any place. 4. In reſpect of duration, being eternal, and bounded by no time.

Q. What underſtand you by God's being eternal?

A. That he is without beginning, and without end; which no creature can pretend to; for tho' angels and mens ſouls have no end, yet they had a beginning; but God, who made them, is *from everlaſting to everlaſting*, Pſal. xc. 2.

Q. What do ye underſtand by God's being unchangeable?

A. That he is ſtill the ſame, and ſubject to no variableneſs or change, either with reſpect to his eſſential perfections, or his counſels and deſigns, or his love and favour towards his people, Pſal. cii. 27. Iſa. xlvi. 10. Rom. xi. 22. James i. 17.

Q. If God be unchangeable, how is repentance attributed to him in ſcripture, as Jer. xviii. 8. and other places?

A. Not properly, but improperly. God there ſpeaks of himſelf after the manner of men, becauſe he doth the ſame thing which men do when they repent and change their minds; he alters the courſe of his diſpenſations, but ſtill without any change of counſels. For, whatever change appear in God's outward conduct, it is exactly according to his infallible preſcience and immutable will; and doth not import any change of mind in God, as it doth in us.

Q. What is meant by the wiſdom of God?

A. That eſſential perfection, whereby he perfectly knows all things, and ſkilfully orders and diſpoſes all things to their proper ends, for his own glory.

Q. Wherein doth the widom of God moſt brightly appear?

A. God's wiſdom ſhines forth both in his works of creation and providence; but the brighteſt diſcovery we have of it is in the contrivance of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, in a way that both ſatisfies juſtice in the puniſhment of ſin, and magnifies mercy in the ſalvation of the ſinner, Pſal. civ. 24. Col. ii. 3.

Q. What is the power of God?

A. That eſſential property of God, whereby he is Almighty, or able to do all things that he pleaſeth to have done, Gen. xvii. 1. Jer. xxxii. 17.

Q. We read of God, that he cannot lie, repent, or deny himſelf: How then is he able to do all things?

A. Theſe things are not objects of power. The doing of them, being contrary to God's holy nature and veracity would argue imperfection and weakneſs, but not power.

Q. Wherein is God's almighty power diſcovered to us?

A. In creating the world by his word, and upholding all things in it, in conquering the power of hell by Chriſt's death, in working miracles, raiſing the dead, converting ſinners to himſelf, preſerving his church, and ſubduing his enemies, Rom. i. 20. Heb. i. 3. 1 Cor. i. 24. Eph. i. 19. Mat. xvi. 18.

Q. What is the holineſs of God?

A. That eſſential perfection, whereby he is infinitely pure, and free from all iniquity, loveth righteouſneſs, and abhorreth all ſin and impurity, Heb. i. 13.

Q. Wherein doth God's holineſs, and hatred of ſin appear?

A. In making pure and holy laws, encouraging men to obey them; threatening and puniſhing ſin, which is contrary to them: and eſpecially in ſending his eternal Son to aſſume our nature and live in it, to be a pattern of holineſs to us; and alſo to die, that he might root out ſin and impurity, and purchaſe pefect holineſs for us, Rom. vii. 12. 1 Theſſ. iv. 3. Eph. v. 25. 26. 27.

Q. What is the juſtice of God?

A. It is the perfect equity of his nature, which inclines him to will what is juſt and right, to render to every man his due, and to deal righteouſly with all his creatures?

Q. What diſcoveries have we of the juſtice of God?

A. In ſending terrible judgments upon men for their ſins in this world, and executing eternal vengeance upon the wicked in hell; and in rewarding the righteous upon the account of Chriſt's merits, Rom. ii. 5. 6. *&c.* 2 Theſſ. i. 7. 8. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Q. What is the greateſt evidence of the juſtice of God, that ever he gave to the world?

A. His pouring out the vials of his wrath upon his own Son, when he ſtood Surety for us; and exacting full ſatisfaction from him for all the debts or ſins of an elect world, without abating him one farthing, Iſa. liii. 4. Rom. iii. 25, 26. Rom. viii. 32.

Q. Doth God's infinite juſtice hinder him from being merciful?

A. No; for, thro' Chriſt's mediation, he exerts his infinite mercy and goodneſs to the world, as well as his juſtice.

Q. Wherein doth the goodneſs and mercy of God appear?

A. In our daily preſervation, and ſupplying the wants of all his creatures, in ſparing his enemies, and chiefly in providing Chriſt to be a Surety for them, in offering them ſalvation through him, and particularly in pardoning, ſanctifying, and giving eternal glory to all who believe in him.

Q. What is the truth of God?

A. That eſſential property, which always inclines him to be ſincere and true in what he ſaith, and to be faithful in fulfilling his word.

Q. Wherein doth the truth and faithfulneſs of God appear?

A. In accompliſhing the predictions recorded in his word, in executing his threatenings againſt the wicked, and in fulfilling all his promiſes to his people, Matt. xxiv. 35. Zech. i. 6. Heb. x. 23.

Q. Wherein doth theſe perfections of wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs and truth, which belong to God, differ from theſe we find in angels or man?

A. Theſe perfections being eſſential to God, he is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in them: but any inferiour degree of theſe perfections we ſee in creatures, the ſame is communicated from God to them, and is ſubject to change.

QUEST. V.

Q. *Are there more God's than one?*

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Q. In what reſpect is God ſaid to be one?

A. God is one, *1ſt*, In oppoſition to mixture and compoſition, he being a moſt pure and ſimple eſſence. *2dly*, In oppoſition to multitude, he being numerically one in eſſence and nature, and no other like him.

Q. Why is God ſaid to be the one only God?

A. To ſhew that tho' there be others that bear the name of gods in the world, yet there is none really God, but he alone, 1 Cor. viii. 4. 5. 6.

Q. Why is this one God called the living God?

A. To diſtinguiſh him from the dead idols of the nations, and to ſhew that all life, natural, ſpiritual and eternal, is originally in him, and from him only, Pſal. cxv. 4. 5. John v. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 13.

Q. Why is he called the true God?

A. To diſtinguiſh him from all the falſe and imaginary deities that are in the world, Jer. x. 10. 11. 15.

Q. Who are theſe mentioned in ſcripture that bear the name of God, beſides the true God?

A. We find ſeverals called gods, as the heathen idols, the Devil, Antichriſt, and Magiſtrates, 1 Cor. viii. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2 Theſſ. ii. 4. Pſal. lxxxii. 6.

Q. Why are the Heathen idols called gods?

A. Not that there is any thing of true divinity in them, but becauſe their deluded worſhippers fancied that they were gods and reputed them ſo.

Q. Can any of the gods among the Heathen give rain?

A. No, Jer. xiv. 22.

Q. Can they create a world, or know the heart?

A. No, they cannot, and therefore ought not to be worſhipped, Jer. x. 11.

Q. How is the devil called God?

A. He is called the god of this world, becauſe he rules over the unregenerate world; he uſurps divine homage, and is actually worſhipped in many parts by the Heathen, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Deut. xxxii. 17. Rev. ix. 20.

Q. How is Antichriſt called God?

A. In reſpect of his uſurping the titles, homage and prerogatives which are only due to God, 2 Theſſ. ii. 4.

Q. How are Magiſtrates called Gods?

A. Only improperly and by participation; they being God's vicegerents on earth, to miniſter juſtice to others, Pſal. lxxxii. 6.

Q. Do not ſome make the world their God?

A. Yes; and hence covetous men are called idolaters, Eph. v. 5. Col. iii. 5.

Q. Why are they called ſo?

A. Becauſe they ſet their hearts upon the world more than upon God.

Q. Do not ſome make a God of their belly?

A. Yes, Phil. iii. 19.

Q. How are they guilty of this?

A. By ſtudying to ſerve and pleaſe their belly more than God.

Q. How do ye prove that there is but one God and no more?

A. 1*ſt*, From holy ſcripture, that doth frequently aſſert this; as in Deut. vi. 4. Mal. ii. 10. Matt. xix. 17. 1 Cor. viii. 4. 6.—2*dly* From reaſon; for, ſeeing God is an infinite, omnipotent, independent, and moſt perfect Being, and alſo the firſt cauſe of all things; reaſon muſt certainly conclude that there can be but one ſuch being, and no more, and that there cannot be a plurality of infinites and firſt cauſes.

Q. Who are they that are guilty of multiplying gods to themſelves?

A. Both the Pagans and the Papiſts, ſeeing they actually worſhip and pray to others beſides the one true God; ſo do the Papiſts to ſaints and angels.

Q. But may not profeſſed Proteſtants be chargeable with multiplying gods to themſelves?

A. Yes; for though they profeſs to own and worſhip the one true God only, yet many ſet up idols in their hearts, and ſtudy to ſerve and pleaſe other things more than God, Ezek. xiv. 3. Phil. iii. 19.

Q. What is incumbent on us, when others will not worſhip and ſerve this one true God?

A. We ſhould with Joſhua, reſolve and ſay, that we and ours will ſerve the Lord, Joſhua xxiv. 15.

Q. Doth any man ſerve God for nought?

A. No; for he rewards all his faithful ſervants with a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10.

QUEST. VI.

Q. *How many perſons are there in the Godhead?*

A. There are Three Perſons in the God head, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one God, the ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and glory.

Q. What is meant by the God head?

A. The divine nature or eſſence.

Q. Is this word *God-head* to be found in ſcripture?

A. Yes, in Acts xvii. 29. 'We ought not to think the God head is like unto gold or ſilver,' *&c.*

Q. Are there three eſſences or natures in the Godhead?

A. No, but only Three Perſons in one divine eſſence.

Q. How do ye prove that there are Three Perſons in the God-head?

A. 1*ſt*, From that expreſs aſſertion, 1 John v. 7. "For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the "Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe "Three are One".—2*dly*, From the inſtitution of baptiſm, Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt." 3*dly*, From the apoſtolical benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt be with you all." *Amen.*

Q. What do ye think of that proof of the Trinity which is brought from Chriſt's baptiſm at Jordan? Matt. iii. 16. 17.

A. It is moſt clear; for there the Father is manifeſted by a voice from heaven, the Son by his bodily appearance upon earth, and the Holy Ghoſt by lighting on him in ſhape of a dove.

Q. Well then, is the Father God? the Son God? and the Holy Ghoſt God?

A. Yes, each one of them is God.

Q. Will not that make three Gods?

A. No; theſe Three Perſons are but one God; becauſe the ſame divine nature or eſſence is in all the Three.

Q. What mean you by a perſon in the Godhead?

A. It is the divine nature ſubſiſting in a different way, and diſtinguiſhed by different perſonal properties.

Q. What are the different perſonal properties of the Three Perſons in the Godhead?

A. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and ſend out the Holy Ghoſt: It is proper to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to ſend out the Holy Ghoſt: It is proper to the Holy Ghoſt to proceed by emanation from the Father and the Son. All which appears from theſe ſcriptures, Pſa. ii. 7. Heb. i. 5, 6, 8. John i, 14, 18, John xv, 26, Gal, iv, 6,

Q. Is none of theſe perſons before another in order of time?

A. No, for they are all co eternal?

Q. Is one of them before another in order of dignity or greatneſs?

A. No, for they are all equal in power and glory.

Q. Why then are they named in this order, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghoſt?

A. To denote the order of ſubſiſting and working which they have among themſelves: The Father ſubſiſting and working from himſelf; The Son ſubſiſting and working from the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt ſubſiſting and working from the Father and the Son, John v. 19. John xvi. 4.

Q. Which of theſe Three Perſons made the world?

A. Each of them made it, as is evident from the ſcriptures, which aſcribe the works of creation to all the Three, Gen. i. 1, 2, 26. Iſa. lxii. 5. Heb i. 2. John i. 3. Col. i. 16 Job xxxiii. 4. Pſalm xxxiii. 6. Iſa. xl 12, 13.

Q. Which of the Three Perſons became man?

A. The Son, who is the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity; and ſince his incarnation he is called the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. How doth it appear that Chriſt the Son is God equal with the Father?

A. From the holy ſcriptures, in which we find the ſame names, titles, attributes, works, worſhip and honour aſcribed to the Son, as they are to the Father?

Q. What are theſe aſſential names and titles which are aſcribed to the Son equally with the Father?

A. Even theſe which are moſt eminent and glorious, ſuch as, God, The Lord God of the prophets, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, The great God, The mighty God, The true God, The only wiſe God, God over all bleſſed for ever. And alſo he is called JEHOVAH which is the peculiar incommunicable name of the only true God. For all which ſee theſe plain texts, John i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Rev. xxii. 6. Rev. xix. 16. Tit, ii. 13. Iſa. ix. 6. 1 John v. 20. Jude 25. Rom. ix. 5. Zech. ii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 6. Pſal. lxxxiii. 18.

Q. What are the divine attributes which are aſcribed to the Son equally with the Father?

A, The holy ſcripture aſſerts, that he is the Eternal, Unchangeable, Almighty, Omniſcient, Omnipreſent, Infinite in holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and truth; as in theſe Texts, Mic. v 2. Heb vii 3 Heb. xiii 8. Rev i 8 John ii 24, 25 John xxi 17. Rev. ii 23. Mat xviii. 20. Iſa. vi. 3. Rev. iii. 7. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Eph. iii. 19. Rev. i. 5.

Q. What are theſe divine works aſcribed to Chriſt the Son, which prove him to be the true God.

A. The ſcripture aſcribes to him the creation of the world, the preſervation and upholding of all things, the working of miracles by his own power, the forgiving of ſins, the working of faith and repentance, the quickning of dead ſouls, the opening of the underſtanding, beſtowing of the Spirit, raiſing the dead at the laſt day, judging of the world and giving of eternal life, John i. 3. 10. Col. i. 16. 17. Heb. i. 3. Mark v. 41. Mark ii. 5. Heb. xii. 2. Acts v. 31. John v. 21, 25, 28, 29. Luke xxiv. 25. John xx. 22. Acts ii. 33. 2 Tim. iv. 1. John x. 28.

Q. What is that worſhip and honour aſcribed to Chriſt the Son, which prove him to be the true God?

A. We find the ſame religious divine worſhip and adoration given to him as to the Father, both by angels and men. As alſo, he is made the object of Faith, of prayer, of praiſe, and of ſacramental dedication, equally with the Father; as we ſee in theſe texts, Heb. i. 6. Mat. vii. 2. Mat. xiv. 13. John xiv. 1. Acts vii. 59, 60. 1 Cor. i. 2. Acts ix. 14. Rev. v, 12, 13. Mat. xxviii. 19. Acts xx, 5.

Q. It is not the Father's expreſs will, that all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father?

A. Yes, as in John v. 22, 23.

Q. Doth not God the Father call Jeſus Chriſt his fellow or equal?

A. Yes; as in Zech. xiii. 7.

Q. Did not Chriſt think himſelf to be equal with him?

A. Yes: for it is ſaid. *He thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6.

Q. If the Son be God with the Father, how ſaith Chriſt, My Father is greater than I? John xiv. 28.

A. Chriſt doth not ſpeak there of his divine nature, for in reſpect of that, he and his Father are equally great: And therefore he ſaith, *I and my Father are one.* And it cannot be otherwiſe, ſince one and the ſame infinitely great Godhead is the undivided nature of them both: But in the place objected, as the context ſhews, Chriſt doth ſpeak of his mediatorial office to which he is appointed by the Father, and in which reſpect he is the Father's ſervant.

Q. Is there not great abſurdity in maintaining the Son to be inferior to the Father in reſpct of his divine nature?

A. Yes; for it would lead us into polytheiſm, or the ſetting up of two Gods, and two objects of worſhip, the one ſupreme, and the other ſubordinate; beſides, it would make Chriſt no God in a proper ſenſe: For inferiority or dependency is inconſiſtent with the notion of the Deity.

Q. How doth it appear that the Holy Ghoſt is God equal with the Father and the Son?

A. By the ſame arguments that prove the divinity of the Son: For the Holy Ghoſt hath the ſame names, attributes, works, worſhip and honour aſcribed to him, which the Father and the Son have: He is called God, Jehovah; He is eternal, omniſcient, omnipreſent; He created the world, miraculouſly formed and furniſhed Chriſt's human nature, and inſpired the prophets and apoſtles; He raiſes the dead, regenerates and ſanctifies his people; And he is the object of divine worſhip, of prayer, and ſacramental dedication. For all which, ſee theſe texts, Acts v. 3, 4 Ezek iii. 24, 26. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Cor. ii 10. Luke ii. 26. Pſal cxxxix. 7. 8. Pſal. xxxiii. 6. Job xxvi. 13. Mat. i. 18. Luke iv. 18. 2 Pet. i. 21. Rom. viii. 11. John iii. 6. 2 Theſ. ii. 13. Cant. iv. 16. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Mat. xxviii. 19.

Q. Do we not receive diſtinct bleſſings and benefits from theſe glorious Perſons?

A. Yes; the Father contrived the ranſom, and ſent the Ranſomer; the Son undertook and came to be our Redeemer; and the Holy Ghoſt applies the redemption to us.

Q. Ought not then a diſtinct glory to be given to each of the Bleſſed Three?

A. Yes; and this will be the work of the redeemed with the angels for ever, Rev. 1. 4, 5, 6. Rea. iv. 8, *&c.* Rev. v. 9, *&c.*

Q. How are we to worſhip one God in three perſons?

A. We are to worſhip God in Chriſt the Son, by the Spirit. We muſt aſk of the Father in the name of the Son, and by the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, John xvi. 23. Eph. v. 20. Jude 20.

Q. Could ever the doctrine of the Holy Trinity be known by the light of nature?

A. No; and this ſhould make us thankful for the light of revelation.

Q. Can this myſtery of One in Three, and Three in One, be comprehended by human reaſon?

A. No; the ſhallow capacities of men cannot fathom the deep things of God, This great myſtery is what we ſhould believe, reverence and adore, ſeeing we have the moſt plain and poſitive aſſertions in God's word of a Trinity of perſons in an Unity of eſſence.

Q. Is there any thing in religion contrary to reaſon?

A. No.

Q. Are there not many things in it above the reach of human reaſon? A. Yes.

Q. Is it juſt to reject what our nature cannot account for?

A. No; for then we ſhould deny every one of God's eſſential perfections, for each of them doth infinitely tranſcend our thoughts; nay, we ſhould deny that we have immortal ſouls, and many other things in nature that our reaſon cannot ſearch out, ſuch as the motion of the wind and tide, *&c*.

Q. What ſhall we think of theſe who deny the Trinity, or refuſe the divinity of the Son or Holy Ghoſt?

A. That they are blaſphemers and damnable hereticks, ſeeing they deny ſuch great and fundamental truths of God ſo clearly revealed in his word.

QUEST. VII.

Q. *What are the decrees of God?*

A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpoſe, according to the counſel of his will, whereby for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatſoever comes to paſs.

Q. What do you underſtand by God's decrees?

A. His eternal purpoſe and appointments concerning the things that ſhall be in time and through eternity.

Q. Were all God's decrees framed from eternity?

A. Yes.

Q. Doth God purpoſe nothing, upon new emergents in time, but what he had before decreed?

A. No, Acts xv. 18, Iſa. xlvi. 10.

Q. And doth nothing fall out in time but according to theſe eternal decrees?

A. No, Eph. i. 11.

Q. Would it be blaſphemy in one to ſay that God is the author of ſin? *A.* Yes.

Q. Would it make God the author of ſin to ſay that he had decreed ſinful actions?

A. It would indeed be blaſphemy to ſay that he had decreed to effectuate ſin; but it is not ſo to ſay that he hath decreed to permit ſinful actions, and to over-rule them to his own glorious purpoſes.

Q. How doth it appear that God may have ſuch a holy hand about the ſinful actions of men?

A. From ſeveral inſtances in ſcripture; particularly that in Acts ii. 3. where Peter chargeth home upon the Jews their crucifying of Chriſt with wicked hands, and yet at the ſame time ſays, That he was delivered up for that end by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God. See alſo Acts iv. 27, 28. where we may ſee that God's deſigning the crucifixion of Chriſt from eternity, and bringing the greateſt good out of it to mankind, was no manner of excuſe for the wicked part the Jews acted in it; ſeeing it flowed from a wicked principle in them, and was their own voluntary act and deed.

Q. What counſel hath God in fore-ordaining all things?

A. The counſel of his own will, which was according to infinite wiſdom, and the higheſt reaſon, Eph. i. 11. Iſa. xl. 13.

Q. For what end did God declare all things?

A. For his own glory, Rom. xi. 36.

Q. What perfections of his did he deſign thereby to glorify?

A. His wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs and truth.

Q. Can nothing fall out in time to alter God's decrees?

A. No.

Q. How appears it that his decrees are unchangeable?

A. Becauſe changing would import weakneſs, and that he did not foreſee the letts and ſtops in the way of his purpoſes.

Q. Do the many changes that fall out in time, ſuch as God's making the world, and afterward deſtroying it, import any alteration in God's counſels or decrees?

A. No; for God from eternity, by his immutable decree, did fore-ordain all theſe alterations.

Q. Doth the immutability of God's decrees take away the free will of rational creatures in performing their actions?

A. No, but rather doth eſtabliſh it; becauſe God hath decreed to bring about his purpoſes in a way agreeably to the nature and liberty of free agents without any conſtraint upon their wills, it being eaſy for infinite knowledge to foreſee how they will incline and determine in every different ſituation.

Q. Are there not many caſual things that fall out in the world, which may be aſcribed to chance?

A. No; for though there be many things caſual or contingent in reſpect of ſecond cauſes or inſtruments, as falling out without or beyond their deſign; yet there is nothing that falls out by chance, or is caſual in reſpect of God, that foreſees and determines every thing that comes to paſs.

Q. Hath not God predeſtinated ſome to eternal life?

A. This is plainly aſſerted in ſcripture, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. 2 Theſſ. ii. 13.

Q. Was their foreſeen faith, repentance or good works the cauſe of this decree?

A. No, but only the effect of it: For God decreed all theſe as neceſſary means to eternal life, as is clear from the forecited texts, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. and from Acts xiii. 48. *We are choſen that we ſhould be holy, not becauſe we are holy.*

Q. What then was the cauſe of God's decree of election?

A. Nothing but his good pleaſure and free love, Rom. ix. 11, 13, 18. No man hath any ground of boaſting; for God hath paſt by one, and pitched upon another, according to his ſovereign will and pleaſure.

QUEST. VIII.

Q. *How doth God execute his decrees?*

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Q. What dou you underſtand by God's executing his decrees?

A. His bringing to paſs the things which he had before-ordained.

Q. Are God's decrees brought to paſs in his works in time?

A. Yes.

Q. What are theſe works of God?

A. His works of creation and providence.

Q. Are theſe all the works of God, which he hath decreed to bring to paſs? A. Yes.

Q. Is not the work of redemption a part of God' works which he had decreed from eternity?

A. Yes, but this is here included in God's work o providence; and indeed his work of redeeming loſt ſinners is the moſt glorious part of his providence toward men.

Q. What is the difference between God's executin or bringing to paſs his works of creation, and his work of providence?

A. The former he executed in ſix days, but the latter he continues ſtill to execute; the one without means, but the other uſually by means.

Q. Are there not many of God's decrees yet to be executed?

A. Yes; but they all ſhall be executed in due time, in the order God hath appointed, Iſ. xlvi. 10. Rev. i. 1. Rev. xxii. 6. Rom. xi. 25 26.

QUEST. IX.

Q. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the ſpace of ſix days, and all very good.

Q. What is it to create?

A. It is to make ſomething out of nothing; and likewiſe the making of a thing out of matter wholly unfit for it, as man's body of the duſt of the ground, is termed creating.

Q. Who is the Creator of all things? *A.* God.

Q. Out of what did God make all things?

A. Of nothing.

Q. How can that be ſaid, ſeeing men was made of the duſt of the earth?

A. Becauſe God made that duſt out of nothing.

Q. Can none elſe create or make a thing out of nothing but God?

A. No; neither man or angel can create the leaſt atom.

Q. Cannot an angel make a living creature?

A. No, not ſo much as a flie.

Q. Can an angel turn any thing into nothing?

A. No.

Q. Can God do this?

A. Yes, he could annihilate the whole world as eaſily as he created it.

Q. Did God employ angels at his inſtruments in the work of creation? *A.* No.

Q. By what means then did God make all things?

A. By the word of his power; 'He ſpake and it was done,' Pſal. xxxiii. 9.

Q. What was the word of power he made uſe of?

A. That in Gen. i. LET IT BE; as, 'Let there be light, Let there be a firmament,' and the like.

Q. In what time did God make all things?

A. In ſix days.

Q. Could not God have made them in leſs time?

A. Yes.

Q. Why did he take ſo long time to do it?

A. To give us a more diſtinct view of the order of the creation, and to ſet us an example of working ſix days, and reſting the ſeventh.

Q. In what ſtate did God make all things?

A. God made all things at firſt very good, Gen. i. 31.

Q. What is the meaning of theſe words, *All very good?*

A. That, of all the things that were made there was none of them marred in the making; all of them anſwered the Creator's deſign, and were ſet to ſhew forth his glory.

Q. If all God's works are very good, then whoſe work is ſin, that is ſo very evil?

A. Sin is none of God's works; it is only the work of the devil, and of man that was tempted by him.

Q. And whoſe workmanſhip are the devils, or who made them?

A. God made them angels of light, but they made themſelves devils by ſin.

Q. When were the angels created?

A. Certainly within the ſpace of the ſix days mentioned by Moſes; for in that time we are told that God finiſhed the creating of the heavens with their hoſts, Gen. ii. 1, 2. which muſt include the angels, which are expreſsly called the heavenly Hoſt, Luke ii. 13. And many think they were created on the firſt day with the empyreal heaven, Gen. i. 1. Job xxxviii. 6, 7.

Q. Why was not Moſes more expreſs and particular with reſpect to the creation of angels?

A. Becauſe it being his great deſign to give a hiſtory of the church, and its original from the creation of the world, he judged it ſufficient for his purpoſe to give us no more but a ſhort account of the viſible creation, to which angels do not belong.

Q. For what end did God make the world?

A. The Lord hath made all things for himſelf, and for the manifeſting of his glorious perfections, Prov. xvi. 4.

Q. What are the attributes of God which do moſt glorioulſy ſhine forth in the works of creation?

A. His infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs.

Q. How is the glory of God's power diſplayed in making the world?

A. In his bringing all things of a ſudden out of the womb of nothing by his bare word, Rom. i. 20.

Q. How doth the glory of God's wiſdom ſhine forth herein?

A. In the amazing variety of creatures and the beautiful order and harmony of all things; the view whereof made the Pſalmiſt cry out, Pſal. civ. 24. 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wiſdom haſt thou made them all.

Q. How is the glory of God's goodneſs manifeſted in creation?

A. In providing ſuch a commodious habitation for men before he gave him a being, and making all the creatures ſubſervient to him, Pſal. viii. 3, 4, *&c.* Pſal. xxxiii. 5.

Q. On which day of the creation did God make light to ſhine? A. Upon the firſt day.

Q. Were the ſun, the moon and ſtars made the firſt day?

A. No; they were not made till the fourth day of the creation.

Q. How could there be light made before the ſun?

A. It was eaſy for the great Creator to form a bright luminous body, and carry it about to enlighten the world for the three firſt days, and afterwards place that light in the ſun, moon, and ſtars, when they were created.

Q. When were the fiſhes created?

A. On the fifth day.

Q. When was man created? A. On the ſixth day.

Q. What did God do the ſeventh day?

A. He reſted from all his works, and ſanctified it for his Sabbath.

Q. Was God weary with his work, that he reſted after it?

A. No; the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary, Iſa. xl. 28.

Q. What is to be underſtood then by God's reſting?

A. His ceaſing from work.

Q. What doth God teach us by this example?

A. To ceaſe from the labour of the week, and keep a ſeventh part of our time holy to the Lord.

Q. Is it not evident from ſenſe and reaſon, as well as ſcripture, that the world did not exiſt from eternity, but was created ſome thouſand years ago, according to Moſes's account?

A. Yes; it is clearly evident from the lateneſs of the invention of arts, the foundation of cities, the erecting of ſtates, and the writing of hiſtories, none of which do we find ſo ancient as the time of the creation fixed by Moſes. Beſides, the being of mountains and valleys is a plain demonſtration that the earth was not from eternity; for, ſeeing the rain ſtill waſheth down ſome earth from the heights. if the ſmalleſt quainty ſhould but come down once in a thouſand years, it is certain the mountains would have been entirely levelled in an infinite courſe of years, ſo that no height had now appeared.

Q. Would it not be profitable for us to meditate much upon the beautiful and ſtupendious Creation?

A. Yes; it would make us little in our own eyes, raiſe in us an awful ſenſe and veneration of God's power, and majeſty, cauſe us hate ſin that brings diſorder into this beautiful frame, and help us to truſt to our Maker's power and goodneſs in all our ſtraits and difficulties.

QUEST. X.

Q. *How did God create man?*

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, with dominion over the creatures.

Q. Which is the principal creature upon this earth?

A. Man

Q. Why then was he made after all other creatures?

A. Becauſe God thought fit to make the world as an houſe ready furniſhed for him, before he would create man to inhabit it.

Q. What ſort of a creature is man?

A. A compound being of ſoul and body, created male and female.

Q. What is male and female?

A. Man and woman.

Q. How many men did God create at firſt?

A Only one man, and one woman.

Q. What are the two conſtituent parts of man?

A. Soul and body.

Q. What is the ſoul of man?

A. It is a ſpirit rational, inviſible, and immortal, by which a man exerts all vital and intelligent acts, lives, moves, underſtands and wills.

Q. How was man's ſoul made?

A. God breathed into him, and he became a living ſoul.

Q. Of what was man's body made?

A. Adam's body was made of the duſt of the ground, and Eve's was made of a rib from Adam's ſide,

Q. Can the body live without the ſoul *A.* No,

Q Can the ſoul live without the body? *A* Yes,

Q After whoſe image did God create man?

A. After his own image.

Q. Did this ly in man's body, or in any bodily ſhape or likeneſs?

A. No, but in man's ſoul, which is a ſpirit endowed with natural faculties and moral qualities, that bear ſome reſemblance of its Maker.

Q. Wherein doth the ſoul reſemble God in its natural faculties?

A. As it is an immortal ſpirit, endowed with underſtanding, will and memory.

Q. Wherein did man at firſt reſemble God in immortal qualities?

A. In his knowledge, righteouſneſs, holineſs, and dominion over the creatures.

Q. What knowledge was man endowed with at his firſt creation?

A. He had a vaſt knowledge of God, of his law and will, of his works and creatures; and theſe in the lower world he knew well how to uſe and govern. And, as an inſtance of his knowledge, he gave names to all the living creatures, ſuitable to their natures, at the firſt ſight of them, Gen. ii. 19. 20.

Q What was that righteouſneſs which man had at his firſt creation?

A. He had an upright and righteous will, which inclined him to do juſtice to all his fellow-creatures.

Q. Wherein did his holineſs ly?

A. In the purity of his ſoul and its affections, whereby he was inclined to hate all ſin, love what was pure and pleaſant to God, and ſtudy a perfect conformity to his holy law both in heart and life.

Q Did not this holineſs of nature fit man for communion with God, and enable him to keep his law perfectly? *A.* Yes.

Q. Was not holineſs the principal part of God's image in man?

A. Yes; and ſtill it is the excellency of man in any ſtate, whether in earth or heaven, ſeeing it is by this that he reſembles God.

Q Doth not knowledge beautify a man too?

A. Yes: very much, if attended with holineſs; but knowledge without holineſs is rather the reſemblance of the devil than of God, Gen. iii. 1. Acts xiii. 10.

Q. Was the dominion man at firſt had over the creatures any part of God's image in man?

A. Yes; for by it he reſembled God in his authority and government.

Q. What was that dominion which man had at firſt over the creatures?

A. It was that authority which was given him over the fiſh of the ſea, fowls of the air, and beaſts of the earth; with power to rule, uſe and diſpoſe of them at his pleaſure, they all being ſubject to his orders.

Q Hath not man now loſt this dominion in a great meaſure?

A. Yes; for, with reſpect to the moſt part of creatures, man now is either a terrour to them, or they to him, which is one of the bitter fruits of the fall. Since man hath rebelled againſt God, no wonder the creatures prove rebellious and diſobedient to him.

QUEST. XI.

Q *What are God's works of providence?*

A. God's works of providence are his moſt holy, wiſe, and powerful preſerving, and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Q. How doth it appear that there is a providence that governs the world?

A. From plain ſcripture-aſſertions, and from the exact accompliſhment of ſcripture prophecies; as alſo from natural things obvious to all, ſuch as the exactneſs of the ſun's motions, diurnal and annual, that produce the moſt uniform revolutions of day and night, the different ſeaſons of the year in order to provide us of the neceſſaries and comforts of life: and likewiſe the regular ebbing and flowing of the ſea; the remarkable care for preſerving and propagating all the different ſpecies of living creatures, whether rational, ſenſitive, or vegetable. Beſides many other ſurprizing obſervations and occurrences; all which convince us of the being of a wiſe Providence, that rules the world.

Q. What are the objects of God's providence, or the things about which it is concerned?

A. It reacheth all the creatures, and all their actions, Pſal. ciii, 19, John xv, 5, Acts xvii. 28.

Q. Is God's providence concerned about the meaneſt as well as the higheſt creatures?

A. Yes; there is nothing ſo high that it is without its reach, and nothing ſo mean that it is below its notice: for, as he rules in the armies of heaven, ſo he takes care of the very ravens, ſparrows, lilies, graſs, and hairs of our head, Dan. iv. 35. Matt. x. 29, 30, Matt. vi. 30. Luke xii. 24.

Q. If God take care of ſuch mean creatures, will he not much more take care of the houſhold of faith?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the acts of God's providence about his creatures, and their actions?

A. They are chiefly two, to wit, his preſerving and governing of them.

Q. How doth he preſerve his creatures?

A. By upholding them in being, defending them from evil, and providing them means of ſubſiſtence, Heb. i. 3. Pſal. cxix. 91. Pſal. cxlv. 15, 16.

Q. Will not the creatures continue in their beings without God's upholding of them?

A. No, they would ſink into nothing again without it; and, in this reſpect, Providence is as a continued creation, Acts xvii. 28.

Q. Could not ſuch creatures as the angels live and ſubſiſt without God's providence?

A. No, no more than a fly, or any ſuch creature.

Q. How doth God govern all his creatures and their actions?

A. By directing them to their proper ends according to their natures, producing events by them according to his pleaſure, and over ruling all their actions to his own glory, Pſal cxlvii. 15, 16, *&c.* Prov. xvi. 9. 33.

Q. Did not God ſometimes make his creatures act contrary to their natural courſe and force?

A. Yes, when he pleaſeth to act miraculouſly, as in dividing of the waters, cauſing iron to ſwim, and reſtraining the force of fire, the fury of lions, *&c.*

Q. Doth the providence of God extend to all the actions of men?

A. Yes, to them all, whether they be good or bad, natural, moral or caſual, Acts xvii. 28, John xv. 5, Exod. xxi. 12, 13.

Q. What hand hath divine Providence about ſinful actions?

A. He hath a holy hand, in permitting them, limiting and reſtraining them, and directing them to holy and wiſe ends beyond the intentions of the actors, Acts xiv. 16, Pſal. lxxvi. 10, Iſa. x. 5, 6, 7.

Q. How doth God permit men to fall into ſin?

A. He in his juſt judgment leaves them, or gives them up, to their own hearts luſts, and the inſtigations of ſatan, Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12.

Q. Why doth God permit ſin, when he can hinder it?

A. In this he acts as a holy and juſt judge; when men refuſe his calls, and deſpiſe light and love, he juſtly puniſheth them by leaving them to themſelves. And yet he is pleaſed to temper juſtice with much mercy and wiſdom; for hereby he ſhews men what evil is in their hearts for their conviction and humiliation, and how wonderfully he can turn about the worſt things to his own glory, and the good of his church, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. Neh ix. 28.

Q. Can you illuſtrate this by any inſtances from ſcripture?

A. Yes; it is evidence, not only in the betraying and crucifying of Chriſt mentioned before upon the 7th queſtion, but alſo in the ſelling of Joſeph into Egypt: The actors meant it for evil, but God turned it about for great good, Gen. l. 20.

Q. Who are theſe about whom the providence of God is moſt eſpecially concerned?

A. The church, and all who are true believers; when others have only God's common and general providence to look to, theſe have his ſepcial providence to depend upon, ſeeing he hath promiſed to make all things work together for their good, Rom. viii. 18.

Q. What are the properties of God's providential acts?

A. There are three mentioned in the anſwer; 1. They are moſt holy, without ſpot or blemiſh. 2. Moſt wiſe, without miſtake or error. 3. Moſt powerful. they cannot be ſtopt or reſiſted, Pſal. cxlv. 17. Rom. xi. 33. Dan. iv 35.

Q. If God doth govern the world ſo wiſely, why doth he let his people be afflicted, and his enemies proſper in the world?

A God's wiſdom is hereby glorified: For theſe diſpenſations, however crooked they ſeem to us, are wiſely ordered to carry on the ſalvation of his people, and deſtruction of his enemies.

Q Are there not many who practically deny God's providence?

A Yes; ſuch as theſe who do not conſult with God in their undertakings, nor ſeek his bleſſing thereupon; and theſe who aſcribe their ſucceſs more to ſecond cauſes than unto God: and theſe who are impatient under afflictions, diſtruſt God in their ſtraits, or betake themſelves to unlawful ſhifts to obtain what they want.

Q What regard ought we to ſhew to the providence of God?

A We ought by prayer to intereſt providence in all our affairs, and depend upon its care: We ought ſeriouſly to obſerve its ſteps, and humbly ſubmit to its determinations.

Q Ought we not to put a remark on all the gracious ſteps of God's providence towards us?

A Yes.

Q What are theſe we ought eſpecially to remark?

A Such as the care of providence in preſerving us in the womb and from the womb; watching over us in our helpleſs infancy; ordering our lot to fall in a land of goſpel-light, and not among infidels; allowing us a religious education, and good examples; giving us wakening ordinances and diſpentions for our converſion to God; preſerving our lives ſo long amidſt ſo many dangerous diſeaſes and accidents; and keeping us from many ſnares and temptations to ſin.

QUEST. XII.

Q. *What ſpecial act of providence did God exerciſe towards man in the eſtate wherein he was created?*

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience: Forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

Q. What did God with man after he had created him?

A. He entered into a covenant with him.

Q. What do you mean by a covenant?

A. A mutual paction or agreement betwixt two parties.

Q. How many covenants hath God entered into with man?

A. Two, to wit, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace.

Q. Which of theſe two covenants did God make with Adam at firſt?

A. It was the covenant of works, which in the anſwer is called a *Covenant of life*.

Q. Why is it called both a *covenant of works* and a *covenant of life*?

A. It is called a covenant of works, from the condition of it; and a covenant of life, from the promiſe or reward of it

Q. How doth it appear that God and Adam did really enter into covenant?

A. From this that God required Adam to obey his will, promiſing him life if he ſhould do it, and threatening death to him if he did not. And doubtleſs Adam, who was made after the image of God, conſented to this his Creator's will, when firſt intimated to him.

Q. Had this covenant a condition in it?

A. Yes, to wit, works, or obedience to the will of God.

Q. What do you mean by the condition of a covenant?

A. A ſpecial article or term, upon the fulfilling of which the promiſed bleſſings of the covenant only are to be beſtowed.

Q. What ſort of obedience did this covenant require as the condition of it?

A. Perfect obedience to the whole will of God.

Q. When may obedience be reckoned perfect?

A. It is ſo when a man continues in doing all things commanded by God, without any defect in matter or manner, principle or ends.

Q. Was there no grace in the covenant of works?

A. Yes, there was much grace in God's condeſcending to enter into covenant with his own creature, and promiſing him great rewards to encourage him to obedience, when he was abſolutely obliged to it by his creation, tho' nothing had been promiſed at all.

Q. What was the reward promiſed in this cevenant for man's obedience? A Life.

Q. What ſort of life was it?

A. A threefold life, natural, ſpiritual and eternal. The natural and ſpiritual life, given to man at his creation, was to be continued with him; and in due time he was to be tranſlated to eternal life in heaven, without dying.

Q. What account can you give of the nature of that threefold life?

A. The natural life conſiſts in the union of ſoul and body; the ſpiritual life in the union of the ſoul with God; the eternal life in the happineſs of the whole man in the immediate viſion and fruition of God in heaven for ever.

Q. Was this covenant made with Adam for himſelf alone?

A. No; it was made with him, not only for himſelf, but in the name of all his poſterity.

Q. Had Adam ſufficiency of ſtrength and grace given him at firſt, to perform the condition of this covenant? A. Yes.

Q. Did not this covenant require obedience to the whole moral law? A. Yes.

Q. Where was that law written?

In the hearts of our firſt parents.

Q. Was there not ſomething elſe that God required of them as a preſent trial of their obedience?

A. Yes, namely, That they ſhould not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Q. Why did God deny them that one tree?

A. To try their ſubjection and obedience to their Sovereign Lord, of whom they held all comforts; and to teach them that their chief happineſs did not lie in the enjoyment of temporal things, but of God's favour; and that they ought to prefer his will and pleaſure to all the delights of ſenſe.

Q. Had that tree any virtue in it to make men knowing and wiſe?

A. No, it had none, though ſatan deluded them with this temptation.

Q. Why then was it called the Tree of Knowledge of God and Evil?

A. It was ſo called, to aſſure them, that, if they did eat of it, they ſhould know to their ſad experience, both what good they would forfeit, and what evil they would bring upon themſelves and their poſterity.

Q. What good were they to forfeit and loſe?

A. Both the image and favour of God.

Q. What evil were they to feel?

A. The wrath and curſe of God.

Q. Was this penalty plainly intimated to them, when the covenant was made with them?

A. Yes; for God ſaid, *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

Q. What ſort of death did God threaten them with?

A. A threefold death, anſwerable to the life promiſed; to wit, death temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal.

Q. What account can you give of the nature of that threefold death?

A. Temporal or natural death conſiſts in the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body; ſpiritual death in the ſeparation of the ſoul from God, and the loſs of his image; eternal death lies in the ſeparation of both ſoul and body from the comfortable preſence of God for ever.

Q. Did Adam die naturally that very day he ate this fruit?

A. No; for he lived till he was 930 years old.

Q. How then was the threatening of God accompliſhed ?

A. On the day he did eat, he died ſpiritually, and became liable to temporal and eternal death.

Q. What do you underſtand by theſe word, *He died ſpiritually*, &c.

A. I underſtand, that Adam loſt the image and favour of God ; that he became mortal, and liable to all afflictions in this life, and to the torments of hell hereafter.

Q. Why was not the ſentence fully execute upon him preſently ?

A. We have ground to believe he was ſaved from eternal death by the mediation of Chriſt ; and for the elect's ſake, who were to ſpring from him, he got a reprieve as to natural death for a time : Yet ſin gave his body the death's wound, of which he died at length.

Q. May we not read much of ſin's evil in that awful threatening ?

A. Yes ; for ſin is an evil that deprives man of the happineſs of a threefold life, and expoſes him to the miſery of a threefold death.

Q. Was there any place in that covenant for a Mediator or Surety ?

A. No ; for it required perſonal obedience or ſuffering from every man, for himſelf.

Q. Would it not accept of repentance from ſinners, and ſincere endeavours after obedience, tho' imperfect ?

A. No ; for it required obedience abſolutely perfect, and ſentenced the tranſgreſſor to wrath for the leaſt failure, without any hope of mercy to the penitent.

Q. Ought not all believers to bleſs God that they are not under this covenant ? A. Yes.

Q. Is not the caſe of unbelievers ſad, who ſtill remain under it ? A. Yes.

QUEST. XIII.

Q. *Did our firſt parents continue in the eſtate wherein they were created?*

A. Our firſt parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the eſtate wherein they were created, by ſinning againſt God.

Q. What was the eſtate wherein our firſt parents were created ?

A. It was a ſtate of innocence, and of great happineſs.

Q. Wherein did their happineſs ly ?

A. They were free of all ſin and miſery ; they had all earthly felicity in paradiſe, and enjoyed ſweet communion with God.

Q. How did they fall from this happy ſtate ?

A. By ſinning againſt God.

Q. Were they not made upright, after the image of God ? and how then could they ſin ?

A. Tho' they were made upright, yet they were not confirmed in that eſtate like the elect angels ; but created mutable, being left to the freedom of their own will.

Q. Were they created with any will or inclination to ſin ?

A. No.

Q. What do you mean by the freedom of will that they were left to ?

A. That they were not under conſtraint from any, but had a liberty in their will to chuſe or refuſe either good or evil.

Q. Had they not a ſufficient liberty in their will, and power to have obeyed God in all things, and to have reſiſted all temptations to ſin ?

A. Yes, if they had uſed it well, as they might have done : But having their ſtock in their own hand, without any confirming grace from God, they might alſo fall, if they would.

Q. Hath fallen man the ſame freedom of will to what is good, that Adam had at firſt ?

A. No : Tho' ſome relicks of that freedom to things naturally or morally good be found in unregenerate men, in ſome more, in ſome leſs ; yet they have no freedom of will to things ſpiritully good, being dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, Eph. ii. 1.

Q. Do regenerate perſons attain to Adam's freedom of will to good ?

A. Not altogether in this life, tho' they recover it in a good meaſure : But being only renewed in part, and the image of God imperfect in them while here, their wills are not intirely free to what is good, there being ſtill a ſad mixture in them of inclination to what is evil.

Q. What freedom of will have the ſaints in glory ?

A. They have a freedom of will only to what is good, and a perfect freedom too, and, by virtue of confirming grace, they cannot will any thing that is evil.

Q. What do you mean by God's leaving our firſt parents to the freedom of their will ?

A. His ſuffering them to make their choice when both good and evil were in their offer, and not giving them any new ſupplies of grace to prevent their will from yielding to temptations to ſin

Q. Why did he not give theſe new ſupplies ?

A. Becauſe he was not bound to do it, and he had glorious deſigns to bring about by not doing it.

Q. What temptation had our firſt parents to ſin againſt God ?

A. *Firſt*, the devil tempted the woman to eat of the forbidden tree ; and, *next*, he put her on to tempt Adam to do the ſame.

Q. Could ſatan have uſed any violence to cauſe them to ſin ?

A. No ; all he could do, was to tempt them to it in a ſubtile manner.

Q. What method did he take in doing it ?

A. He made uſe of the ſerpent, and ſpake out of it, he ſhewed them the deſirableneſs of the fruit, and perſuaded them that by eating it they ſhould become wiſe as God, and ſhould eſcape the puniſhment threatened ; he attacked Eve when ſhe was alone, and then made uſe of her to prevail with her huſband.

Q. Is it not upon this account that Chriſt calls the devil a liar and murderer from the beginning ?

A. Yes ; for it was by lies and falſhoods that he murdered our firſt parents and their poſterity.

Q. Was it not a dreadful ſin in them to believe the devil more than God ?

A. Yes ; and it is what Adam's children are much inclined to do ſtill, according to their example.

Q. What would become of the beſt of men now, if God ſhould leave them to themſelves, and to ſatan's temptations ?

A. They would ſurely be ruined, conſidering that we have loſt our ſtrength by the fall. No man here attains to Adam's perfection in grace, there is ſtill a mixture of corruption in the beſt.

Q. Should we not always pray againſt God's leaving us to our free will?

A. Yes: For if perfect holineſs, without new aids and confirming grace from God, be no ſecurity againſt total apoſtacy, as is evident from the example of the angels and our firſt parents? our ruin muſt be inevitable. if God ſhould leave us, who are weak and corrupt, to ourſelves.

Q. Are not believers now ſafe froom any ſuch fall?

A. Yes, tho' that is not owing to themſelves, but to the gracious promiſe of God thro' Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. What were God's wiſe and gracious ends in permitting Adam's fall?

A. He deſigned to glorify his infinite wiſdom, and likewiſe his juſtice and mercy, in ſaving loſt ſinners of mankind by a ſurety of his own providing.

QUEST. XIV.

Q. *What is ſin?*

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or tranſgreſſion of the law of God.

Q. What mean you by the law of God?

A. The commands or precepts which God hath given to man to be his rule to walk by.

Q. Where is this law written?

A. At firſt it was clearly written on Adam's heart, but by the fall this writing became dark, and therefore God has written it moſt plainly to us in his word.

Q. How many kinds of laws hath God written there?

A. Three; the judicial, the ceremonial, and the moral law.

Q. What is the judicial law?

A. That which related to the civil conſtitution, and contained the municipal ſtatutes of the Jewiſh nation; which do not bind other nations any farther than they are founded upon moral equity.

Q. What is the ceremonial law?

A. The ſtatutes relating to the Jewiſh worſhip, their ſacrifices, waſhings and rites, which were typical of Chriſt and his benefites, and are now fulfilled and abrogated by Chriſt's coming.

Q. What is the moral law?

A. That which is the rule of our manners and practice, and is perpetually binding upon all men, which we have briefly ſummed up to us by God himſelf in the ten commandments.

Q. Ought all men to ſtudy a conformity to this law?

A. Yes; for every want of it is a ſin.

Q. What do you underſtand by conformity to the law?

A. A ſuitableneſs in us to what it requires.

Q. What ſort of conformity is due by us to God's law?

A. Both an internal conformity of the heart and thoughts, and an external conformity of the words and actions; and, if the firſt be wanting, we are guilty of ſin, be the latter never ſo exact.

Q. What is meant by the tranſgreſſion of the law?

A. It is a going beyond the bounds and limits which God doth ſet to us by his law, or doing that which is contrary to it.

Q. Why are both theſe expreſſions made uſe of to deſcribe ſin, namely, want of conformity to the law, and tranſgreſſion of the law?

A. The *firſt* of theſe is made uſe of to include *Original Sin*, which is a want of conformity of *nature*; and *ſins of omiſſion*, which are a want of conformity of life to God's law. The *ſecond* is uſed to comprehend all ſins of *commiſſion*, either in thought, word, or deed.

Q. Muſt not ſin be a great evil, which breaks ſuch a holy, juſt and good law? *A.* Yes.

Q. Wherein doth the prodigious greatneſs of this evil appear?

A. In theſe; that ſin ſhakes off the ſovereignty of God, deſpiſeth his power, offends his holineſs, grieves his Spirit, defaceth his image in the ſoul, and brings damnation to it.

Q. What is the glaſs that repreſents the evil of ſin in the moſt lively colours?

A. We ſee much of ſin's evil in the glaſs of God's holy law, and very much of it in the glaſs of hell's torments, but moſt of all in the glaſs of Chriſt's ſufferings and death.

Q. Can we ever repair the injury that ſin doth to God's holy law?

A. No; but Chriſt our Surety hath given full ſatiſfaction for all the ſins of thoſe who believe in him.

QUEST. XV.

Q. *What was the ſin whereby our firſt parents fell from the eſtate wherein they were created?*

A. The ſin whereby our firſt parents fell from the eſtate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Q. Why did God forbid the eating of this fruit?

A. To ſhew his dominion over man, and to make trial of man's obedience to his Maker's will and authority in keeping a command for which he ſaw no reaſon but purely the will of God.

Q. Was there no evil in eating this fruit if God had not forbid it? A. No.

Q. Were our firſt parents guilty of no ſin before actual eating of this fruit?

A. Yes; they ſinned in hearkening to the devil, and believing him, before they did eat.

Q. Why is their eating the fruit called then their firſt ſin?

A. Becauſe it was their firſt ſin finiſhed, as expreſſed in James i. 14. 15.

Q. Who was firſt in the tranſgreſſion?

A. The woman.

Q. Was our firſt parents eating of the forbidden fruit a great ſin?

A. In ſeveral reſpects, it was the moſt hainous ſin ever was committed.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. In regard it was a complicated wickedneſs, including many atrocious ſins in it, ſuch as renouncing the authority of their Creator, unthankfulneſs for his great bounty, aſpiring to be equal with God, believing the devil before God, and joining in rebellion with him, murdering themſelves and all their offspring: and all this guilt was attended with the moſt terrible aggravations that ever were heard of.

Q. What are theſe aggravations?

A. They committed this ſin ſoon after they were made after the image of God, when they had no corruption within to incline them to it, nor temptation from without, but what they could eaſily reſiſt: yea, they were guilty of it in paradiſe, in the preſence of God, and in the place where they had been lately taken into covenant with God ; they well knew the glorious advantages of keeping this covenant, and the fearful conſequences of breaking it ; nay, they ſinned againſt the cleareſt light and illumination of God's Spirit, that ever any mere man had : So that we ſhould not think of this ſin without horror.

Q. Did it not heighten their ſin, that they durſt offend ſo great a God for ſo ſmall a temptation as a little fruit ?

A. Yes, very much.

Q. By what door got ſin acceſs to our firſt parents hearts ?

A. By the door of the eyes, Gen. iii. 6. 'The fruit was pleaſant to the eye.'

Q. Should we not learn from this to ſet a watch upon this door, that ſin may not enter by it ? A. Yes.

Q. Have we not the example of ſaints ſet before us who did ſo ?

A. Yes ; we have the example of Job, who made a covenant with his eyes, and of David, who prayed to turn away his eyes from beholding vanity, Job xxxi. 1. Pſal. cxix. 37.

QUEST. XVI.

Q. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himſelf, but for his poſterity, all mankind deſcending from him by ordinary generation, ſinned in him, and fell with him in his firſt tranſgreſſion.

Q. Was the covenant of works made with Adam for himſelf only ?

A. No ; it was made with him for his poſterity alſo.

Q. What mean you by Adam's poſterity alſo ?

A. His children or offspring that ſhould come after him to the end of the world.

Q. Are we included in that covenant, who live now near ſix thouſand years ſince it was made ?

A. Yes, ſeeing we are of Adam's poſterity.

Q. How could the covenant be made with us who had not then a being ?

A. We had a being virtually in Adam's loins ; and Adam tranſacted with God not as a ſingle perſon, but as a common head and repreſentative of all his poſterity; and ſo the covenant was made with Adam in our name.

Q. Is it upon that account we are ſaid to ſin in him and fall with him ?

A. Yes, according to Rom. v. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 22.

Q. How came Adam to be our head and repreſentative in this covenant ?

A. God appointed him.

Q. How can Adam be held as our repreſentative, ſeeing we never conſented to it ?

A. Could we have exiſted, we would have conſented to ſo juſt a choice, Adam being our natural head and affectionate parent, made after God's image, with ſufficient power to obey him. And ſeeing, it was God's will, we are bound to conſent to it as a holy and juſt law. Beſides, it is warrantable, in human tranſactions and covenants, for parents to repreſent children unborn ; as in making bargains, ſelling lands, contracting debts, &c. And why then was it not juſt for Adam to repreſent us in tranſacting with God ?

Q. Is it juſt that parents ſhould make covenants for their children, whereby they may be involved into guilt and miſery, and made to ſuffer for what they never committed ?

A. If a man make a covenant for himſelf and his poſterity, in a thing juſt and lawful, men do judge his children bound : As in the caſe of our allegiance to a king : The rebellion of a Father may juſtly affect his poſterity, ſtain their whole blood, and forfeit their inheritance. And, if this be reckoned juſt among men, Why is it not alſo juſt betwixt God and man ?

Q. Was it right to put our ſtock into the hands of thoſe who improved it ſo ill ?

A. They might have improven it well if they had pleaſed, and none of their children could have been thought better hands than they were. Neither is there place for us to complain, who approve of their ill management and apoſtaſy from God, by our ſinning daily after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion.

Q. If Adam had ſtood, would we not have been happy with him ?

A. Yes; and therefore, ſeeing he fell, it is juſt we ſhould be miſerable with him.

Q. Are we partakers with Adam in all his ſins ?

A. No, but in his firſt ſin only.

A. Why only in his firſt ſin ?

Q. Becauſe then he repreſented all his poſterity as a federal head ; but after he once brake the covenant, he was no more truſted as ſuch, but reckoned to act as a ſingle perſon only for himſelf.

Q. Is it not as juſt to impute Adam's firſt ſin to his poſterity for their condemnation, as it is to impute Chriſt's righteouſneſs to us for our juſtification ?

A. Yes, it is equally juſt, becauſe of the covenants their being made both with the firſt and ſecond Adam in our name, Rom. v. 18, 19.

Q. How ſoon is Adam's ſin imputed to his poſterity ?

A. As ſoon as they have a being, and ſtand in relation to Adam.

Q. If one ſin hath thus defiled and deſtroyed all mankind, ſhould we not look upon ſin as of a moſt miſchievous nature ?

A. Yes, and avoid it more carefully than we would do the plague.

Q. Should not our woful fall by the firſt Adam, ſtir us up to ſeek recovery by Chriſt the ſecond Adam ?

A. Yes, we ſhould be reſtleſs till we get it, that, as we have born the image of the earthly Adam, we may come to bear the image of the heavenly, and be taken to dwell with him at laſt.

Q. Did never any of Adam's poſterity eſcape the imputation of Adam's firſt ſin ?

A. None, but Jeſus Chriſt only.

Q. Was Chriſt one of Adam's poſterity ? A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear ?

A. In regard he is the ſeed of the woman, and had the ſubſtance of his fleſh from Mary that deſcended from Adam.

Q. If Chriſt deſcended from Adam, how could he eſcape Adam's ſin ?

A. He eſcaped it by deſcending from Adam not by ordinary generation, but in an extraordinary way.

Q. What was that ?

A. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghoſt in the womb of a virgin, without any earthly father.

Q. Why was Chriſt conceived in this wonderful manner ?

A. That he might be kept free of the guilt and pollution of Adam's ſin.

Q. Was this ſufficient to keep him free of it ?

A. Yes ; becauſe the Holy Ghoſt, by his infinite power, did ſanctify and keep pure and ſpotleſs ſo much of the virgin's ſubſtance as was needful to form our Saviour's body, Luke i. 35.

Q. Are all the reſt of mankind defiled with Adam's ſin ?

A. Yes, and infants as well as others.

Q. Are all men equally guilty and ſinful before God ?

A. Yes, they are ſo in reſpect of nature, but not in reſpect of practice.

Q. How comes there to be any difference in reſpect of practice ?

A. Becauſe ſome are more left of God, and ſome are more beholden to free grace, than others, 1 Cor. iv. 7.

QUEST. XVII.

Q. Into what eſtate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an eſtate of ſin and miſery.

Q. Who of Adam's race were brought into a ſtate of ſin by his fall ?

A. All mankind, excepting Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. Did the fall bring mankind into a ſtate of ſin only ?

A. Into a ſtate of miſery alſo.

Q. Can man be in a ſtate of ſin and not in a ſtate of miſery ?

A. No; for the one ſtill followeth upon the other : Miſery is the neceſſary conſequence of ſin.

Q. Was there ever ſuch a fall as that of the firſt man ?

A. No.

Q. How ſo ?

A. Becauſe ſo many men fell with him, and fell from ſuch a height of happineſs, to ſuch a depth of miſery.

Q. Was Adam able to raiſe himſelf to his former ſtate after his fall ? *A.* No.

Q. Why ſo ?

A. Becauſe Adam and all his poſterity were ſo bruiſed and diſabled by that woful fall, that they could do nothing to raiſe themſelves up, but muſt lie in their miſerable caſe till divine mercy move for this relief.

Q. Are we not defiled as well as diſabled by the fall ?

A. Yes ; our fall is like that of a man into a pit among ſtones and mire, which both bruiſes and defiles him at once.

QUEST. XVIII.

Q. *Wherein conſiſts the ſinfulneſs of that eſtate whereinto man fell?*

A. The ſinfulneſs of that eſtate whereinto man fell, conſiſts in the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, the want of original righteouſneſs, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original ſin, together with all actual tranſgreſſions which proceed from it.

Q. What are theſe two evils mentioned in the anſwer, which make up the ſinfulneſs of our fallen eſtate?

A. They are original and actual ſin.

Q. What are theſe evils which make up original ſin?

A. They are three, to wit, the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, the want of original righteouſneſs, and the corruption on of our whole nature.

Q. What do you mean by the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin ?

A. Our liableneſs to wrath or puniſhment by reaſon of that ſin of Adam's.

Q. How doth that guilt become ours ?

A. By the imputing of Adam's ſin to us ; he having been our repreſentative in the covenant of works which he brake.

Q. What is meant by the want of original righteouſneſs, which we now lie under by the fall ?

A. It imports, that we are now deprived of that perfect rectitude, purity and holineſs, implanted in man's nature at his firſt creation, which was the image of God upon his ſoul.

Q. How is it that we have loſt that original righteouſneſs, or the image of God in our ſouls.

A. God is now provoked to withhold it, as a juſt puniſhment of Adam's fall.

Q. Doth it make God the author ſin, to ſay that he withholds original righteouſneſs from us ?

A. No ; for he is not bound to reſtore that to us which we have loſt through our own fault, but may juſtly deny it as a puniſhment of Adam's firſt ſin. We are bound to have it, but God is not bound to give it.

Q Doth not the want of original righteouſneſs make way for the corruption of our whole nature ?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you mean by the corruption of our whole nature ?

A. That our whole conſtitution, both in ſoul and body, is infected, defiled, and impraved by ſin, and that from the very womb.

Q. Wherein doth this corruption of nature appear ?

A. In our impotency and emnity to what is good, and in our proneneſs and inclination to what is evil.

Q What parts of our nature doth this corruption infect ?

A. Our whole nature and conſtitution, every ſenſe and member of our bodies, and every power and faculty of our ſouls, to wit, our underſtandings, will, conſciences, memories, and affections and thoughts.

Q. How are our ſenſes and members corrupted by original ſin ?

A. They are now become ready weapons and inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs, Rom. vi. 13.

Q How is the mind or underſtanding corrupted thereby ?

A. It is ſo blinded and darkened, that it cannot diſcern ſpiritual things.

Q. How is the will corrupted ?

A. It is turned crooked and perverſe, backward to good, and inclined to evil.

Q. How is the conſcience corrupted ?

A. It is become ſleepy, dead, partial, biaſſed and unfaithful : It doth not perform its office uprightly by warning, challenging, and ſpeaking for God, as his deputy ought to do; but is either ſilent or faint in God's cauſe.

Q. How is the memory corrupted ?

A. It is become weak, deceitful and falſe : It is apt to forget what is good and neceſſary for us, and to retain what is evil, vain and unprofitable to us.

Q. How are the affections corrupted ?

A. They have gone into ſad diſorder, and are naturally ſet upon improper and wrong objects: We love what we ſhould hate, and hate what we ſhould love; we rejoice in things which are matter of ſorrow, and we ſorrow for things that are ground of joy.

Q. How are the thoughts of the heart corrupted?

A. God is not in our thoughts, but they are apt to run out upon the vanities of the world, or ſinful objects.

Q. How is this corruption of the nature conveyed from Adam to his poſterity? Is it from the Author of our being?

A. It is not from God, who is the Author of all holineſs and purity, but of no ſin or corruption: God juſtly with-holds original righteouſneſs from us, but doth not communicate ſin or corruption to any of his creatures: But it is conveyed to us by natural generation, Pſal. li. 5. Job xiv. 4. Job xv. 14.

Q. How is original ſin conveyed by natural generation?

A. By ſinful parents their producing ſinful children like themſelves; as we ſee the parents leproſy infects the child, and treaſon ſtains the blood of poſterity.

Q. Tho' the body be corrupted by this way, how can the ſoul be thus infected, that is not begot by natural generation?

A. By reaſon of the intimate union and cloſe conjunction of the ſoul with the body; the ſoul, being deſtitute of original righteouſneſs when joined with the corrupt body, is alſo tainted with corruption, as liquor is tainted by the veſſel it is put into. Tho' the manner of propagating original ſin to the ſoul be difficult to explain, yet the certainty of the thing itſelf is moſt evident.

Q. How doth the certainty of this appear?

A. From the word of God, and our woful experience.

Q. How doth it appear from the word of God?

A. From many paſſages in it, ſuch as theſe which aſſert, that we are conceived and born in ſin, that a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean, that what is born of the fleſh is fleſh, that we are dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, and tranſgreſſors from the very womb. And likewiſe it is aſſerted of Adam, who was made after the likeneſs of God, that, after his fall, he begat a ſon in his own likeneſs after his image: For all which, ſee the following plain texts, Pſal. li. 5. Job xiv. 4. John iii. 6. Eph. ii. 1. Iſa. xlviii. 8. Gen. v. 3.

Q. How doth the truth of original corruption appear from experience?

A. In regard every man may feel that there is in him a natural antipathy to what is ſpiritually good, and a woful proneneſs to what is evil, beſides many other bitter fruits of it.

Q. What are theſe bitter fruits of original corruption?

A. Such as theſe; our blindneſs of mind, hardneſs of heart, hatred of God and goodneſs, miſplacing of our affections upon wrong objects, and falling into daily ſins.

Q. Doth not this original ſin and corruption make us odious to God, and deſerving of hell, before the commiſſion of actual ſin? A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By theſe two things; 1ſt, The infinite purity of God's nature, that cannot but abhor ſin and corruption, eſpecially ſuch corrupt natures as we have, which contain the ſeeds and principles of all ſorts of ſins that ever were or ſhall be committed in the world. 2dly, By the miſeries, ſufferings, and death which we ſee inflicted upon infants which never committed actual ſin, Rom. v. 14.

Q. Is it not reaſonable to think that children procreated by ſanctified parents ſhould be free of original corruption?

A. No; for the natures of the beſt ſaints are not perfectly ſanctified, but remain ſtill corrupt in part. And this corruption is natural to them, where grace is ſupernatural and adventitious.

Q. Cannot gracious parents convey grace to their children?

A. No; for it is freely beſtowed by God upon whom he pleaſeth.

Q. Are they not bound to pray much for grace to their children?

A. Yes, becauſe they have propagated much corruption to them.

Q. Is there any remedy for this original ſin or corruption?

A. Yes; there is the Blood and the Spirit of Chriſt, the one to pardon it, the other to change the nature by a work of regeneration.

Q. Doth the work of regeneration remove it wholly in this life?

A. Not wholly; for we find the beſt complaining while they are here, Rom. vii. 14, 18, 23. James iii. 2. James iv. 5.

Q. What names doth original ſin get in ſcripture?

A. It is called, the Old Man, the Fleſh, Luſt, and indwelling Sin, Rom. vi. 6. Rom. viii. 5. James i. 15. Rom. vii. 17.

Q. Why is it called Original Sin, ſeeing this word is not in ſcripture?

A. To denote three things; 1ſt, That we derive it from Adam, who is the original of all mankind. 2dly, That it is in us from our original or firſt having a being. 3dly, That it is the original of all actual ſins or tranſgreſſions.

Q. What is the difference between original and actual ſin?

A. Original ſin is the ſin inherent to our nature, which we bring into the world with us; but actual ſin is that which we commit after we come to the uſe of reaſon.

Q. What do you mean by an actual ſin or tranſgreſſion?

A. Every breach of the law of God, whether by omitting duty commanded, or committing ſin forbidden by it.

Q. Are there not many different kinds of actual ſin?

A. Yes; very many, ſuch as ſins of omiſſion, and of commiſſion; ſins againſt the firſt table, and ſins againſt the ſecond; ſins of the heart, and of the life; of the words, and of the actions; of ignorance, and againſt light; of infirmity, and of preſumption, *&c*

Q. Whence do all theſe actual ſins proceed?

A. From original ſin, or the corruption of our natures.

Q. May it not be thought that they proceed more from the evil example ſet before us?

A. No; for we ſee Cain's murdering his brother proceeded out of his heart, and not from any ſuch example; according to Matth. xv. 19.

Q. How do the ſins of life proceed from the evil heart or nature?

A. Even as evil fruit from a corrupt tree, or unclean ſtreams from a polluted fountain, Matth. vii. 17. James iii. 11.

QUEST. XIX.

Q. What is the miſery of that eſtate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind by their fall loſt communion with God, are under his wrath and curſe, and ſo made liable to all the miſeries in this life, to death itſelf, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Q. What are the three heads of man's miſery by the fall pointed at in the anſwer?

A. There is, 1ſt, The happineſs we have loſt by it, 2dly, The evils we are preſently under. 3dly, The miſeries we are further liable to.

Q. What are theſe three more particularly?

A. The happineſs we have loſt is communion with God: The evils we are preſently under are God's wrath and curſe, and all the afflictions of this life: The miſeries we are further liable to, are both the firſt and ſecond death.

Q. Hath man loſt no more happineſs than communion with God?

A. He hath alſo loſt the image of God upon his ſoul; but that was mentioned in the former anſwer, under the want of original righteouſneſs, which is the ſame thing with the image of God.

Q. What do you mean by that communion with God which man hath loſt by his fall?

A. It is that ſweet intimacy, acquaintance and fellowſhip with God, which man had in the enjoyment of God's gracious preſence, and comforts in the garden of Eden.

Q. How doth it appear that man enjoyed ſuch ſweet communion with God there before his fall?

A. From this, that there was no ſin nor guilt then to ſtop man's free acceſs to God, or to eclipſe the light of God's countenance towards man; and therefore he was under the continued ſmiles of his Creator. God converſed familiarly with him, conferred high favours upon him, tranſacted with him by covenant, brought all the living creatures to own their ſubjection to him, and receive names from him, Gen. i. 28, 29, 30. Gen. ii. 15, 16, 19, 22.

Q. How did our firſt parents loſe all that ſweet communion with God?

A. By their ſinning againſt God, and breaking his holy laws.

Q. Is not the loſs of communion with God a very great miſery?

A. Yes: For ſeeing the happineſs of heaven lies in having communion with God, who is the ſoul's chief good and portion; the want of that communion muſt be our greateſt loſs and miſery, and therefore it is juſtly put before all the reſt of our miſeries mentioned in the anſwer.

Q. Is not the eternal loſs of communion with God the chief part of the damned's miſery in hell?

A. Yes; for, depart from me, is the firſt word of the ſentence againſt them.

Q. Did not man firſt forſake God, before God withdrew his gracious preſence from man?

A. Yes; it is evident that man fell from God, before he loſt communion with him.

Q. How doth it appear that our firſt parents were deprived of communion with God after their fall?

A. By their hiding themſelves, and fleeing from God in whoſe preſence they formerly rejoiced; and by God's frowning upon them, driving them out of paradiſe, and placing a flaming ſword to guard the entry to it, Gen. iii. 8, 17, 23, 24.

Q. How doth it appear that all Adam's poſterity have alſo loſt communion with God by the fall.

A. From this, That we have natural averſion to God's preſence, and to the means of attaining to it, ſuch as meditation, prayer, and attending upon the word and ſacraments.

Q. Muſt not ſin be a great evil, that deprives us of ſo great a happineſs as communion with God?

A. Yes.

Q. Why cannot ſinful creatures have communion with God?

A. Becauſe he is a holy God, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; he cannot look upon ſin where it is harboured or allowed.

Q. Have unregenerate ſinners any deſire after communion with God?

A. No: for the preſence of God is both hateful and frightful to them: And hence it is, they ſay unto God, *depart from us*, Job. xxi. 14.

Q. Why do they hate God's preſence and communion with him?

A. Becauſe, being unregenerate and ſenſual, their carnal mind is enmity againſt God; and, being guilty criminals, they dread the preſence of their judge, who has power to condemn them.

Q. Is the loſs of communion with God by Adam's fall an irrecoverable loſs to us?

A. No; for God hath found out a way for recovering loſt ſinners to a ſtate of communion with himſelf again.

Q. What is that way?

A. By appointing Jeſus Chriſt to be our Redeemer; for taking away our guilt, and purchaſing communion with God for us, by his blood; that ſo believers may have free acceſs to his throne of grace here, and to his throne of glory hereafter.

Q. Will not the believer's communion with God in heaven, be far more ſweet than Adam's was in Paradiſe?

A. Yes: For the believer will have greater diſcoveries of the love of God, than Adam had; he will have God dwelling with him in his own nature, and be immutably fixed in a ſtate of bliſs for ever, Eph. ii. 5. 6.

Q. Are we not infinitely bound to Chriſt for recovering to us what Adam loſt?

A. Yes.

Q. Where is communion with God to be enjoyed here?

A. In the uſe of theſe ordinances which God hath appointed, to wit, the word, ſacraments, prayer, and praiſes.

Q. When is it that we have communion with God in his ordinances?

A. When he allows us the gracious influences of his Spirit upon our ſouls: That is, when we have the communications of light, life, ſtrength, or comfort from God; and when our graces of faith, love, repentance, or ſpiritual deſires are drawn forth to a lively exerciſe.

Q. Beſides loſs of communion with God, are we not likewiſe brought under his wrath and curſe by the fall?

A. Yes; we are all by nature children of wrath, and under God's curſe; according to theſe plain texts, Eph. ii. 3. Gal. iii. 10.

Q. What is meant by the wrath of God?

A. God's anger, or ſin-revenging juſtice, which burns fiercely againſt ſin, and is ſtill ready to break forth in terrible judgments againſt ſinners.

Q. What is meant by the curſe of God?

A. The ſentence of God's law, denouncing wrath and judgments upon the tranſgreſſors of it.

Q. Do the wrath and curſe of God ly upon all men whatſomever?

A. Yes, as long as they are in the ſtate of unbelief: but by Jeſus Chriſt all true believers are delivered from God's wrath and curſe, and inherit his favour and bleſſing, 1 Theſſ. i. 10. Gal. iii. 9.

Q. Are not theſe, who are under the wrath and curſe of God liable to all ſorts of miſeries?

A. Yes, and particularly to theſe named in the anſwer, to wit, all the miſeries of this life, death itſelf, and the pains of hell for ever.

Q. What are the miſeries of this life which the fall makes us liable to?

A. They are very many, both in ſoul and body.

Q. What are the ſoul miſeries which we are liable to?

A. Such as unbelief, blindneſs of mind, ſtrong deluſions, hardneſs of heart, weakneſs of memory, the bondage of ſin and ſatan, evil imaginations and vile affections, ſtupidity and ſearedneſs of conſcience, or elſe horror and deſpair, Rom. xi. 8. Eph. iv. 18, 19. 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. Rom. ii. 5. Rom. i. 26. 28. 2 Tim ii. 26. Gen. vi. 5. 1 Tim. iv. 2. Iſa. xxxiii. 14. Heb. x. 27.

Q. What are the bodily or external miſeries we are liable to by the fall in this life?

A. Both private afflictions and public calamities, ſuch as diſeaſes in our bodies, reproach in our names, decay in our eſtates, loſs of relations, poverty, croſſes, diſappointments, ſore toil and labour; as alſo, famine, ſword, peſtilence, captivity, exile, perſecution, and the like, Deut. xxviii. 15. 16. 17. 18. 22. 30. 37. Gen. iii. 17. Ezek. v. 17.

Q. Should a living man complain of theſe his miſeries?

A. No; for they are juſtly inflicted, and his ſins deſerve worſe, Lam. iii. 39.

Q. What worſe miſeries are we liable to by ſin?

A. Death and hell.

Q. What is meant by death in the anſwer?

A. The ſeparation of ſoul and body, at the end of this life.

Q. Hath the fall brought death upon all men that ever lived in the world?

A. By the fall it is appointed for all men once to die; and never any were exeemed from that ſentence, ſave Enoch and Elijah, who were tranſlated into heaven without taſting of death.

Q. Is death the ſame thing both to the wicked and the godly?

A. No; for it is a puniſhment to the one, and a purgation to the other.

Q. What kind of puniſhment is death to the wicked?

A. It is the king of terrors, or beginning of hell to them: it is a ſerpent with a fearful ſting, or a meſſenger ſent to ſeize and carry them to everlaſting torments.

Q. Is not death a puniſhment to the godly alſo?

A. Not properly: for tho' it be the conſequent of ſin, yet to believers, thro' Chriſt, its nature is changed, and its ſting and terror removed; yea it becomes a friend and ſervant to them, to pluck up ſin by the roots, and carry them home to their Father's houſe.

Q. Doth not death put an end to the miſeries of all men?

A. No; for tho' it put an end to all the godly's miſery, yet in ſome reſpect it only begins the miſeries of the wicked.

Q. What miſeries are they liable to after this life?

A. To the pains of hell for ever.

Q. What do ye mean by hell?

A. A place of torment, which God hath prepared for devils and wicked men; where they ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, 2 Theſſ. i. 19.

Q. Wherein do the pains of hell conſiſt?

A. In the pain of loſs, and the pain of ſenſe.

Q. What is it you call the pain of loſs in hell?

A. The loſs of heaven, with God's glorious preſence and the ſociety of ſaints and angels there for ever, Mat. xxv. 41. Pſal. xvi. 11. Luke xiii. 28.

Q. What do ye call the pain of ſenſe in hell?

A. The dreadful pains and torments which the damned will ſuffer there, both in their bodies and ſouls.

Q. What will be the torments of their bodies in hell?

A. They will be caſt into a lake burning with fire and brimſtone, where there ſhall be weeping, wailing and gnaſhing of teeth, Matt. xiii. 42. Rev. xxi. 8.

Q. Why are theſe torments called the ſecond death? Rev. xxi. 8.

A. Becauſe the damned there will ſtill be, as it were, in the agonies of death; but that death will differ from the firſt in this, that they will be ever dying, but never able to die.

Q. What will be the torments of the ſoul in hell?

A. The ſouls of the wicked there will be immediately liable to the ſtrokes and laſhes of God's wrath, and the worm that never dieth, which will fill them with eternal anguiſh and horror, Heb. x. 31. Mark ix. 44.

Q. What is meant by the worm that dieth not?

A. An awakened conſcience, that will gnaw, bite and ſting them for ever.

Q. How will it do that?

A. By upbraiding them for their bypaſt ſins, and for ſlighting the remedy offered to them: by throwing up to them the happineſs they have loſt, and the miſeries brought upon them by their folly, and ever telling them what more is acoming. God's wrath in hell will be ſtill *wrath to come*. All which reflections, improven by a deſpairing conſcience, cannot but diſtreſs the guilty ſoul with ſuch cutting thoughts, bitter anguiſh, and tormenting ſtings, as cannot now be imagined, Luke xvi. 25. Heb. x. 26, 27. 29.

Q. What ſort of wrath is the wrath of God, which will be poured out upon the wicked in hell?

A. It is called in ſcripture, *great wrath*, *anger*, *fury*, and *vengeance*, which will be fierce, powerful, imreſiſtible, inſufferable, unmixed, eternal and unquenchable; and is oft expreſt by fire, which is the moſt terrible element, Zech. vii. 12. Rev. vi. 17. 2 Kings xxiii. 26. Neh. i. 9. Pſal. xc. 11. Pſal. lxxvi. 7. Ezek. xxii. 14. Iſa. xxxiii. 14. Rev. xiv. 10. Mark ix. 43. 44. 45. &c. Heb. x. 30. 31.

Q. How doth it appear that the wrath poured out on the damned is ſo great and terrible?

A. In regard it is poured out upon every power and faculty of the ſoul, and upon every ſenſe and member of the body; and both their ſouls and bodies are made capacious and ſtrong to receive and underly much of it: And hence they are called *veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction*, Rom. ix. 22.

Q. Why is it called unmixed wrath?

A. Becauſe it is without any mixture of mercy. They have no ſympathy or pity from any hand, no drop of comfort to relieve them, no ground of hope to ſupport them, no interval of reſt under it day nor night; but *the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever*, Rev. xiv. 10, 11. Mark ix. 44. Luke xvi. 24, 25. John iii. 36.

Q. How is it agreeable to juſtice to puniſh the wicked with eternal ſufferings for temporary ſinning?

A. It is juſt, becauſe they provoke an eternal God, and deſpiſe an infinite good, for which finite or temporary ſufferings can never ſatisfy. It is juſt for God to puniſh the wicked as long as he can, ſeeing they ſin as long as they can; and, when they can ſin no longer here, they carry their ſins to hell with them, and continue ſinning there for ever, whereby they ſtill add oil to the flame, and keep it burning for ever.

Q. Is not this wrath ſo terrible, that the very devils are afraid of it?

A. Yes; for the dread they have of it makes them to tremble and cry out at the approach of their judge, James ii. 19. Mat. viii. 29.

Q. Did the Man Chriſt Jeſus ſuffer this terrible wrath in the room of an elect world? *A.* Yes.

Q. How was he able to bear all that was due to them?

A. His Godhead ſupported the human nature under it.

Q. Had it not terrible effects upon him while he was ſuffering it?

A. Yes; it caſt him into dreadful agonies, cauſed him to ſweat forth blood in great drops, and make that fearful outcry, *My God, my God, Why haſt thou forſaken me?*

Q. Will not one ſpark of this wrath let fly into the conſcience drive a ſinner to deſpair amidſt all the world's comforts?

A. Yes; as hath been verified in the inſtances of Cain, Judas, Spira, and many others.

Q. Do all the wicked in hell ſuffer equal puniſhment there?

A. No; ſome have hotter places in hell than others, according to the different meaſures of their guilt, Mat. xxiv. 51. Luke xii. 47, 48.

Q. Muſt not there be an unſpeakable evil in ſin, that expoſeth men to all this wrath and miſery?

A. Yes; we may ſee much of ſin's evil in the glaſs of hell's torments.

Q. What ought we to learn from the ſcripture doctrine concerning the wrath to come?

A. To bleſs God for contriving a way, and providing a Saviour, to redeem us both from ſin and hell; and highly to eſteem and love Jeſus Chriſt, that willingly undertook and came to bear our ſins, and ſuffer all this wrath for us, 2 Cor. ix. 15. 1 Theſſ. i. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 24. John i. 29.

QUEST. XX.

Q. Did God leave all mankind to periſh in the eſtate of ſin and miſery?

A. God having out of his mere good pleaſure, from all eternity, elected ſome to everlaſting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the eſtate of ſin and miſery, and to bring them into an eſtate of ſalvation by a Redeemer.

Q. Are all men left to periſh in their fallen eſtate?

A. No? bleſſed be God, who hath provided a remedy for us.

Q. Doth God deliver all men from periſhing in their fallen eſtate?

A. No, but only ſome.

Q. Who are theſe?

A. The elect.

Q. Who are theſe you call the elect?

A. Theſe whom God hath choſen out of Adam's fallen race.

Q. What hath God elected them to?

A. To everlaſting life.

Q. When did God make this choice of theſe perſons?

A. From all eternity.

Q. What was the cauſe of God's chuſing ſome, and paſſing by others?

A. God's own mere good pleaſure, Luke xii. 32.

Q. Did God elect any to eternal life becauſe of their foreſeen faith or holineſs?

A. No: Theſe are not the cauſe, but fruits, of election: for God hath choſen all his people to faith and holineſs as the neceſſary means of ſalvation, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6.

Q. Ought we not to try and examine our election by ſuch fruits as theſe of faith and holineſs?

A. Yes, 2 Pet. i. 10. 2 Theſſ. ii. 13.

Q. By what other plain evidences may we know whether God hath choſen us to eternal life?

A. If we have choſen God to be our God and portion, and given ourſelves away to him, we may conclude that he hath firſt choſen us; for, if *we love* him, it is *becauſe he firſt loved us*, 1 John iv. 19.

Q. In what way and method doth God bring his elect into an eſtate of ſalvation?

A. In the way of a covenant, and by a Redeemer.

Q. Is it in the way of a covenant of works that he ſaves them?

A. No, but in the way of a covenant of grace.

Q. What is meant by the covenant of grace in the anſwer?

A. It may either point at, 1ſt, The covenant of grace as made from eternity with Chriſt in name of the elect, called frequently the covenant of redemption: Or, 2dly, The covenant of grace as made in time with the elect themſelves upon their believing in Chriſt.

Q. What is that covenant of grace or redemption which was made with Chriſt from eternity?

A. It is a gracious agreement made between the Father and Chriſt as the ſecond Adam and repreſentative of the elect; wherein God promiſed to him, that, upon condition of his mediatorial obedience and ſatisfaction in their ſtead, he ſhould be gloriouſly aſſiſted and rewarded himſelf, and have grace and glory to all his ſeed. And all this Chriſt accepted of, Iſa. liii. 10. 11. Pſal lxxxix. 3, 4, 19, 20, &c. Heb. x. 5, 6, 7, &c.

Q. How can that covenant made with Chriſt be called a covenant of grace, ſeeing it required perfect obedience to the law?

A. It was a covenant of grace with reſpect to the elect whom Chriſt did repreſent, ſeeing in it God paſſeth from their perſonal obedience, and accepteth obedience from their ſurety in their ſtead. Likewiſe it contains all the bleſſings and good things which are freely and gratiouſly beſtowed upon the elect, theſe being firſt promiſed in that covenant to Chriſt as their head and repreſentative, 2 Tim. i. 19. Tit. i. 2. Gal. iii. 16.

Q. What is the covenant of grace as made in time with the elect themſelves?

A. It is the execution or application of the covenant made with Chriſt, as to what immediately concerns the elect themſelves; and may be defined, God's gracious paction with elect ſinners in Chriſt, wherein he offereth and promiſeth pardon and ſalvation to them, and to all who hear the goſpel, upon their believing in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, John iii. 36. Acts xvi. 31.

Q. When was this covenant firſt tendered to fallen ſinners?

A. Immediately after the fall to our firſt parents in that great goſpel-promiſe, 'The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent,' Gen. iii. 15.

Q. Can you ſhew what is meant by that promiſe?

A. By the ſeed of the woman is meant Chriſt that was to be born of a virgin. By the ſerpent is meant the devil, called ſo for his ſubtlety. By breaking his head, is meant Chriſt's diſappointing his counſels, and deſtroying his works.

Q. What are the bleſſings promiſed to us in this covenant?

A. All the bleſſings of Chriſt's purchaſe, ſuch as, illumination, pardon of ſin, peace with God, freedom from the law's curſes, ſanctification, acceſs to God, the conduct of the ſpirit, victory over death, reſurrection to life, and eternal glory, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c. Heb. viii. 10, &c. John iii. 18, 36. Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 57.

Q. What is the condition required of us to intereſt us in theſe promiſed bleſſings?

A. Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, Acts xvi. 31. *

Q. Can we fulfil this condition, or believe of ourſelves?

A. No; but Jeſus Chriſt hath both purchaſed faith for us, and promiſed it to us in this covenant, John vi. 37. Phil. i. 29. Eph. ii. 7, 8. Rom. viii. 32.

Q. How then is it a condition required of us?

A. Tho' faith be both purchaſed and promiſed, yet God doth ſtill require it of us as a duty, and that to humble us, and to put us on the uſe of means; to make unbelievers inexcuſable, and to teach us the order and connexion in which he will beſtow the bleſſings of this covenant.

Q. Hath faith the ſame place in the covenant of grace that obedience had in the covenant of works?

A. No: For Adam's obedience, had he performed it, was a condition in a proper ſenſe, which gave him right to life, and was pleadable before God, for that effect; which cannot be ſaid of faith, ſeeing it is not our faith, but Chriſt's ſurety-righteouſneſs, that gives us a right to eternal life. This, and this only, is the ground of juſtification, that a ſinner can plead before God.

Q. Can faith then be called the condition of the covenant of grace in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe?

A. No, but in a more general ſenſe, as it is the only mean or inſtrument for applying the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to us, and without which Chriſt and his benefits cannot be ours. The righteouſneſs by which we are juſtified, is oft called the righteouſneſs of faith, or by faith; to teach us, that as the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is the only meritorious and pleadable condition of our juſtification, ſo faith is the inſtrumental and applying condition of it, Heb. ix. 6, 7. Rom. iv. 13, 16. Rom. iii. 22, 24, 26, &c. Rom. ix. 30, 32. Rom. x. 4. 6.

Q. What is the difference betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace?

A. The firſt covenant makes the ground or condition of a man's juſtification before God to be the righteouſneſs performed by the man himſelf; but the ſecond makes it to be the righteouſneſs performed by Chriſt the ſurety, apprehended by our faith; The firſt covenant had no ſurety to anſwer for Adam's performing what was required of him; but the ſecond hath Chriſt engaged for what is required of us.

Q. Doth not the covenant of grace require obedience to God's law, as well as the covenant of works?

A. Yes, but not for the ſame ends, or in the ſame manner: For the firſt covenant required our obedience as the proper condition of life; but the ſecond requires it as the evidence of our faith, and of our conformity to Chriſt: The firſt for the juſtifying of our perſons: The ſecond for teſtifying our thankfulneſs for redeeming love: The firſt required perfect obedience in our own ſtrength; but the ſecond accepts of ſincere aims to obey in Chriſt's ſtrength, and imputes his perfect obedience to us, to cover our defects, to atone for our guilt, and to obtain grace and glory for us.

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* The Weſtminſter aſſembly, and our aſſembly 1648 in Lar. Cat. 32. Queſt. do alſo aſſert this, in expreſs words, that God requireth faith as the condition to intereſt ſinners in Chriſt, proving it from John i. 12. and iii. 16. Now our Lar. Cat. that hath theſe words, was approven by the Weſtminſter aſſembly and the aſſembly 1648, after the moſt exact trial and examination both by themſelves, and by the reſpective preſbyteries of this church: as appears from the act of aſſembly 1648 ſeſſ. 10. If theſe noble reforming aſſemblies had not thought fit to uſe the word *condition* to guard againſt the Antinomians, who ſay, the elect are juſtified before they believe; probably I might have dropt it, as being abuſed by ſome. But I continue to uſe it, in order to explain the words of our ſtandards, to prevent miſtakes, and to ſhew in what ſenſe the word *condition* may be ſafely uſed when applied to Faith as our reformers underſtood it, *viz.* that it is nowiſe a meritorious or pleadable condition, but only an inſtrumental or applying condition, mean, or qualification (theſe being all one and the ſame) required in us, in order to our getting an actual intereſt in Chriſt, and the poſſeſſion of the other benefits of his purchaſe (for faith is alſo his purchaſe, tho' required of us;) and that Chriſt's righteouſneſs and ſatisfaction alone, is the meritorious and pleadable condition of a ſinner's juſtification before God, and of his eternal ſalvation, and nothing elſe.

Q. May not repentance, love, ſelf-denial and holineſs be called conditions of the covenant of grace as much as faith, ſeeing theſe are alſo required of us in it?

A. Tho' they be required, yet they have not the ſame conditionality with faith; in regard that among all the graces, faith hath a peculiar aptitude and fitneſs, and alſo for emptying the creature of ſelf, and exalting of God's free grace: Therefore God puts honour upon faith above all the reſt of the graces, by aſcribing our juſtification and ſalvation ſo frequently to it, Rom. iii. 26, 25. John iii. 16, 18, 39. Rom. v. 1. Eph. ii. 8, 9. John vi 40. Rom. iv. 16. Phil. iii. 9. Luke vii. 50. 1 Pet. 1. 5.

Q. What names doth the covenant of grace get in ſcripture?

A. It is called a teſtament, a covenant of peace, a covenant of promiſe, a new covenant, a holy covenant, an everlaſting, well-ordered, and ſure covenant, Heb. ix. 15. Iſa. liv. 10. Eph. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 24. Luke i. 72. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Q. Is the *covenant of grace* a ſcripture-term?

A. Tho' we find it not in the expreſs words, yet we oft have it in words of the ſame import: And, it being a moſt ſignificant term, it is fitly appropriated to this covenant.

Q. Why is it called the *covenant of grace?*

A. To ſhew that free grace only, or the undeſerved mercy and goodneſs of God, moved him to contrive it, that free grace only determines the elect to take hold of it, and that the exalting of free grace is the great end of it. Likewiſe it is termed the covenant of grace, becauſe even faith itſelf which is called the condition of it, is God's gracious and free gift to us, as well as all the reſt of the bleſſings and benefits promiſed in it, Eph. ii. 7, 8 9 Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7. Eph. i. 4, 6, 7. Rom. xi. 5, 6. 2 Tim. i 9, 10. Phil. i. 29.

Q. Why is this covenant called a Teſtament?

A. Becauſe all the bleſſings and good things promiſed in it are freely bequeathed and made over to the elect, as legacies left and made ſure to them by the death of Chriſt the teſtator; and in it he hath left them grace to enable them to perform every duty required of them.

Q. What is the greateſt promiſe in the covenant of grace?

A. The whole covenant of grace, with all the bleſſings in it, is ſummed up in that great and comprehenſive promiſe, "I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people," Jer. xxxi 33. Heb. viii. 10. *I will be your God*, hath more in it, than giving us the poſſeſſion of both heaven and earth.

Q. How may we know whether we be included in this promiſe?

A. If we have been enabled to take God to be our God, and to ſurrender and give up ourſeves unto him, we may claim an intereſt in it; according to Zech. xiii. 9 2 Cor. viii. 5.

Q. Is the covenant of grace made with all mankind as the covenant of works was?

A. No; for tho' it be tendered and offered to all who hear the goſpel, yet it is really made with none but theſe who take hold of it.

Q. Have not all ſinners even the worſt of them, a call and warrant to come and take hold of this covenant?

A. Yes; as it appears from Iſa. lvi. 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Rev. xxii 17.

Q. Was ever any man ſaved another way than by the covenant of grace?

A. No; Acts iv. 12. Gal. ii. 16.

Q. Were all the faithful under the Old Teſtament ſaved by this covenant?

A. Yes; for they had it diſcovered and tendered to them tho' not ſo clearly as we have.

Q. Was the covenant which God made with the Iſraelites, when he brought them out of Egypt, a covenant of works, or of grace?

A. Tho' that covenant was delivered in a legal form, and intermixed with terror, for humbling of that people; yet it was the ſame covenant of grace in ſubſtance with that propoſed to us in the goſpel: for they had the ſame Mediator and Surety with us, typified to them by Moſes and the ſacrifices; they had the ſame promiſes of remiſſion, and of grace and glory, thro' the blood of the Meſſiah, to which they were required to look by faith, thro' the types and ſacrifices, for their juſtification and ſalvation, Pſal. ii. 12. Iſa. xlv. 22. Iſa. xlii. 1. 3. 6. 7. Ezek. xi. 19. 20 Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 26. 27 Exod. xii. 22. 23. Num. xxi. 7. 8. Lev. i. 4. Exod. xxiv. 7. 8. Heb. iv. 2.

Q. Ought we not to praiſe the Lord with our ſouls, that we have a far more ſpecial, plain and clear diſpenſation of the covenant of grace than the Old-Teſtament believers had? A. Yes.

Q. What is the eſtate out of which God delivers his elect by the covenant of grace?

A. Out of an eſtate of ſin and miſery.

Q. Do the elect ly in a ſtate of ſin and miſery as well as others till God is mercifully pleaſed to take them into the bond of his covenant?

A. Yes; for we are told, that at the time when God looks upon them with an eye of pity, and enters into covenant with them, he finds them in a lothſome ſtate, wallowing in their blood and pollution, and by nature children of wrath, even as others, Ezek. xvi. 5. 6. 8. Eph. ii. 1. 2. 3.

Q. What is the eſtate that God brings them into by this covenant?

A. Into an eſtate of ſalvation.

Q. What eſtate is that?

A. It is an eſtate of ſafety and growing felicity, wherein they ſhall perſevere, till in due time they arrive at full and perfect happineſs.

Q. By whom doth he bring them into this eſtate of ſalvation?

A. By a Redeemer.

QUEST. XXI.

Q. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man; and ſo was and continued to be God and man, in two diſtinct natures, and one Perſon for ever.

Q. What do ye mean by a Redeemer?

A. A Ranſomer, or a perſon that delivers others out of captivity or bondage, as Chriſt doth elect ſinners.

Q. How doth it appear that Chriſt is ſuch a Redeemer?

A. Becauſe he is frequently ſo called in ſcripture, and is ſaid to give his life a ranſom for many, Job xix.

25. Iſa. liv. 5. Iſa. lx. 16 Jer. l. 34. Matt. xx. 28.

Q. Are God's own elect in bondage by nature?

A. Yes.

Q. What ſort of bondage is it they are in?

A. It is a ſpiritual bondage: they are priſoners in the hands of juſtice, condemned to the priſon of hell: they are alſo captives and bondmen to ſin and ſatan.

Q. How doth Chriſt redeem his people from their bondage?

A. Partly by price or purchaſe, and partly by power or conqueſt.

Q. How doth Chriſt redeem them out of the hands of God's juſtice?

A. Not by ſilver or gold, but by his precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 18 19.

Q. How doth Chriſt redeem his elect from the captivity of ſatan and ſin?

A. By his mighty power, conquering their enemies, and ſubduing their hearts to himſelf, Eph. iv. 8. Col. ii. 15. Pſal. cx. 3.

Q. Is not Chriſt the ſtronger man that overcomes the ſtrong man, and ſpoils him of his goods?

A. Yes, Luke xi. 21. 22.

Q. Is it not Chriſt that recovers his people out of the ſnare of the devil, who before had taken and led them captive at his will?

A. Yes, 2 Tim. ii. 26.

Q. How were the elect redeemed from ſin and hell who died before Chriſt ſhed his blood?

A. By virtue of the compact between the Father and the Son from all eternity; the virtue of Chriſt's blood did reach back to believers from the beginning of the world, as well as it doth extend forward to believers to the end of the world; even as a cautioner by his bond will deliver a man from priſon, long before he actually pay the debt.

Q. Could either angels or men have provided ſuch a Redeemer for us.

A. No, none could do it but the infinitely wiſe God, it was his own arm that brought about this ſalvation, Iſa. lix. 16.

Q. What is our Redeemer's name?

A. The LORD, JESUS, CHRIST.

Q. Why is he called the LORD?

A. Becauſe he is JEHOVAH, as he is God. And as Mediator he hath by his death acquired an univerſal Lordſhip and dominion over all things in heaven and earth, Matt. xxviii. 18. Phil. ii. 8. 9. 10.

Q. Why is he called JESUS?

A. Becauſe he ſaves his people from their ſins, Mat. i. 21. The word ſignifies a Saviour, being the name given him by the angel that foretold his birth.

Q. What is in ſin, that this glorious Jeſus ſaves his people from?

A. He ſaves them from the pollution and power of their ſins, from the guilt and puniſhment of them, and at laſt from the very inbeing of ſin.

Q. Why is he called CHRIST?

A. Becauſe he is the anointed of God. The Greek word Chriſt is the ſame with the Hebrew word Meſſiah, both ſignifying anointed.

Q. Wherefore gets he that name?

A. Becauſe he was conſecrated to a threefold office as Mediator, *viz.* the office of a Prophet, of a Prieſt and of a King; to which offices men under the law were ſolemnly ſet apart and anointed with oil.

Q. Was Chriſt anointed with oil to theſe offices?

A. No, but with the Holy Ghoſt above meaſure, whereby he was ſet apart, authoriſed, and fully furniſhed to diſcharge theſe three offices to the church, Pſal. xlv. 7. John iii. 34.

Q. Is there no other Redeemer of ſouls beſides the Lord Jeſus Chriſt?

A. No, he is the only Redeemer.

Q. But tho' he be the only mediator for redemption, may there not be other Mediators for interceſſion?

A. The Papiſts have coined this diſtinction, to bring in angels and ſaints to ſhare of Chriſt's glory, if not in that of redemption, yet in that of interceſſion. But as he is the only Redeemer, ſo he is the only Advocate with the Father; for his infinite blood is neceſſary to be the foundation of the one as well as the other.

Q. Whoſe Son is Chriſt?

A. The Son of God.

Q. Are there not others called the Sons of God in ſcripture beſides Chriſt?

A. Yes; we find angels, Adam, and believers ſo called, Job xxxviii. 7. Luke iii. 38. 1 John iii. 1. and that either in reſpect of their immediate creation by God, or their adoption into his family.

Q. How then is Chriſt the Son of God, as no other is ſo?

A. Chriſt is the ſon of God by nature, and from all eternity, and ſo called the eternal Son of God.

Q. Why would God have no leſs a perſon to be our Redeemer?

A. That the glory of his juſtice might be diſplayed, and our redemption made effectual. Infinite juſtice could not have been glorified by a finite ranſom: Therefore it is ſaid, That Chriſt's blood was ſhed to declare God's righteouſneſs, Rom. iii. 25.

Q. How many natures has Chriſt?

A. Two; to wit, his divine nature and his human nature.

Q. How many perſons hath he?

A. But one.

Q. Are theſe two natures in Chriſt mixed or confounded together?

A. No; they are diſtinct, without any mixture or confuſion, as ſome ancient hereticks aſſerted.

Q. What are the ancient hereſies about Chriſt's natures and perſon, which are obiviate in the anſwer?

A. There are four herſies which were condemned by four general councils. 1. Arius and his followers denied the eternity of Chriſt's Godhead: And therefore it is aſſerted he is God, and that from all eternity. 2. Marcian and his followers denied the verity of Chriſt's human nature, ſaying he was only man in appearance: But the anſwer aſſerts, He became Man, and real Man. 3 Eutyches and his followers would have the two natures mixed and confounded, ſo as to make one: Therefore it is aſſerted, That he hath two diſtinct natures. 4 Neſtorius and his followers divided the two natures of Chriſt, ſo as to make him two perſons: Therefore it is aſſerted, That theſe two natures are ſo united as to make him but one perſon.

Q. Is Chriſt true God, co-eſſential, co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father?

A. Yes; as is evident from the ſcriptures, John x. 30. Phil. ii. 6. See this fully proven before, in the explication of the 6th Queſt. Pag. 36. 37, 38, 39, 40.

Q. How do you prove that Chriſt is true man as well as true God?

A. He hath the eſſential conſtituent parts of a man, a true body, and a rational ſoul: He was hungry; he ate, drank, ſlept, ſwate, ſuffered, bled, and died.

Q. Was he man from all eternity?

A. No, Heb. ii. 14.

Q. When became he Man?

A. In the fulneſs of time when the ſceptre was departed from Judah. Then a body was prepared for him; being conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, in an extraordinary way, Gal. iv. 4. Heb. x. 5. Luke ii. 1, 2, &c.

Q. How long time was there between Chriſt's coming in the fleſh, and the firſt promiſe made thereof to our firſt Parents?

A. About four thouſand years.

Q. Why did he delay the accompliſhing of this promiſe ſo long?

A. To convince fallen ſinners of God's indignation againſt ſin, and of the wretched ſtate ſin hath plunged them into, and that their deliverance could never ariſe from themſelves: And alſo to teach us to wait patiently for the fulfilment of other of God's promiſes to his church.

Q. How many years is it ſince Chriſt came into the world?

A. We may know that from the preſent year of God, which is 1737 years; for that is the reckoning of years among Chriſtians, ſince God became Man.

Q. Why was it neceſſary that our Redeemer ſhould be true Man?

A. That he might be our near kinſman, and have the right of redemption lodged in him: And that he might be capable to ſhed blood and ſuffer death in our room; for without the ſhedding of blood there was no remiſſion, Ruth iv. 3, 4. Heb. ix. 22.

Q. Why was it neceſſary that our Redeemer ſhould be God?

A. To ſupport the human nature, and keep it from ſinking under the wrath of God and power of death; and to give ſufficient value and efficacy to his blood and ſufferings, for ſatisfying juſtice, and purchaſing life for us.

Q. Do theſe two natures in Chriſt make two perſons?

A. No.

Q. How can he be but one perſon, ſeeing he is both God and man?

A. By the human nature its ſubſiſting in union with the ſecond Perſon of the glorious Trinity.

Q. Why was it neceſſary that the ſecond Perſon ſhould have taken the human nature to ſubſiſt in his own perſonality, ſo that our Redeemer ſhould be but one Perſon?

A. That his ſufferings, tho' only in his human nature, might be reckoned the ſufferings of one that was truly God, and ſo be of infinite value to redeem a loſt world.

Q. How is this union called?

A. A hypoſtatical or perſonal union; but it is ſuch a myſtery as neither men nor angels can comprehend, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Pet. 1. 12.

Q. How long will this union laſt?

A. For ever.

Q. Doth Chriſt continue to be God and Man ſtill in heaven?

A. Yes.

Q. Is not the human nature highly exalted by this hypoſtatical union?

A. Yes.

Q. Have we not ground to ſay with wonder, *Lord what is man, that thou art mindful of him* in ſuch a manner?

A. Yes; for it is moſt amazing conduct to ſhew ſuch reſpect to fallen men, when fallen angels are paſt by.

Q. Is it not a ſtrong argument to avoid brutiſh luſts and ſenſual pleaſures, that theſe would debaſe the human nature which Chriſt hath ſo highly advanced?

A. Yes.

Q. Ought we not cheerfully to act, ſuffer, and be abaſed for Chriſt, that ſtooped ſo low as to become man for us?

A. Yes.

QUEST. XXII.

How did Chriſt, being the Son of God, become Man?

A. Chriſt the Son of God became Man, by taking to himſelf a true body and a reaſonable ſoul; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without ſin.

Q. Did Chriſt, in aſſuming our nature take all the neceſſary eſſential parts of a man?

A. Yes, he took a true body, and a reaſonable ſoul.

Q. Why is it called a true body?

A. To ſhew that it was not a phantaſtical body, or only the ſhape and appearance of a body, as ſome old hereticks maintained; but that he took a real body of fleſh and blood, as we have, Luke xxiv. 39. Heb. ii. 14.

Q. Did Chriſt's divine nature ſupply the place of a ſoul to him?

A. No; tho' ſome hereticks taught ſo. He took a reaſonable ſoul, as well as a true body, Iſa. liii. 10. Mat. xxvi. 38.

Q. Did Chriſt bring his body or fleſh from heaven?

A. No; he was the ſeed of the woman, Gen. iii. 15.

Q. Was Chriſt's birth like that of other men?

A. No; for he was born of a virgin, without any earthly father, Iſa. vii. 14. Mat. 1. 24, 25.

Q. How could that be?

A. He was miraculouſly conceived by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the womb of the virgin Mary, Luke 1. 34, 35.

Q. Of what nation, tribe or family did Chriſt deſcend as he was a man?

A. By his mother Mary, he came of the nation of the Jews, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David, Luke i. 69.

Q. If Chriſt had a mother, how is Melchizedec a type of him, as being recorded *without father and without mother*? Heb. vii. 3.

A. In regard Chriſt is without any human Father as man, and without mother as God.

Q. Why was he conceived and born of a virgin?

A. To fulfil ſcripture-prophecies concerning him, and to keep him pure from original ſin, which is conveyed to all Adam's poſterity by natural generation.

Q. How could he be free of ſin, ſeeing he was born of a ſinful woman?

A. The Holy Ghoſt did miraculouſly ſanctify ſo much of the virgin's ſubſtance as formed Chriſt's body, which therefore is called that *Holy Thing* which ſhall be born of her, Luke i. 35.

Q. Why was it neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould be conceived and born without ſin?

A. If he had not been without all ſpot or blemiſh, he could not have been a ſacrifice for ſin acceptable to God: Neither could his righteouſneſs, which was to be imputed to all believers, have been infinitely perfect, as was neceſſary for our redemption, Lev. iii. 1. 6. Jer. xxiii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb. vii. 26, 27. Num. xxviii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 19.

Q. Do not we read that Chriſt was ſent in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh? Rom. viii. 3.

A. That doth not import he was really tainted with ſin, but only that he had the likeneſs or appearance of ſinful fleſh, in partaking of theſe infirmities of our nature which were the conſequents of ſin, tho' they were ſinleſs in themſelves.

Q. What were theſe ſinleſs infirmities?

A. Such as wearineſs, ſleeping, weeping, ſorrowing, ſuffering, bleeding, ſweating, and dying.

Q. Did not Chriſt ſuffer for ſin?

A. Yes, but not for any ſin of his own; for *he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities*, Iſa. liii. 5.

Q. Should we not all deſire to be like our head, and, as much as poſſible, to be without ſin?

A. Yes, 1 Pet. ii. 21.—— 25.

QUEST. XXIII.

Q. *What offices doth Chriſt execute as our Redeemer?*

A. Chriſt, as our Redeemer, executeth the office of a Prophet, of a Prieſt, and of a King, both in his eſtate of humiliation and exaltation.

Q. Are not theſe three offices called Chriſt's mediatory offices?

A. Yes; or they are three branches of Chriſt's mediatory office, in each of which Chriſt doth perform what he undertook, by mediating and acting, either for God with us, or for us with God.

Q. Why is Chriſt's mediatory office threefold?

A. To anſwer his peoples threefold miſery, ignorance, guilt, and bondage: For, as a Prophet, he cures our ignorance by his divine teaching; as a Prieſt, he atones for our guilt by his ſacrifice; as a King, he reſcues us from bondage by his power, and ſettles us under a good government.

Q. What mean you by Chriſt's executing of his offices?

A. His doing or performing theſe things which properly belong to ſuch an office or charge.

Q. Did Chriſt take upon him theſe offices without a call?

A. No; he was lawfully called to every one of them by the Father, who hath put all power and judgment in his hand. And therefore he is called the LORD's Chriſt, Matth. xxviii. 18. Luke ii. 26. John v. 27.

Q. How doth it appear from ſcripture, that Chriſt is called and appointed by the Father to his threefold office, of Prophet, Prieſt, and King?

A. It appears from theſe three following plain texts, Acts iii. 22. Heb. v. 6. Pſal. ii. 6.

Q. Was ever any man honoured with all the three offices of Prophet, Prieſt, and King, but the man Chriſt?

A. No: for, though Melchizedec was a king and a prieſt, yet he was not a prophet; David was a king and a prophet, yet he was not a prieſt; Samuel was a prieſt and a prophet, yet he was not a king. Which ſhews us how far ſhort the types and ſhadows came of the ſubſtance.

Q. Do not all the promiſes of the new covenant flow from Chriſt's ſeveral offices as their proper fountain?

A. Yes: the promiſes of inſtruction, illumination and conduct, flow from his Prophetical office: the promiſe of pardon, peace and healing, from his Prieſtly office; and the promiſe of deliverance, protection, grace and glory, flow from his Kingly office.

Q. Do not theſe three offices of Chriſt render him a moſt ſuitable help and complete remedy for all the grievances and neceſſities of his people?

A. Yes.

Q. Can a man cloſe with Chriſt in one of theſe offices, and not in another?

A. No: they are but hypocrites who would divide his offices, and receive him partially; for whoever would reap benefit by one office, muſt receive Chriſt in all.

Q. In which of Chriſt's eſtates doth he execute his three offices?

A. In both of his eſtates, *to wit*, of humiliation and exaltation.

Q. What do you mean by theſe two eſtates of Chriſt?

A. By his eſtate of humiliation, I underſtand that low and afflicted condition Chriſt was in here upon earth; and by his eſtate of exaltation, that raiſed, high and glorious condition he is now in heaven.

Q. How did Chriſt execute all his three offices in his eſtate of humiliation?

A. *1ſt*, He executed his office as a Prophet, by his perſonal miniſtry upon earth, and ſending out his diſciples to inſtruct the world in the way of ſalvation. *2dly*, He executed his Prieſtly office, by offering up himſelf a ſacrifice on the croſs, and praying for his people. *3dly*, He executed his Kingly office, in promulgating and explaining laws to the world, purging the temple, and riding in triumph to Jeruſalem.

Q. How doth Chriſt execute theſe three offices now in his eſtate of exaltation?

A. *1ſt*, He executes that of a Prophet, by furniſhing and ſending forth his miniſters to teach the world. *2dly*, That of a Prieſt, by making interceſſion for his people. *3dly*, That of a King, by proclaming his laws, ſubduing his enemies, and governing his church.

Q. Did Chriſt execute none of theſe offices before either his ſtate of humiliation or exaltation?

A. Chriſt being inſtalled in all theſe three offices by virtue of the covenant of redemption, he entered upon the execution of them immediately after the fall, and did execute them ſo far as his work did not neceſſarily require his incarnation.

QUEST. XXIV.

Q. *How doth Chriſt execute the office of a Prophet?*

A. Chriſt executeth the office of a Prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit the will of God for our ſalvation.

Q. What do you mean by a Prophet, or his office?

A. One whoſe employment it is, either to foretell things to come, or to teach ſinners the will of God, and expound his word to them.

Q. Is Chriſt a Prophet in all theſe reſpects ?

A. Yes.

Q. What do we read of his propheſying or foretelling things to come ?

A. He foretold Judas his betraying him, Peter's denying him, all the diſciples their forſaking him, the manner of his death and ſufferings, his riſing on the third day, the deſtruction of the city and temple of Jeruſalem, the perſecution of his diſciples, the calling of the Gentiles, *&c.* Mat. xxvi. 23, 31, 34. Mat. xx. 18, 19, Luke xix. 44. Mat. xxiv. 2. John xvi. 2. Mat. xxi. 43.

Q. By what other way did Chriſt execute his prophetical office ?

A. He did it by his perſonal miniſtry, and teaching ſinners the will of God, while he was on earth ; and by ſending forth his apoſtles and their ſucceſſors to teach them ; and by illuminating the minds of goſpel hearers by his Spirit, to underſtand and reliſh divine truths.

Q. What was the need of ſuch an extraordinary prophet as Jeſus Chriſt to teach us the will of God ?

A. Becauſe of the groſs darkneſs and blindneſs which came upon us by the fall ; and becauſe none but he, that was in the boſom of the Father from eternity, was capable to make known to us the hid myſteries of the goſpel, John i. 18, Acts xxvi. 18.

Q. Did Chriſt execute his prophetical office under the Old Teſtament as well as the New ?

A. Yes ; for he exiſted before he became man, and taught his church of old.

Q. How doth that appear ?

A. By the holy ſcripture, which tells us, that Chriſt was in the Old Teſtament prophets by his Spirit ; that he preached in the days of Noah, to theſe who are now in priſon ; that he ſpoke with Moſes and the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, and was tempted by them there. See 1 Pet. i. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 19. Acts vii. 38. 39. 1 Cor. x. 9.

Q. Wherein doth Chriſt excell all other prophets ?

A. In regard Chriſt authoriſes them all, and teacheth the heart as well as the ear. No prophet ever taught with ſuch authority, power, wiſdom, diligence, faithfulneſs, zeal and compaſſion as Chriſt did ; nor ever confirmed his doctrine with ſuch miracles and holineſs of life as Chriſt did his, Mat. xxii. 16. 22. 34. 46. Luke iv. 22. Mat. vii. 28. 29. John vii. 46. Luke xxiv. 32. 45. John xv. 24. John viii. 46.

Q. By what means doth Chriſt reveal to us the will of God ?

A. He doth it outwardly by his word, and inwardly by his Spirit.

Q. Why are the ſcriptures called the word of Chriſt ? Col. iii. 16.

A. Tho' they be alſo the word of the Father and of the Holy Ghoſt, yet they are Chriſt's word in a peculiar manner, becauſe by them he ſpeaks as Mediator in the name of God, and executes the prophetical office for teaching the church.

Q. Is it only by the word read that Chriſt teacheth his church ?

A. He teacheth alſo by preaching and hearing of the word ; and therefore he hath appointed paſtors for opening up the ſcriptures, and teaching his church thereby to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 19. 20. Neh. viii. 8. Rom. x. 14. 15. 16. 17. Prov. viii. 34.

Q. Is the word ſufficient to teach us the will of God without the Spirit ?

A. No ; for tho' the ſcriptures are in themſelves a ſufficient rule to direct, yet ſuch is the darkneſs of our minds that we cannot ſavingly diſcern and receive divine truths without the Spirit's illumination, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Q. How is it that the Spirit teacheth us the will of God ?

A. He teacheth us in and by his word, giving inward light, writing his laws in our hearts and ſetting home ſpiritual truths upon the conſcience.

Q. What are theſe ſpecial leſſons which our great Prophet teacheth ſinners by his Spirit ?

A. Such as theſe ; the great evil in ſin, the woful corruption of our natures, the dreadful wrath we deſerve, our inſufficiency to ſave ourſelves, the fulneſs of ſaving power that is in Chriſt, the excellency of the new covenant and a ſurety-righteouſneſs, the neceſſity of the Spirit's work in the ſoul, and of faith and holineſs.

Q. Is not the Spirit ſufficient to teach us theſe things without the word ?

A. No doubt he could have taught us by the Spirit alone, without the word, if he had ſo pleaſed ; but he hath inſtituted the words as the means he will make uſe of in teaching his church, Iſa. viii. 20. Rom. xv. 4.

Q. What caſe are theſe in, who have not the ſcriptures to reveal the will of God to them ?

A. They muſt be in a periſhing condition, Prov. xxix. 18.

Q. Cannot the light of reaſon, or the ſun, moon and ſtars, make known the will of God to us ?

A. No ; for tho' they may teach us ſome general things concerning God, yet they cannot ſhew us the way of ſalvation thro' Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. Who are theſe that are taught the will of God by his word and ſpirit ?

A. All true believers are ſo taught.

Q. Do not others know the will of God beſides them ?

A. Tho' natural men may have much literal knowledge and ſome common illuminations ; yet none but believers attain to the ſaving knowledge of God's will.

Q. How may we know if our knowledge of God's will be ſaving ?

A. We may conclude it is ſo, if it tend to humble us and exalt Chriſt ; if it warm our hearts, transform our ſouls, and reform our lives ; and if we ſtudy to live up to our light in all reſpects, Phil. iii. 8, 9. John xiii. 17. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Q. What ſhall become of theſe who are ignorant of God and his will, and ſlight the means of knowledge which God hath appointed ?

A. He that made them will not have mercy on them ; but will come with flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the goſpel, Iſa. xxvii. 11. 1 Theſſ. i. 8.

Q. What ſhall ignorant perſons do for knowledge ?

A. They muſt read and hear the word, and go to Chriſt the great Prophet and Teacher of his church, and cry, ‘ Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,’ Pſal. cxix. 18.

QUEST. XXV.

Q. *How doth Chriſt execute the office of a Prieſt ?*

A. Chriſt executeth the office of a Prieſt in his once offering up of himſelf a ſacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and reconcile us to God: and in making continual interceſſion for us.

Q. What are the two parts of Chriſt's Prieſtly office in the anſwer?

A. They are his offering ſacrifice, and making interceſſion for us.

Q. What do you mean by a ſacrifice?

A. In the ſcripture ſenſe, it is a living creature ſlain, and offered to God to make atonement for ſin.

Q. What is it to make atonement for ſin?

A. It is to ſatisfy God's juſtice for ſin, and pacify his wrath.

Q. What was the ſacrifice which Chriſt our Prieſt offered up to God for us?

A. It was himſelf.

Q. What mean you by himſelf? Was it his body or his ſoul, that he offered?

A. He offered up both his body and ſoul for us, according to Heb. x. 10. Iſa. liii. 10.

Q. What is meant by his offering up himſelf a ſacrifice for us?

A. His repreſenting his death and ſufferings to God for his acceptance, as an equivalent for the ſins of an elect world.

Q. How often did Chriſt offer up himſelf for us?

A. Once, and no more; tho' yet the Papiſts moſt abſurdly pretend to offer him up frequently in their unbloody ſacrifice of the maſs, and to ſet every maſs prieſt upon a level with Chriſt.

Q. Why may not Chriſt be offered oftener than once?

A. Becauſe his once offering up of himſelf did ſufficiently ſatisfy juſtice: And none elſe can offer up Chriſt but himſelf; nor can he be offered without new ſuffering, which is inconſiſtent with his exalted ſtate. See Heb. ix. 25, 26, 28.

Q. For what ends did Chriſt offer up himſelf as a ſacrifice?

A. We are told in the anſwer, that he did it, to ſatisfy divine juſtice for our ſins, and to reconcile us unto God.

Q. Could neither men nor angels offer a ſacrifice ſufficient to ſatisfy the juſtice of God for our ſins?

A. No.

Q. Why ſo?

A. Becauſe no ſatisfaction of theirs could be of infinite value.

Q. Was divine juſtice fully ſatisfied by Chriſt's ſacrifice?

A. Yes.

Q. How do that appear?

A. By the infinite dignity of the perſon that offered it; by the Father's voice from heaven, declaring he was well pleaſed in him; by Chriſt himſelf ſaying on the croſs, *It is finiſhed;* and by the glorious marks of reſpect God put upon him after his ſufferings in raiſing him from the dead, in receiving him up to heaven, and ſetting him down on his right-hand.

Q. But why might not God have pardoned our ſins without any ſuch ſacrifice?

A. Becauſe he behoved to ſee his juſt threatening in the covenant of works fulfilled in the puniſhing of ſin; and the glory of his juſtice diſplayed, as well as that of his mercy.

Q. What is the happy conſequent to us of Chriſt's ſatisfying divine juſtice?

A. Our reconciliation to God.

Q. What is it to be reconciled to God?

A. It is to make God and men friends, who were enemies before.

Q. How is this reconciliation brought about?

A. By Chriſt's ſhedding his blood as a price to purchaſe our peace and friendſhip with God, of which we are to ſhare upon our receiving Chriſt by faith.

Q. What are the benefits which Chriſt purchaſed by his ſacrifice for his people?

A. All needful bleſſings, whether temporal, ſpiritual, or eternal; ſo that faith, repentance, converſion, juſtification, holineſs, with all the graces of the Spirit, daily bread, communion with God, and eternal life, are all the purchaſe of Chriſt to his people.

Q. Whence had the ſacrifice of Chriſt ſo much efficacy?

A. From his divine nature, to which his ſoul and body were cloſely united; and hence his blood is called the *blood of God,* Acts xx. 28.

Q. How could the ſufferings of one man ſatisfy for the ſins of others?

A. By his having the ſins of theſe others laid upon him, and imputed to him.

Q. How could the ſins and crimes of men be imputed to Chriſt, an innocent perſon, who had no hand in them?

A. By Chriſt's becoming Surety for ſinners, ſubſtituting himſelf in their place, and voluntarily taking their guilt upon him.

Q. What view doth this ſacrifice give us of ſin?

A. It ſhews us the malignity and hainous nature of ſin, that no leſs could expiate or wipe it away than the blood of Chriſt's ſacrifice on the croſs.

Q. Doth Chriſt's ſacrifice ſo completely ſatisfy juſtice for ſin, as to exclude all further ſatisfaction from us?

A. Yes; and hence all Popiſh ſatisfaction for ſin, by penances, pilgrimages, prayers, alms-deeds, and purgatory, are vain and preſumptuous.

Q. Why then are good works, prayers, confeſſions, tears, afflictions and ſufferings, required of, and appointed to, believers here below?

A. Not to ſatisfy or atone for their ſins, but to glorify God, and promote their ſanctification and meetneſs for a better world.

Q. For whom did Chriſt offer up his ſacrifice?

A. For the elect, and theſe who believe on him, Iſa. liii. 11. Mat. xxvi. 28. John x. 15, 16. John xvii. 9, 19, 20. Acts xx. 28.

Q. Do we not read alſo of Chriſt's dying for all, of his reconciling the world to God, and of his being a propitiation for the ſins of the whole world? 2 Cor. v. 15, 19. 1 John ii. 2.

A. Yes, but theſe texts are to be underſtood only of the elect world; it being abſurd to ſay, that Chriſt did ſhed his blood for thoſe, for whom he would not pray; that he ſatisfied juſtice for great numbers, who were actually in hell before he ſuffered.

Q. How could Chriſt's ſacrifice ſatisfy for the Old Teſtament ſaints, who died before it was offered?

A. See the anſwer before, page 306.

Of CHRIST's Interceſſion.

Q. What is the ſecond part of Chriſt's prieſtly office?

A. His making continual interceſſion for us.

Q. Doth this office properly belong to Chriſt's prieſthood?

Q. Yes; for under the law the prieſts made interceſſion for the people, and for that end carried the blood of the ſacrifices into the moſt holy place, and ſprinkled the mercy-ſeat with it.

Q. What is the end of Chriſt's interceſſion?

A. Becauſe there are many to accuſe us, and plead againſt us; and of ourſelves we are vile and unworthy of acceſs to God.

Q. How is it that Chriſt makes interceſſion for us?

A. When he was on earth, he did it by humble prayers and ſupplications to God; but now in heaven he doth it by his glorious appearing as a public perſon in our name, and preſenting before the throne of glory his all-ſufficient merits, willing his Father to accept of his blood in behalf of the elect, that all and every one of them may in due time enjoy the benefits of his purchaſe, John xvii. 11, 17, 24. Heb. ix. 12, 24. and xii. 24.

Q. Is this the way that the blood of Chriſt is ſaid to ſpeak?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it upon the account of Chriſt's interceſſion that our duties and ſervices are now accepted of God?

A. Yes, John xiv. 13.

Q. Is not the Holy Ghoſt ſaid to make interceſſion for us, Rom. viii. 26. How is that conſiſtent with Chriſt's office?

A. It is Chriſt's office to intercede with us, by preſenting his blood and ſufferings for us: It is the Spirit's work to intercede within us, by exciting our deſires, and ſuggeſting arguments in prayer to God.

Q. Did not Chriſt finiſh his prieſtly work when he was upon the croſs?

A. Yes, with reſpect to his ſatisfaction, but not his interceſſion; the one was then perfected, the other ſtill continues.

Q. Is not his ſatisfaction the foundation of his interceſſion?

A. Yes.

Q. How long will Chriſt's interceſſion continue?

A. For ever, Pſal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 25.

Q. Will there be any need for the interceſſion of Chriſt after the laſt day, when all the elect will be gathered home?

A. Yes, in order to preſerve them for ever in the poſſeſſion of that happineſs to which they are come.

Q. Doth Chriſt intercede only for actual believers?

A. No; he interceeds for all the elect, both theſe who have believed, and theſe who are yet to believe, John xvii. 20.

Q. What are the reſpective bleſſings which he pleads for to them?

A. To the uncoverted, he pleads for converting grace, faith, repentance, *&c.* To them who believe, for more grace and holineſs, for renewed pardons, preſervation from the evil of the world, perſeverance in grace, unity among themſelves, and accompliſhment of all the promiſes, and good things purchaſed to them, both here and hereafter.

Q. When Chriſt pleads for his people that they may be kept from the evil in the world, John xvii. doth he mean to keep them from all afflictions?

A. No.

Q. Are not ſanctified afflictions a part of Chriſt's purchaſe to them?

A. Yes; and in reſpect, they are not evil to them, but good.

Q. What evil is it then that Chriſt ſpeaks of?

A. The evil of ſin, and the evil of wrath.

Q. Is Chriſt's interceſſion ſtill prevalent and ſucceſsful?

A. Yes; for him the Father heareth always, John xi. 42.

Q. What are the grounds of Chriſt's prevalency?

A. The dignity of his perſon and of his ſacrifice, and becauſe he pleads for nothing but what is agreeable to the divine will, and for thoſe whom the Father loves as well as he.

Q. Doth not Chriſt infinitely excel all other advocates in the world?

A. Yes; for there is none ſo ſkilful, ſo prevalent, ſo diligent, ſo cheap, or ſo ready as he is.

Q. May we employ any other mediator or advocate beſide Chriſt?

A. No; for the ſcripture tells us, 'There is but one Mediator between God and men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus,' 1 Tim. ii. 5. Chriſt is the ſole Mediator of interceſſion, as well as of redemption.

Q. Why cannot ſaints or angels be our mediators with God?

A. Becauſe they have no merit to plead upon, neither do they know us, nor our caſes and wants, Iſa. lxiii. 16.

Q. Wherein doth the prieſthood of Chriſt excel that of the Levitical prieſts?

A. All theſe were but types and ſhadows of Chriſt, he is the ſubſtance: Theſe offered many ſacrifices, and the blood of beaſts, which could not ſatisfy juſtice for ſin: but Chriſt offered only one ſacrifice, even his own blood, which gave full ſatisfaction: In the Levitical prieſthood, there was ſtill a difference between the prieſt, the ſacrifice, and the altar; but Chriſt is all the three in one.

Q. How is it that Chriſt is all three, the prieſt, the ſacrifice and the altar?

A. Chriſt in his own perſon was the prieſt which made the offering that atoned for ſin; his human nature was the ſacrifice, and his divine nature was the altar.

Q. Was not the croſs the altar on which the ſacrifice was offered?

A. The croſs may be called ſo improperly, or in a large ſenſe, as being the material part to which the ſacrifice was affixed: but it was by no means the altar which ſanctified the gift, and made it acceptable for the great ends it was offered for: this only was Chriſt's Godhead.

Q. How is Chriſt ſaid to be a prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec, rather than after the order of Aaron?

A. Becauſe, tho' both of them typified Chriſt, yet Melchiſedec was a more exact and lively type and repreſentation of Chriſt as a prieſt than Aaron was; ſeeing he is ſet forth as ſuperior to Abraham, and was a King as well as a Prieſt, having neither predeceſſors nor ſucceſſors in his office, and his genealogy and deſcent wholly concealed; thereby prefiguring Chriſt's eternal generation and duration.

Q. What ſhall we do to ſecure an intereſt in the ſacrifice and interceſſion of this glorious High Prieſt?

A. 1. Let us ſeek to be duly affected with our miſery while without it, as being every moment expoſed to the ſtroke of unſatisfied juſtice. 2. Let us be perſwaded that no ſacrifice will ſatisfy, no blood will protect, but that which Chriſt hath offered. 3. Let us renounce all confidence in our own righteouſneſs and duties. 4. We muſt heartily approve of the glorious device of ſaving penitents by the merits and interceſſion of our High Prieſt. 5. We muſt receive this bleeding High Prieſt into faith's arms, as one freely offered to us, and entirely truſt him with our ſalvation. 6. Accept of him as a Prieſt upon his throne, and give up ourſelves unto his government.

QUEST. XXVI.

Q. How doth Chriſt execute the office of a King?

A. Chriſt executeth the office of a King in ſubduing us to himſelf, in ruling and defending us, and in reſtraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Q. What ſort of a kingdom is it which Chriſt hath?

A. Beſides his eſſential kingdom, which he hath as God equal with the Father over all the world; he hath alſo a Mediatorial kingdom, given him as Immanuel, in which he acts as the Father's viceroy, Pſal. ii. 6. Acts ii. 36.

Q. What is Chriſt's Mediatorial kingdom?

A. It is the great dominion and power which is given to him as a Mediator; and this is twofold, 1. Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom in and over the church. 2. His providential kingdom over all things for the good of the church.

Q. What do you mean by Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom?

A. Both his kingdom of grace, and his kingdom of glory; or, in other words, the church militant on earth and the church triumphant in heaven; which are not two different kingdoms, but two provinces of one and the ſame kingdom; they both being but one body united together under one head, in and over which Chriſt doth reign and rule both in a gracious and glorious manner.

Q. What do ye mean by Chriſt's providential kingdom?

A. The adminiſtration of the kingdom of providence, or the power which is given to Chriſt over all things, whether in heaven, earth, or hell, to be managed for the good of the church; by which he is made the King of kings, and King of nations, as well as the King of ſaints, Mat. xxviii. 18. Eph. i. 22. Prov. viii. 15. 16. Rev. xv 3. 4. and xix. 15. 16.

Q. Over whom doth Chriſt exerciſe his kingly power?

A. Both over his own people, and over his enemies.

Q. Doth he govern them both alike?

A. No; for he puts forth and executes different acts of his power concerning them.

Q. What are theſe different acts?

A. With reſpect to his people, he ſubdues them to himſelf, he rules them, and defends them: With reſpect to his enemies, he reſtrains them, and conquers them.

Q. In what eſtate doth the King of Zion find his own people and ſubjects at firſt?

A. In a ſtate of enmity and rebellion to him.

Q. Do they ſubmit to him of their own accord?

A. No; he muſt ſubdue them to himſelf.

Q. What is that to ſubdue them?

A. It is to conquer their wills, and to make them, who were children of diſobedience, willing and obedient in the day of his power.

Q. How ſhall we know if a day of Chriſt's power hath paſſed upon us, to make us his willing people?

A. It is a good ſign, if our love to ſin be changed into a hatred of it, and if we ſincerely deſire to do the things that pleaſe God, and that not only in duties which are outward and public, but in theſe which are inward and ſecret.

Q. Doth Chriſt leave his church and people to their own care and conduct, after he hath ſubdued them?

A. No; but like a good king, brings them under a good government, and continues to rule them in a gracious manner.

Q. How is it that Chriſt doth rule his ſubjects?

A. 1. He rules them outwardly, by giving them good laws with promiſes and threatenings annexed thereto, and appointing church-officers and diſcipline for applying the ſame. 2. He rules them inwardly by his Spirit, writing his laws in their hearts, and diſpoſing them to yield obedience to what he requires them: thus he ſets up his throne in the hearts of his ſubjects, and makes all the faculties of their ſouls to ſubmit unto him.

Q. What further doth Zion's King for his ſubjects beſides ruling them?

A. He defends them alſo.

Q. From what doth he defend them?

A. From whatever may hurt their ſouls; and, ſo far as it is for his glory, he defends their bodies from enemies alſo.

Q. How doth Chriſt defend his people?

A. He ſets a hedge about them, he hides them under his wings, he intercedes for them; he gives ſtrength to his people, he upholds them in the ſtate of grace; and reſtrains and conquers their enemies.

Q. Have Chriſt and his ſubjects always the ſame enemies?

A. Yes.

Q. How comes that?

A. Becauſe of the near relation between them; he being the head, and they the members: So, whatever injures the one, the other feels it.

Q. Who are the enemies of Chriſt and his people?

A. Sin, ſatan, wicked men, and death, which is called *the laſt enemy.*

Q. How doth Chriſt reſtrain his and his peoples enemies?

A. By ſetting bounds to their rage, diſappointing or over-ruling their evil deſigns, and making their wrath to praiſe him, Rev. ii. 10 Pſal. lxxvi. 10.

Q. Will Chriſt ſuffer theſe enemies to prevail at laſt?

A. No; for he will at length conquer them all.

Q. When doth he conquer them?

A. He did it partly at his death and aſcenſion, when he triumphed over them, and led captivity captive; for then he diveſted them of that legal power they held over the elect, as executioners of divine juſtice. He ruins many of them by particular judgments within time; and he will bring final deſtruction upon them all at his ſecond coming.

Q. Is there not a great difference betwixt Chriſt's ſubduing of his people, and his conquering of his enemies?

A. Yes; for he makes the one ſweetly bow to his golden ſceptre, the other he breaks with his rod of iron.

Q. Are not devils and wicked men ſubject to Chriſt, as well as his people?

A. Yes; but the one are ſubject by conſtraint and againſt their will, and the other are ſubject by free choice and conſent.

Q. Have we not many things to engage us to become Chriſt's willing ſubjects?

A. Yes; for he it is that hath beſt right to us, and there is none ſo good a maſter; his yoke is eaſy, and his rewards are glorious.

Q. Can any truſt to Chriſt as their Prieſt, who do not ſubmit to him as their King?

A. No; for they who will not be governed by his laws cannot expect to be ſaved by his blood.

Q. Will not Chriſt look on them as his enemies, who refuſe to ſubmit to his government?

A. Yes.

Q. What will the King ſay to them at laſt?

A. Thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me, Luke xix. 27.

QUEST. XXVII.

Q. *Wherein did Chriſt's humiliation conſiſt?*

A. Chriſt's humiliation conſiſted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miſeries of this life, the wrath of God, and the curſed death of the croſs; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Q. What do you mean by Chriſt's humiliation?

A. His coming from a high condition to a low one.

Q. What was the neceſſity of his doing ſo?

A. That he, as our Surety and Cautioner, might ſuffer the puniſhment due unto us.

Q. What are the ſeveral ſteps of Chriſt's humiliation mentioned in the anſwer?

A. They are chiefly three, namely, with reſpect to, 1. His birth. 2. His life. 3. His death.

Q. How did Chriſt humble himſelf in his birth?

A. 1. In that ſuch a glorious Perſon ſhould be willing to reſide in fleſh, and be born of a woman. 2. In his being born in ſuch a low condition as he ſubmitted to.

Q. Was it not a low ſtep of humiliation in Chriſt to be incarnate, or to become man?

A. Yes; this was a much lower ſtep for the eternal Son of God, than for the ſun in the heavens to become a clod of duſt, or an angel a worm.

Q. What was the low condition that Chriſt ſubmitted to be born in?

A. He was born of a mean woman, in a mean city, and that in the ſtable of an inn, having the beaſts manger for his cradle.

Q. How did Chriſt humble himſelf in this life?

Q. There are three things relative thereto, mentioned in the anſwer; 1. His being made under the law. 2. His undergoing the miſeries of this life; and, 3. Suffering the wrath of God.

Q. What is meant by Chriſt's being made under the law? Gal. iv. 4.

A. That, according to his engagement as our Surety he ſubjected himſelf to the law both cermonial and moral, and did exactly fulfil and obey the ſame.

Q. How did Chriſt ſubject himſelf to the ceremonial law?

A. In ſubmitting to circumciſion, making the offerings, and attending the ordinances therein required; and, in order to fulfil it at once, he offered himſelf a ſacrifice upon the croſs.

Q. How did Chriſt ſubject himſelf to the moral law?

A. He did it as our Surety, fulfilling the preceptive part of it by the perfect obedience of his holy life, and ſatisfying the minatory part, by bearing the curſe and penalties of the law, which we incurred for breaking it.

Q. Was it not a piece of amazing humiliation for the eternal lawgiver to be thus ſubjected to his own law? A. Yes.

Q. What is meant by the miſeries of this life which Chriſt did undergo for us?

A. Theſe are manifold, and do include, 1. The common ſinleſs infirmities of the human nature which Chriſt took upon him; as hunger, thirſt, wearineſs, pain, ſleeping, weeping, and the like. 2. The aſſaults and temptations of the devil which he endured. 3. Outward poverty and want. 4. The contradictions, reproaches and perſecutions of a wicked world.

Q. Why did he take all theſe miſeries upon him?

A. That he might bear what we deſerved, and be the more ſypathizing with us in our troubles.

Q. Why became he ſo poor, that was Lord of all?

A. That through his poverty we might be made rich, and to teach us contentment in a low condition.

Q. Did Chriſt undergo no more trouble in this world than what he endured from devils and wicked men?

A. Yes, he underwent the wrath of God alſo; as in the anſwer.

Q. What is to be meant by that?

A. That Chriſt became the butt of God's wrath and anger for our ſins, and felt the direful effects of it in his ſoul as well as his body.

Q. Was God really angry with Chriſt, who was perfectly innocent and his dearly beloved Son?

A. Chriſt in himſelf conſidered was always the Father's delight; but as he became our Surety, and took on him our ſins the object of God's indignation, and which had a burden of wrath neceſſarily annexed thereto, he behoved to feel the ſenſe and preſſure of that inſupportable load in a very extraordinary manner.

Q. How did his feeling of it appear?

A. By expreſſing his ſoul-trouble and nonpluſſing ſtrait at the diſtant proſpect of it; by the ſhrinking of his human nature at taſting of the bitter cup, and praying it might paſs from him if poſſible; by his wreſtling in an agony, and ſweating great drops of blood that fell to the ground about him; by his crying out of his ſoul its being exceeding ſorrowful even unto death, and complaining of God's forſaking of him, John xii. 27. Mat. xxvi. 38, 39 Luke xxii. 44. Mat. xxvii. 46.

Q. Is it not upon this account alſo, that Chriſt is ſaid to be made a curſe for us, and a man of ſorrows?

A. Yes.

Q. Could any mere creature have borne the load of the Almighty's wrath?

A. No; and Chriſt's human nature could not have borne it, had it not been united to, and ſupported by his Godhead.

Q. Was it not poſſible this bitter cup could paſs from our Surety Chriſt?

A. No; for the juſtice of God could not be otherwiſe ſatisfied.

Q. Was not Chriſt heard in that prayer he made concerning it?

A. Yes; for we are told, 'He was heard in that he feared,' Heb. v. 7.

Q. How was he heard, when the cup did not paſs from him?

A. In the extraordinary ſupplies granted to his human nature for enabling him to drink it.

Q. Was it neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer death after all other ſufferings?

A. Yes; that he might fully anſwer the threatening of the firſt covenant, ſatisfy juſtice, and confirm the truth by his reſurrection.

Q. Was our Lord greatly humbled in his death?

A. Yes.

Q. In what reſpects?

A. In reſpect of the previous circumſtances of his death, the kind and manner of it, and the things following upon it.

Q. How was he humbled in the previous circumſtances of his death?

A. 1. In being betrayed by his own diſciple Judas. 2. In being ſold for a ſmall price. 3. In being taken and bound like a thief. 4. In being forſaken by all his diſciples. 5. In being denied by Peter in his own hearing. 6. In being accuſed by the Jews of crimes he was wholly innocent of. 7. In being buffeted, ſpit on, cruelly mocked, arrayed and crowned with thorns, by the ſoldiers and Herod. 8. In being ſcourged and condemned by Pilate as a notorious criminal. 9. In being put to carry his own croſs to the place of execution.

Q. How was Chriſt humbled in the kind and manner of his death?

A. In being crucified, or put to ſuffer the death of the croſs, which was a curſed, painful, lingring, and ſhameful death.

Q. What manner of death was the death of the croſs?

A. A death uſed among the Romans for the greateſt of malefactors, in which the man was ſo racked that they might tell his bones, his feet being nailed to the lower part of a tree, and his hands to a croſs tree above where he hang alive for ſeveral hours; the wounds ſtill widening by his own weight, and the blood guſhing out, till he died in extreme pain.

Q. Why is it called a curſed death?

A. Becauſe God had ſaid, Deut. xxi. 'Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree:' That is, he is expoſed to the higheſt diſgrace and reproach that can be done to a man, which proclaims him as much under the curſe of God as any external puniſhment can do it.

Q. Why is it called a ſhameful death?

A. Becauſe the perſon ſuffering it was expoſed naked, and accounted one of the vileſt criminals; and our bleſſed Lord was placed between two of them, as if he had been the greateſt of the three.

Q. What love was this, that made him to endure the croſs, and deſpiſe the ſhame?

A. Love that cannot be comprehended, for it paſſeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19.

Q. What was the moſt afflicting and humbling ingredient of all in Chriſt's death?

A. His being deſerted and forſaken of God at the time of it; as appears by that amazing outcry on the croſs, *Eli, Eli, lama ſabachthani.*

Q. Why was Chriſt thus forſaken?

A. To teſtify God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin, and to bear the puniſhment of deſertion which was due to us for ever.

Q. In that dark hour of Chriſt's death, did nothing fall out to give teſtimony to Chriſt?

A. Yes; the ſun was eclipſed, the earth quaked, the rocks rent together with the vail of the temple, and many graves were opened; ſo that the centurion with his guard, that attended Chriſt, were forced to own, that truly he was the Son of God, Mat. xxvii. 51, 52, 53, 54.

Q. Doth not the death of Chriſt afford the ſtrongeſt arguments to cauſe us hate and forſake ſin?

A. Yes; for in it we ſee the infinite mercy of God towards us in providing ſuch a Surety for us; we ſee God's indignation againſt ſin as the moſt curſed evil in the world, and the dreadful ſtorm of wrath which he will bring upon the workers of iniquity.

Q. What humbling things followed upon Chriſt's death?

A. There are two things mentioned in the anſwer; 1. He was buried. 2. He continued under the power of death for a time.

A. Was it a piece of great humiliation for Chriſt to be laid in the grave?

A. Yes certainly; for it is humbling to any man to be ſent there, where he muſt call the worms his brethren and ſiſters: But much more was it ſo for him, who hath the keys of hell and death, to be himſelf locked up in the grave.

Q. Was not Chriſt's burying attended with ſeveral humbling circumſtances?

A. Yes.

Q. What are they?

A. It was done in great haſte, with few attending it 2. Theſe few were not his relations, but ſtrangers. 3. His body was not carried from his own houſe, nor from any houſe, but from the ignominious croſs. 4 It was not laid in his own, but in another man's ſepulchre.

Q. What is meant by Chriſt's continuing under the power of death?

A. His remaining in the ſtate of the dead, and being death's priſoner for a time.

Q. What gives death a power over any man?

A. Sin.

Q. How could death have any power over Chriſt, who had no ſin?

A. Tho' he had no ſin of his own, yet *he was made ſin for us*; and ſo death ſeized him as his priſoner in our ſtead.

Q. How then ſhould death have any more power over believers?

A. Death cannot ſeize them as priſoners for puniſhment, but is only continued as a mean to purge away the remainders of ſin perfectly from them.

Q. Was it not a great humiliation for him, who is the Lord of life, to be laid under the power of death for a time?

A. Yes.

Q. How long was the time he was in this ſtate?

A. To the third day after his death.

Q. What type have we in the ſcripture of his continuing ſo long in the grave?

A. Jonah, his being three days in the whale's belly, Mat. xii. 40.

Q. Why did Chriſt continue ſo long?

A. To ſhew that he was really dead.

Q. Why could not death hold him under its power any longer?

A. Becauſe he had given full ſatisfaction to divine juſtice for his peoples ſins, and could not ſee any corruption in the grave.

Q. Why could he not ſee corruption there?

A. Becauſe he was the holy One of God, and free of all ſin.

Q. Whither did Chriſt's ſoul go after his death?

A. We read in the goſpels, that he reſigned it into his Father's hands, and that it went to paradiſe, the ſeat of the bleſſed.

Q. Do we not read in the Creed, that *he deſcended into hell*?

A. Yes; but the meaning is not that he deſcended locally into hell, the place of the damned; but, the ſame word in the original ſignifying both *hell* and the *grave*, it muſt be underſtood either of his body's lying in the grave, or of his ſuffering the pains of hell in his ſoul.

QUEST. XXVII.

Q. *Wherein conſiſteth Chriſt's exaltation?*

A. Chriſt's exaltation conſiſteth in his riſing again from the dead on the third day, in aſcending up into heaven, ſitting at the right-hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the laſt day.

Q. What may we learn from Chriſt exaltation its following his humiliation?

A. That we ſhould patiently bear an afflicted ſtate here, in hope of the glory that is to follow.

Q. In reſpect of what nature was Chriſt exalted?

A. Seeing Chriſt as to his divine nature cannot be exalted, really but declaratively only; it behoved to be with reſpect to his human nature that he was really and properly exalted.

Q. What are the ſteps or degrees of Chriſt's exaltation mentioned in the anſwer?

A. They are four; 1. His reſurrection. 2. Aſcenſion. 3. Sitting at God's right hand. 4. Judging the world.

Q. When did Chriſt riſe from the dead? -

A. On the third day.

Q. What day of the week did that day fall upon?

A. The firſt day of the week, which, ever ſince, is called, *The Lord's day.*

Q. By whoſe power did Chriſt riſe?

A. By his own power, and by the power of his Father, John ii. 19. Rom. vi. 4.

Q. In what manner did he riſe?

A. In a triumphant manner, with a great earthquake, the angels attending, and the keepers trembling for fear, and becoming as dead men, Mat. xxviii. 2, 3, 4.

Q. How do we know the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection?

A. By the teſtimony of the apoſtles, who ſaw him very often after it, and heard his excellent inſtructions about their future conduct, and, for their greater ſatiſfaction, were allowed to handle his body, and to eat and drink with him in a familiar manner.

Q. Did none ſee him after his reſurrection beſides the apoſtles?

A. Yes, many others, both men and women; and the apoſtle Paul writing to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xv. 6. ſays, He was ſeen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the moſt part were then alive.

Q. But how can we be ſure that the apoſtles teſtimony was true?

A. Becauſe they were men of great ſincerity, and could propoſe no worldly advantage by declaring their maſter's reſurrection, but the greateſt perſecution from the Jews. And, if it had not been certain, they had not choſen Jeruſalem as the firſt place of publiſhing it, and that within a few days after he was crucified there; and yet there they began, and many thouſands embraced their doctrine. Nay, God from heaven confirmed their teſtimony, by enduing them with the gift of tongues, and a power of working all kinds of miracles.

Q. What was the neceſſity of Chriſt's riſing again?

A. To declare that he was the Son of God, and that juſtice was fully ſatisfied for our ſins, and to aſſure all believers of their reſurrection from the dead alſo.

Q. Did Chriſt riſe with the very ſame body that was crucified? A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By the print of the nails, and ſpears in his hands, feet, and ſide, which he ſhewed to his diſciples after he roſe.

Q. Did never any riſe from the dead but Chriſt?

A Yes, ſuch as Lazarus, Jairus's ſon, and ſeveral others.

Q. What is the difference betwixt their reſurrection, and Chriſt's?

A. They roſe but as private perſons, by the power of God: but Chriſt roſe by his own power, and that as a public perſon, the great head and repreſentative of the church, for their juſtification, and to aſſure them of the truth of all his promiſes.

Q. How long did Chriſt ſtay with his diſciples after his reſurrection? *A.* Forty days.

Q. For what end?

A. That he might convince them he was truly riſen, and alſo inſtruct them of the nature of his kingdom and church, and give them directions about the government thereof.

Of CHRIST's Aſcenſion.

Q. What is the ſecond ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation?

A. His aſcending up into heaven.

Q From what place did he aſcend?

A. From the mount of Olives.

Q. In what manner?

A. Viſibly and triumphantly with a cloud receiving him and angels attending; leading captivity captive, and diſpenſing gifts, Acts i 9, 10. Pſal. lxviii. 17, 18.

Q. How was he employed at parting from his diſciples ?

A. He was bleſſing them with uplifted hands, Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

Q. For what end did Chriſt aſcend into heaven ?

A. That he might take poſſeſſion of the kingdom, both in his own name, and in the name of all his people; and as a forerunner he might prepare manſions for them, and as an advocate he might plead their cauſe effectually.

Q. Where is Chriſt now bodily preſent ?

A. In heaven.

Q. How long will he continue there ?

A. Until his ſecond coming.

Q. Are we not to look for his bodily preſence on earth till that time ?

A. No; for him the heavens muſt receive, until the reſtitution of all things, Acts iii. 21.

Q. Is not this a good argument againſt tranſubſtantiation, or Chriſt's bodily preſence in the ſacrament ?

A. Yes.

Q. Doth not Chriſt promiſe his preſence to his people upon earth ?

A. Yes; but that is meant of his ſpiritual, not his bodily preſence.

Q. What do you mean by Chriſt's ſpiritual preſence ?

A. His coming to his people by the influences of his Spirit, for quickening and comforting their ſouls.

Q. Did never any aſcend bodily to heaven but Chriſt ?

A. Yes, Enoch and Elijah did alſo.

Q. What was the difference between their aſcenſion and Chriſt's ?

A. They were taken up, but Chriſt went by his own power; they as private perſons without witneſſes, but Chriſt as a public perſon before many witneſſes.

Q. What are the great leſſons which Chriſt's aſcenſion ſhould teach us ?

A. To be heavenly minded, to ſet our affections upon things above where Chriſt is, and to deſire to be with him, Col. iii. 1. Phil. i. 23.

Q. What comfort may believers draw from Chriſt's aſcenſion ?

A. They may conclude that manſions will be ready, and that they will follow their head: They may promiſe themſelves welcome, and kind uſage, ſeeing he who hath got all power in heaven, is nearly related to them, and hath all the compaſſions of both God and man in him.

Of CHRIST's Sitting at God's Right-hand.

Q. What is the third ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation ?

A. His ſitting at the right hand of God the Father, Eph. i. 20. 1 Pet. iii. 22.

Q. Hath God a right or left hand as we have ?

A. No, for God is a ſpirit that hath no bodily parts: Only his right hand is ſpoken of, in condeſcenſion to our weak capacities.

Q. What is meant by Chriſt's ſitting at God's right-hand ?

A. That he is advanced to the higheſt place of honour, power and dignity in heaven, having all things ſubjected to him, 1 Pet. iii. 22.

Q. How long will Chriſt ſit at the Father's right-hand ?

A. Until he make all his enemies his footſtool, Pſal. cx. 1.

Q. What is the laſt enemy which he hath to deſtroy ?

A. Death

Q. When will that enemy be finally deſtroyed ?

A. At the general reſurrection, then it is that *mortality* ſhall be *ſwallowed up of life*, 2 Cor. v. 4.

Q How is it that we read of Chriſt ſometimes, as *ſitting*, and at other times as *ſtanding* at God's right-hand ? Acts vii. 56.

A. His *ſitting* is mentioned, to denote his perpetual poſſeſſion of the kingdom; his *ſtanding*, to repreſent his readineſs for the mediatory work, and particularly to help, plead for, and receive afflicted and dying ſaints, ſuch as Stephen was, who ſaw him in that poſture, Acts vii. 56.

Q. What may we learn from Chriſt's ſitting at the right hand of God ?

A. That it muſt go well with the church, ſeeing her Friend and Agent is ſo high in favour, and ruleth over all things; and that all the members of the body muſt be exalted, ſeeing the head is raiſed ſo high.

Of CHRIST's Judging the World.

Q. What is the fourth ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation ?

A. His coming to judge the world at the laſt day.

Q. Is not this called Chriſt's ſecond coming:

A. Yes, Heb. ix 28.

Q. Why is it called ſo ?

A. Becauſe we read of two famous comings of Chriſt to the world, and this is one of them.

Q. What is the other ?

A. His coming in the fleſh.

Q. Is not the difference between theſe two comings of Chriſt very great ?

A. Yes; for the firſt was in a ſtate of deep humiliation, but the ſecond is in a ſtate of glorious exaltation.

Q. Do we read of any other comings of Chriſt in ſcripture ?

A. Yes; we read of his coming by his Spirit in his ordinances; and of his coming in the diſpenſations of his providence, to deſtroy Antichriſt, and deliver his church from his enemies, John xiv. 18. 2 Theſſ. ii. 8.

Q. For what end will Chriſt come the ſecond time ?

A. To judge the world.

Q. What is underſtood by the world ?

A. All mankind, quick and dead, ſmall and great, righteous and wicked; and likewiſe the fallen angels.

Q. What is meant by Chriſt's judging of the quick and the dead, 2 Tim. iv. 1. and other places ?

A. That Chriſt at the end of the world ſhall deſcend from heaven, to judge all that will be then living on the earth, and all the dead then in their graves.

Q. How is it evident that there will be ſuch a judgment day ?

A. 1. Conſcience in every man declares for it, by creating remorſe and fears upon the doing of evil; and, on the other hand, ſatisfaction and hope upon the doing of good. 2. The juſtice of God requires it, that the wicked may be duly puniſhed, and the Godly rewarded: which is not done in this life. 3 The holy ſcriptures do often aſſure us of it, that we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, John v. 28, 29. Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17.

Q. Who is to be the judge in that day ?

A. Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. Is not God the judge of all? Heb. xii. 23.

A. Yes, and Chriſt is that God equally with the Father and Holy Ghoſt: But God hath ordained the Man Chriſt to be the viſible Judge of the world, Acts xvii. 31.

Q. Why is Chriſt ordained for that end?

A. That he might be rewarded for his obedience and ſufferings, and every eye might ſee the judge; and that man being thus judged by his peers, the equity of God's proceedings might the more appear.

Q. When will Chriſt come to judge the world?

A. At the laſt day.

Q. Why is it called the laſt day?

A. Becauſe it will be the concluding period of the world, when God will put an end to its days by the diſſolution of all things; for then 'the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo and the works therein ſhall be burnt up,' 2 Pet. iii. 10.

Q. Doth any man know the particular time of Chriſt's coming?

A. No, tho' yet we may diſcern its approach to be near by ſigns and forerunners. The Apoſtles declare the goſpel-times which we enjoy to be the laſt times, and that the ends of the world are come upon us, 1 Pet. 1. 20. 1 John ii. 18. 1 Cor. x. 11.

Q. Are there not ſtill ſome great events to be expected in the world before the laſt day come?

A. Yes, ſuch as the converſion of the Jews, the downfall of Antichriſt and Mahomet, and the great enlargemnt and purity of the church.

Q. Why hath God kept the particular time hid from us?

A. To prevent carnal ſecurity, and to keep us preparing and watching for it every day; ſtill ready to ſay, 'Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus, make haſte, O my Beloved.'

Q. What will be the manner of Chriſt's coming at the laſt day?

A. 1. It will be ſurpzing and unexpected; and therefore it is compared to the coming of a thief in the night. 2. It will be with power and great glory: For the heaven ſhall rend, and fire iſſue before him; and he, attended with a multitude of glorious angels and ſaints, ſhall deſcend with a great ſhout, with the voice of the arch-angel and the trumpet of God which will raiſe the dead: And thus ſhall he aſcend the great white throne, and have all the world gathered before him, 2 Theſſ. v. 2. Mat. xxv. 31. Pſal. l. 3. Jude 14. 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8. 1 Theſſ. iv. 6. Rev. xx. 11.

Q. Why do the ſcriptures inſiſt ſo much upon Chriſt's coming to judgment?

A. To aſſure the world of it, to excite us to duty, to deter men from ſinning, and to comfort the godly under diſtreſs, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11, 14. 2 Theſſ. i. 6, 7.

Q. What is the great neceſſity of a day of judgment?

A. To make a ſolemn manifeſtation of the glory of God's attributes and perfections; as of his omniſcience, in diſcovering the ſecrets of mens hearts and lives; of his mercy, in ſaving the elect; and of his juſtice, in puniſhing the wicked.

Q. In what manner will Chriſt judge the world?

A. He will judge the world in righteouſneſs, and render to every one according to what he hath done in the body whether it be good or evil, Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10.

Q. Muſt all men come into judgment at that day good and bad, Chriſtians and Heathens?

A. Yes.

Q. May not ſome be overlooked and concealed in that great crowd?

A. No; for God's all-ſeeing eye will find them all out.

Q. Upon which of the Judge's hands will the good and bad be placed in that day?

A. The godly will be ſet upon the right-hand, and the ungodly upon the left.

Q. What will be the difference betwixt the judgment of the godly and of the ungodly?

A. The one ſhall come into a judgment of abſolution, the other into a judgment of condemnation: The ſentence of the one will be, *Come unto me, ye bleſſed*; but the ſentence of the other will be, *Depart from me, ye curſed.* And likewiſe, the judgment of believers will go before that of the wicked.

Q. How do you know that?

A. By the ſcriptures, which tell us that *the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt*, and be immediately *caught up to meet the Lord in the air*; and that they ſhall be ſet on thrones, and become aſſeſſors to Chriſt in judging the world, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17. Mat. xix. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

Q. Seeing believers are guilty of many ſinful thoughts and actions, as well as the wicked, how is it that they are not condemned with them?

A. Becauſe all their ſins are laid upon Jeſus Chriſt, and he hath anſwered for them to the juſtice of God.

Q. Who are theſe ſinners that ſhall be moſt miſerable in the day of judgment?

A. Wicked Chriſtians, and eſpecially theſe who have had the cleareſt diſpenſations of goſpel-light, and greater meaſures of knowledge of God's will than others, and yet have abuſed them, and ſinned againſt them, Mat. xi. 23, 24. Luke xii. 47.

Q. Will God judge heathens, who never had his law or goſpel revealed unto them?

A. Yes, he will judge them by the law of nature, and the dictates of their own conſciences, Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15.

Q. Will not the wicked have many accuſers and witneſſes to appear againſt them in that day?

A. Yes; ſuch as the attributes of God, his mercy, patience, omniſcience, bounty; and the creatures of God which they have abuſed: The blood of Chriſt which they have trampled, conſcience which they have ſtifled, and the devil and companions in ſins which have tempted them, will then accuſe them, and witneſs againſt them.

Q. Do we not read of books that will be opened in that day, Rev. xx. what are thoſe?

A. This is ſpoke with alluſion to the courts here below which have books for the rule of judgment. Accordingly in that day will be opened the book of God's remembrance or omniſcience, wherein all the actions of men will be found written. 2. The book of conſcience, which will bring convincing evidences of ſinners guilt. 3. The book of the law, with all its precepts, threatenings and curſes, which they have deſpiſed. 4. The book of the goſpel, with all its calls, offers and promiſes, which they have ſlighted. All which will afford terrible matter of indictment againſt the wicked.

Q. What are the things which will be brought into judgment at that day?

A. All the thoughts and deſigns, as well as the words and actions of men.

Q. Muſt we give an account in that day of every idle word?

A. Yes. Mat. xii. 36.

Q. Should not this teach us to take good heed to all our words, thoughts and deſigns now? A. Yes.

Q. Will not the conſequences of this judgment be very awful? A. Yes.

Q. In what reſpects?

A. In regard the wicked ſhall thereupon go into everlaſting puniſhment, and the righteous into life eternal, Mat. xxv. 46.

Q. How will the Judge's ſentence be executed againſt the wicked?

A. The devils, the executioners of God's juſtice, will be waiting on, and ready, upon the paſſing of the ſentence, to hale away the wicked to the place of torment.

Q. Will angels be judged at that day?

A. Yes, evil angels.

Q. How is it ſaid, that the ſaints ſhall judge angels? 1 Cor. vi. 3.

A. In regard they ſhall approve of the ſentence which Chriſt ſhall paſs upon them and upon all his enemies.

Q. What ought we to learn from Chriſt's coming to judgment?

A. We ſhould endeavour always to be ready for it, and to love his appearing; we ſhould be diligent to be found of him in peace, and to aim at all holy converſation and godlineſs; and we ſhould ſuſpend all raſh judgments till that time, Luke xii. 40. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Tit. ii. 11, 13. 2 Pet. iii. 11, 14. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

QUEST. XXIX.

Q. *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt?*

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt, by the effectual application of it to us by his holy Spirit.

Q. What is the proper office and agency of the holy Ghoſt in the work of man's redemption?

A. To apply it to elect ſouls.

Q. Hath not each perſon in the glorious Trinity an eminent hand in the work of our redemption?

A. Yes; the Father projected it, the Son purchaſed it, and the Holy Ghoſt applies it.

Q. What is meant by the work of our redemption?

A. The delivering of loſt ſinners from ſin, ſatan, and the wrath of God.

Q. What is meant by the purchaſing of our redemption?

A. The buying or obtaining it at a valuable price.

Q. Who was it that purchaſed our redemption?

A. Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God.

Q. At what price did he purchaſe it?

A. At the price of his own precious blood.

Q. What is meant by our being partakers of this purchaſed redemption?

A. Our being made ſharers of the benefits and advantages of it.

Q. What are theſe benefits?

A. Such as pardon of ſin, protection from wrath, peace with God, peace of conſcience, a change of nature, ſanctifying grace, the unſtinging of death, reſurrection to life and eternal glory.

Q. What is meant by the applying of this redemption to us?

A. The making of it ours, by producing the firſt beginnings of it in the ſoul, and thereby bringing us gradually into the full poſſeſſion of its benefits. We begin the poſſeſſion of them in our juſtification, and ſanctification here, and we complete it in our glorification hereafter.

Q. Is it only the Holy Spirit that can apply this redemption to us effectually, and poſſeſs us of it?

A. Yes.

Q. Cannot godly parents, miniſters or goſpel-ordinances do this? A. No.

Q. Why is the Holy Spirit ſaid to apply this redemption to us effectually?

A. To teach us that all that can be done by means and inſtruments to apply this redemption to us, will be ineffectual, without the work of the Holy Spirit.

Q. Is not the Spirit's application of this redemption as neceſſary to us, as Chriſt's purchaſing of it? A. Yes.

Q. What is the difference between the purchaſing and application of it?

A. The firſt is a work done without us, but the ſecond a work done within us.

QUEST. XXX.

Q. *How doth the Spirit apply to us, the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt?*

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Chriſt, in our effectual calling.

Q. What doth the Spirit work in us, in order to apply the purchaſed rdemption to us?

A. Faith.

Q. Cannot we produce faith, or believe of ourſelves?

A. No.

Q. Is not faith an act of the believing ſoul?

A. Yes; but ſtill the ſcripture makes it God's gift to him, and the Spirit's work within him, Eph. ii. 8. Col. ii. 12.

Q. Is not the Spirit of God the Author or Worker of all grace?

A. Yes; and therefore he is called the Spirit of Grace.

Q. What means doth he uſe for working faith in us?

A. The word, or miniſtry of the goſpel, Rom. x. 14, 17.

Q. What ſhall become of thoſe who want the goſpel? May not the Spirit work faith in them for their ſalvation?

A. We have no promiſe for his doing ſo.

Q. What is the uſe of faith for applying Chriſt's purchaſe to us?

A. Faith is the grace that brings us to Chriſt, and is the means of our union with him.

Q. What is it to be united to Chriſt?

A. It is to be joined to him, and made one with him.

Q. Is it hereby that every believer hath an actual intereſt in Chriſt, and a title to his purchaſe? A. Yes.

Q. What ſort of union is there between Chriſt and believers ?

A. It is a ſpiritual, ſupernatural and myſtical union hard to be explained by any thing we find here below. It is ſomewhat like the union that is between a debtor and his ſurety, ſeeing by it the righteouſneſs and ſatiſfaction of Chriſt becomes believers ; or like the union that is between the head and the members, and the root and the branches, ſeeing by it the Spirit of Chriſt brings vital and refreſhing influences from Chriſt to all true believers, 2 Cor. v. 21. Col. ii. 19. John xv. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Q. Are not believers ſaid to be in Chriſt, and Chriſt in believers, by virtue of this union ?

Q. Yes, Rom. viii. 1, 10. 2 Cor. v. 17. and xiii. 5.

A. What are the bonds of this union with Chriſt and believers ?

A. There is the Spirit on Chriſt's part, taking hold of us ; and there is faith on our part, taking hold of Chriſt.

Q. What advantage doth believers reap by this union ?

A. By it they have ſympathy from Chriſt in their ſufferings, and communion with Chriſt in his fulneſs ; and, becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo.

Q. Is there any diſſolving of this union ?

A. No ; for death, which looſeth all the ties of nature, cannot diſſolve this union ; for Chriſt is united to believers duſt in the grave, as well as to their ſouls in heaven.

Q. What muſt we do to be united to Chriſt ?

A. We muſt be deeply ſenſible of our miſery without Chriſt, caſt off our ſins which ſeparate us from Chriſt, and receive him by a lively faith as he is offered to us in the goſpel.

Q. How ſhall we attain to this uniting grace of faith ?

A. Let us look and cry to the Holy Spirit to work it in us ?

Q. When doth he that ?

A. In our effectual calling.

QUEST. XXXI.

Q. *What is effectual calling ?*

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our ſin and miſery, inlightning our minds in the knowledge of Chriſt, and renewing our wills, he doth perſwade and enable us to embrace Jeſus Chriſt, freely offered to us in the goſpel.

Q. Is not effectual calling the ſame thing with converſion or regeneration ? A. Yes.

Q. Why is our converſion termed a *call* or *calling* ?

A. In regard that it is by the voice or word of God, that we are rouzed from the ſleep of ſin, reduced from our wanderings, and brought home to himſelf.

Q. Why is it termed *effectual calling* ?

A. Becauſe it takes effect to bring the ſoul to God, and to diſtinguiſh it from the outward call of the word, which of itſelf is inſufficient to prevail with us ; for *many are called, but few are choſen*, Mat. xxii. 14.

Q. What do you mean by *few are choſen* ?

A. That few are determined effectually to embrace the call.

Q. Whoſe work is the inward and effectual call ?

A. It is the work of the Spirit of God.

Q. Why is it called a work ?

A. Becauſe it is not perfected all at once, but done by ſeveral ſteps and degrees.

Q. What are the ſeveral ſteps of the Spirit's work mentioned in the anſwer ?

A. There are, 1. A work of conviction. 2. A work of illumination. 3. A work of renovation.

Q. What is the ſtate which the ſoul is called from by this work ?

A. From a ſtate of ſin, of darkneſs, of enmity, of ſlavery, and miſery.

Q. What is the ſtate which the ſoul is called to ?

A. It is a ſtate of grace, of light, of peace, of liberty, and bliſs.

Q. Whence is it that God doth call ſome, and not others ?

A. It is not from any worth or goodneſs in them, but from his own mere good will and pleaſure.

Q. What means doth the Spirit make uſe of in the calling of men ?

A. Chiefly the voice and miniſtry of the word.

Q. Whether is it the voice of the law or the goſpel ?

A. It is both ; the law to ſhew us our miſery, and the goſpel to diſcover our remedy.

Q. What is the firſt ſtep of the Spirit's work in our effectual calling ?

A. Conviction.

Q. What doth the Spirit convince us of ?

A. Of our ſin and miſery, or the defiled and wretched condition we were born and ly in, till a gracious change be wrought in us.

Q. What is it in ſin that the Spirit doth convince us of ?

A. Of ſin's evil, malignity, guilt and pollution ; of its fountain, numerouſneſs, aggravations and deſervings.

Q. By what means doth the Spirit bring men to the conviction of ſin ?

A. By the law's precepts and threatenings, by rods, and by conſcience.

Q. May not any of theſe convince us of ſin without the Spirit ?

A. No.

Q. Was not this one great deſign of ſending the Spirit ?

A. Yes, John xvi. 8.

Q. Is there no converſion without conviction going before ?

A. No ; for, unleſs we have it in ſome meaſure, we will not ſee our need of Chriſt, nor come to him for help.

Q. Is the work of conviction alike great in all true converts ?

A. No ; ſome have more and ſome leſs, according to God's holy pleaſure.

Q. What degree of conviction is neceſſary to all who are converted ?

A. So much as is needful to diſcover a man's loſtneſs, to make him value Chriſt above all things, and willing to part with all things for Chriſt.

Q. Doth converſion always follow upon a work of conviction ?

A. No ; for not a few like Judas and Felix, have had ſtrong convictions which have come to nothing.

Q. Whence is it that their convictions prove abortive ?

A. Becauſe they ſtifle them, and go to the world for eaſe, and not unto Chriſt : neither are their convictions of the right kind.

Q. What is the difference between the conviction of

will,

natural men, and theſe of true penitents ?

A. 1. The firſt proceed only from a natural conſcience and the fears of hell ; but the ſecond from the operation of God's Spirit, and a view of ſin's evil, God's goodneſs and Chriſt's ſufferings. 2. The firſt are mainly upon the account of groſs ſins and outbreakings ; but the other reach alſo to heart-ſins, and theſe which are ſecret. 3. The convictions of natural men are cured by natural means, but theſe of true penitents only by the blood of Chriſt.

Q. What is the ſecond ſtep of the Spirit's work in effectual calling ?

A. The work of illumination with reſpect to the remedy for ſin.

Q. Are our minds dark by nature in that reſpect till the Spirit of God enlighten them ?

A. Yes.

Q. What doth he enlighten our minds with ?

A. With the knowledge of Chriſt, our only Surety and Saviour.

Q. Is not ignorance of Chriſt a ſad ſign of one that is not effectually called or converted ?

A. Yes.

Q. What knowledge or diſcoveries of Chriſt doth a ſinner get by the Spirit's light ?

A. He is brought to know the excellency of Chriſt's perſon, offices, righteouſneſs and fulneſs provided for believing ſinners : he is made to ſee Chriſt's all ſufficiency and ability to ſave to the uttermoſt, his ſuitableneſs to the various needs of our ſouls, and his willingneſs to ſave all that come to him for relief.

Q. What means doth the Spirit uſe for enlightening us with the knowledge of Chriſt ?

A. Ordinarily the preaching of the goſpel, Acts xxvi. 17. 18. Rom. x. 17.

Q. Are not then both the law and the goſpel uſeful in our converſion ?

A. Yes ; the law for diſcovering to us our diſeaſe, and the goſpel for ſhewing us a phyſician : the law for convincing us of ſin, and the goſpel for leading us to a Saviour.

Q. May not the minds of ſome be very much enlightened under the goſpel, without being called effectually or converted ?

A. Yes ; for Balaam was greatly illuminated ; and we read of ſome ſuppoſed to be once enlightened, that yet may make final apoſtaſy from Chriſt, Heb. vi. 4. 6.

Q. How may we know if the knowledge of Chriſt we are inlightened with, be true and ſaving ?

A. It will be a good ſign, if our knowledge humble us the more under a ſenſe of our vileneſs ; if it inflame our hearts with love to Chriſt, and a deſire to be like him ; if it engage us to put our truſt in him for the whole of our ſalvation, and to hate ſin as his great enemy, and to ſtudy to do the things that pleaſe him.

Q. What is the third ſtep of the Spirit's work in effectual calling ?

A. His renewing of the will.

Q. What do ye mean by the Spirit's renewing of the will of man ?

A. His making the will new and pliable, by putting new inclinations and diſpoſitions into it, to chuſe what is good, and refuſe what is evil.

Q. Doth the Spirit by his powerful work upon the will, offer any violence to the liberty of man's will ?

A. No ; for he inclines it in a way agreeable to its nature, and ſweetly changes its ſtubbornneſs and rebellion into a willing obedience.

Q. How may we know if our hearts and wills be yet renewed ?

A. By our embracing of Chriſt in all his offices ; by our preferring his will and glory before all earthly ſatisfactions ; by our loving the good we once hated, and hating the evil we formerly loved.

Q. Are we able to renew our own wills, or change them from evil to good ?

A. No ; we can no more do it than the 'Ethiopian can change his ſkin or the leopard his ſpots,' Jer. xiii. 23.

Q. What ſhall we do then to attain to this gracious change by the Spirit's renewing work ?

A. Let us be deeply ſenſible of the evil and miſery of ſin, diligently wait upon the means of ſalvation, earneſtly to look to God in Chriſt, pleading for his Spirit's work upon our hearts, and carefully entertain his motions when he begins to work.

Q. What end doth the Spirit aim at in his convincing, inlightening and renewing work in our effectual calling ?

A. That thereby he may perſwade and enable us to embrace Jeſus Chriſt as freely offered to us in the goſpel.

Q. What do ye mean by the Spirit's perſwading and enabling us to embrace Jeſus Chriſt ?

A. His prevailing with us, determining us, and making us able and willing to accept of Chriſt as our Saviour, and conſent to the terms he propoſeth to us in the goſpel.

Q. What do ye mean by the goſpel ?

A. The glad tidings or joyful news of ſalvation thro' Jeſus Chriſt, written at his direction by the prophets and apoſtles, and publiſhed by his meſſengers to loſt ſinners of mankind.

Q. How, or upon what terms, is Chriſt offered in the goſpel to ſinners, that they may embrace him ?

A. He is offered to them as a free gift from heaven, in all his offices, of Prophet, Prieſt, and King ; and they muſt embrace him accordingly.

Q. What mean you by embracing Chriſt freely as he is offered ?

A. That we muſt come to Chriſt without money or price ; that is, we muſt be ſenſible of our emptineſs of all good; and that we can bring no qualification nor worth to purchaſe or obtain Chriſt, but muſt come poor and empty-handed, willing to take Chriſt and his riches to furniſh us with every thing neceſſary for us.

Q. How may we know if we have thus embraced Chriſt in a right manner ?

A. By diligent examination of ourſelves, and particularly trying if we can ſay, that we have embraced Chriſt, not only for pardon of ſin and eternal ſalvation, but alſo for holineſs and newneſs of life ; believing and depending on him as the meritorious cauſe and fountain of ſanctification, as well as juſtification and glorification.

Q. Can no man thus embrace Chriſt until he is perſwaded and enabled by the Spirit to do it ?

A. No.

Q. Are we naturally averſe from accepting the offer of a Saviour ?

A. Yes, and therefore muſt be perſwaded to it.

Q. Are we without ſtrength, as well as averſe to do it ?

A. Yes; and therefore we muſt be enabled to embrace Chriſt.

Q. Cannot moral ſwaſions, ſuch as the exhortations, threatenings and promiſes of the word, perſwade ſinners to embrace Chriſt?

A. No; theſe can no more do it of themſelves, than the beams of the ſun can enlighten a man born blind, or arguments can raiſe a dead man from the grave: for we are naturally blind and dead in ſin.

Q. Is then the ſame power requiſite to our renovation and converſion, as to our creation and reſurrection?

A. Yes.

QUEST. XXXII.

Q. *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of juſtification, adoption, ſanctification, and the ſeveral benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

Q. Have theſe who are effectually called, a title to ſpecial benefits and privileges above other perſons?

A. Yes.

Q. When is it that they partake of theſe benefits?

A. They have ſome of them in this life, and the reſt in the other life; they have ſome in hand, but much more in hope.

Q. What are the benefits or advantages they partake of in this life?

A. They are principally three, to wit, juſtification, adoption, and ſanctification.

Q. Are all theſe who are effectually called, juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified by God in this life?

A. Yes.

Q. What do ye mean by theſe words, juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified?

A. That they have their ſins pardoned, they become God's children and are made holy.

Q. Is holineſs then a ſpecial benefit and privilege, as well as our duty? A. Yes.

Q. Do theſe three benefits come ſingly to thoſe who are effectually called?

A. No; for they are attended with many other bleſſings that depend upon and flow from them; ſuch as inward peace, free acceſs to God, aſſurance of his love, fatherly proviſion, growth in grace, *&c.*

Q. Who then are the happieſt perſons even in this life?

A. Thoſe who are effectually called; for they are privileged above all others.

QUEST. XXXIII.

Q. What is juſtification?

A. Juſtification is an act of God's free grace wherein he pardoneth all our ſins, and accepteth us as righteous in his ſight, only for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Q. Doth the word juſtify ſignify to make a perſon juſt, by infuſing of inherent righteouſneſs into him, as the word ſanctify ſignifieth to make a perſon holy in that manner?

A. No; for, if that were the meaning, it would confound juſtification with ſanctification, of which the Papiſts are guilty.

Q. What then is the true meaning of the word juſtify?

A. It is a legal or forenſick word, borrowed from courts of juſtice; and it ſignifies to abſolve one from guilt or puniſhment, and to pronounce him righteous or innocent.

Q. Whoſe act is it to juſtify a ſinner?

A. It is God's act; for it is God that juſtifieth, Rom. viii. 33.

Q. Doth God juſtify the ungodly?

A. Yes, Rom. iv. 5.

Q. Is it not written, Prov. xvii. 15. 'He that juſtifieth the wicked is an abomination to the Lord?' will God do that himſelf, which he abhors in another?

A. God indeed abhors the abſolving of guilty perſons without ſatisfaction made to juſtice; but, when God doth juſtify the ungodly, it is upon due ſatisfaction made to his juſtice.

Q. May any ungodly perſon take encouragement from this, to reckon himſelf among thoſe that are juſtified?

A. No; for tho' God doth juſtify thoſe who were ungodly before the paſſing of that act, yet none of theſe do continue to live ungodly afterwards: and theſe who continue to do ſo, ſhew plainly that they never were juſtified perſons, ſeeing juſtification and ſanctification are inſeparable.

Q. Why do you call juſtification an act and not a work?

A. Becauſe it is a thing done all at once, as the ſentence or declaration of a judge; and not a work of time, carried on by degrees, as effectual calling and ſanctification are.

Q. What is the moving cauſe of this act?

A. The free grace of God, *that is*, his undeſerved love and favour to ſinners, without any worth or merit in them.

Q. What are the conſtituent parts of juſtification?

A. They are two, as mentioned in the anſwer, to wit, God's pardoning of our ſins, and his accepting of our perſons as righteous.

Q. What is the meritorious cauſe of our juſtification?

A. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

Q. Is it upon account of this righteouſneſs that God both pardons our ſins, and accepts of our perſons?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you mean by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt by which we are juſtified?

A. Not his eſſential righteouſneſs as God, which is incommunicable; but his ſurety-righteouſneſs, which as Mediator God-man he performed in our ſtead, to ſatisfy juſtice, and magnify the law.

Q. What was this ſurety-righteouſneſs of Chriſt made up of?

A. Of his active and paſſive obedience.

Q. What is Chriſt's active obedience?

A. The perfect obedience he gave to the precepts of the law in his holy life, which is imputed to believers; ſeeing by the obedience of this one man many are made righteous, Rom. v. 19.

Q. What is his paſſive obedience?

A. His ſuffering the penalties of the law due to us for ſin, whereby he gave perfect ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God.

Q. If Chriſt gave perfect and full ſatisfaction to juſtice for our ſins, how can our juſtification be ſaid to be of free grace?

A. Theſe two conſiſt very well together, according to Rom. iii. 24. ' Being juſtified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt.' It is wholly free to us, ſeeing God doth graciouſly accept of a righteouſneſs and ſatisfaction from a Surety, which he might have demanded from us. It is free, ſeeing God hath provided the Surety for us, and furniſhed him to pay our debt, when it was impoſſible for us to find one to do it. It is free, ſeeing God requires nothing from us but faith in the Surety, which faith he alſo promiſeth freely to give us: So that our juſtification is altogether of free grace to us.

Q. How is it that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt becomes ours?

A. By God's imputing it to us, that is, his placing it to our account, as if we ourſelves had performed a perfect righteouſneſs to him.

Q. How is it according to truth for God to pronounce us righteous, who really are not ſo?

A. God doth not pronounce us righteous in ourſelves, but righteous in our Surety Chriſt, who is righteouſneſs to us in God's account; even as a creditor, having received payment from the ſurety, juſtly counts the debitor free and acquitted in law, 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21.

Q. Were the Old-Teſtament ſaints juſtified by Chriſt's righteouſneſs as well as we?

A. Yes.

Q. How could that be, ſeeeing they died before Chriſt's righteouſneſs was performed?

A. They believed in the promiſed Meſſiah that was to come, to be made an offering for ſin, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs; and their faith in him was accepted of God for their juſtification.

Q. How doth it appear that they depended upon Chriſt for juſtification?

A. In regard we are told that the goſpel was preached unto them: That they ſaw the promiſes afar off, and embraced them. They had Chriſt exhibited to them in the antient prophecies, types and ſacrifices; and ſo they viewed him as the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world. Abraham ſaw Chriſt's day afar off. Job knew his Redeemer lived. Iſaiah foretels, That his ſoul ſhould be made an offering for ſin: And he calls all men to look to him for ſalvation; and he points him out as one in whom we have righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and one in whom all the ſeed of Iſrael would be juſtified and ſhould glory. Jeremiah calls him, *The Lord our righteouſneſs*. Daniel ſays, He ſhall make reconciliation for ſin, and bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs; and that for this end Meſſiah was to be cut off. Heb. iv. 2, & xi, 13. Rev. xiii. 8. John viii. 56. Job xix. 25. Iſa. liii. 10. and xiv, 22, 24, 25. Jer. xxiii. 6. Dan. xix. 24, 26.

Q. By what means do we receive and apply this righteouſneſs of Chriſt?

A. By faith alone, Rom. iii. 22.

Q Doth faith juſtify us as it is a work or act done by us?

A. No, but only as it is an inſtrument or hand whereby we receive and apply Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is the only ground of our juſtification before God.

Q. Why would God have faith to be the alone inſtrument of our juſtification?

A. That it might appear to be wholly of free grace; for faith is of a ſelf-emptying quality, and aſcribes all to God, Rom. iv. 16.

Q. Doth the matter come all to one, when we are ſaid ſometimes to be juſtified by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and ſometimes by faith?

A. Yes; for it is by the one meritoriouſly, and by the other inſtrumentally.

Q. Are we juſtified partly by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and partly by our own?

A. No, we muſt not mix any thing of our own with Chriſt in the point of juſtification; therefore the apoſtle Paul aſſerts in ſtrong terms, that we are juſtified by faith in Chriſt, without the works of the law, Rom. iii. 28. Gal. ii. 16.

Q. How is it then that the apoſtle James doth ſay, that a man is juſtified by works, and not by faith only, Jam. ii. 24.

A. It appears from the context, that James is not ſpeaking of our juſtification before God, but of the juſtification of a perſon, and of his faith, before men: So good works declare before the world that we are juſtified perſons, and they declare our faith to be true and lively, ſeeing they are the genuine fruits of faith. And therefore the apoſtle ſaith, "I will ſhew thee my faith by my works:" and Abraham's faith was perfected by works, Jam. ii. 18, 22.

Q. Why cannot we be juſtified before God by our works?

A. Becauſe all the world is guilty, and all our works imperfect before God; and a juſt God requires a perfect righteouſneſs.

Q. Are good works then of no uſe?

A. Though they cannot juſtify us before God, yet they are moſt neceſſary and uſeful to glorify God, and to evidence the ſincerity of our faith; and therefore it is required of all believers, that they be careful to maintain all good works, Tit. iii. 8.

Q. Is there not ground to ſuſpect the truth of a man's faith, and of his juſtification, where holineſs and good works do not appear?

A. Yes: For by the ſame faith that a man is juſtified, his heart is alſo purified; and the goodneſs of a tree is known by its fruits, Acts xv. 9. Mat. vii. 16, 17.

Q. When is it that a perſon is actually juſtified?

A. As ſoon as he is brought actually to believe on Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. Did not God decree to juſtify the elect from eternity?

A. Yes, but that will not infer that we are juſtified from eternity; no more than, becauſe God decreed to create us from eternity, that therefore we were created from all eternity. All that we can draw from it is, that God graciouſly purpoſed our juſtification from eternity, and this only to take effect upon our believing.

Q. Are not the elect juſtified at the death or reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, ſeeing it is ſaid that he died for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification?

A. They were then juſtified virtually, but not actually; for though the price was truly then paid or completed, yet the purchaſed redemption is never actually ours, until it be applied.

Q. What is the firſt part of juſtification?

A. The pardoning of our ſins.

Q. Whoſe prerogative is it to pardon ſins?

A. It is God's only; for he is both the offended party, and the great Judge of all, Iſa. xliii. 25.

Q. Have not miniſters power to forgive ſins, ſeeing Chriſt ſaith to them, *Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted*? John xx. 23.

A. That imports no more but a miniſterial declarative power to pronounce from God's word, that every penitent believing ſinner ſhall be forgiven: So that miniſters can only declare ſin to be pardoned upon the condition of faith and repentance.

Q. Have not private men power to forgive ſin? ſeeing Chriſt ſays to all, Mat. vi. 15. *If ye forgive men their treſpaſſes*, &c.

A. Private men have power only to forgive private injuries done againſt themſelves, but no power to forgive the wrong that at the ſame time is done to God.

Q. When doth God pardon men their ſins?

A. When they believe on Chriſt.

Q. Whether is pardon an act of juſtice, or of mercy?

A. It is both.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. 1. It is an act of juſtice in God to pardon every penitent believer, ſeeing Chriſt their Surety hath paid their debt, 1 John i. 9. 2. It is an act of mercy likewiſe, ſeeing God is graciouſly pleaſed to accept of a Surety's payment, and to provide the Surety alſo.

Q. What is it in ſin that pardon doth take away?

A. The guilt of it.

Q. What is that?

A. Our actual obligation to puniſhment.

Q. Doth pardon take away the demerit or deſervings of ſin?

A. No; for the ſins of believers in themſelves do deſerve hell, as well as the ſins of others.

Q. Doth pardon take away the inherence or being of ſin altogether?

A. No; for we find corruption ſtill remaining in theſe who are pardoned, Rom. vii.

Q. Hath every pardoned man the aſſurance of his pardon?

A. No; for an act of pardon may be paſt in the court of heaven, before it be intimated in the court of of conſcience.

Q. When God doth pardon the ſins of his people, whether is it their bypaſt ſins only, or is it their future ſins alſo?

A. All their bypaſt ſins are actually pardoned, and they have a right to pardon for their future ſins, upon their actual believing and repenting: But no ſin can be ſaid to be actually pardoned, until it be actually committed, and application made to the blood of Chriſt for the pardon of it?

Q. Is not God angry with the ſins of juſtified perſons?

A. Yes.

Q. What ſort of anger doth he manifeſt againſt them?

A. It is not vindictive wrath, as againſt the ſins of the wicked, but only fatherly diſpleaſure, which yet may be attended with ſharp rods, and the loſs of God's reconciled countenance, that cannot be recovered until they ſincerely humble themſelves, confeſs their ſin, renew their faith and repentance, and pray earneſtly for pardon.

Q. How may we know if our ſins be pardoned?

A. By our love to Chriſt that obtained it, and our deſire of conformity to him; by our mourning for ſin that pierced Chriſt, and our fear of grieving him for the future; By the uprightneſs of our hearts, and our readineſs to forgive others, Luke vii. 47. Rom. viii. 1. Pſal. cxxx. 4. Pſal. xxxii. 1. Mat. xviii. 35.

Q. What is the ſecond part of juſtification?

A. God's accepting of us as righteous in his ſight.

Q. What is meant by that?

A. It is God's adjudging us as righteous, or perſons acquitted from guilt; and his giving kindly acceſs and acceptance both to our perſons and ſervices upon the account of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt that covers both.

QUEST. XXXIV.

Q. *What is adoption?*

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the ſons of God.

Q. Is adoption a ſcripture word?

A. Yes, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 5. Eph. 1. 5.

Q. What is the meaning of the word; or, what is it to adopt?

A. Among men it ſignifies, to take one that is a ſtranger into a family, to account him as a child or heir, and to provide for him as ſuch. So for God to adopt believers, it ſignifies his bringing them who are aliens by nature into his houſhold, his owning them as his ſons and daughters, and giving them a right to the privileges of his children.

Q. How many ſorts of ſons is God ſaid to have in ſcripture?

A. Three ſorts; 1. Jeſus Chriſt is his Son by eternal generation, being of the ſame nature and eſſence with the Father, Pſal. ii 7. 2. Angels and Adam are called the ſons of God, by reaſon of their immediate creation by him, Job xxxviii 7. Luke iii. 38. 3 Believers are his ſons by adoption, John 1. 12. 1 John iii. 1.

Q. Whoſe act is adoption?

A. It is God's.

Q. Why is it called an act?

A. Becauſe it is done at once.

Q. What ſort of an act is it?

A. An act of God's free grace.

Q. Why is it called ſo?

A. Becauſe it is wholly owing to the free love and favour of God, that he adopts any of mankind ſinners into his family.

Q. Is there nothing lovely in one more than another, that moves God to adopt them into his family?

A. No.

Q. In what condition are ſinners before they are adopted?

A. They have neither wiſdom, beauty, holineſs, nor any good thing to recommend them; but are black as Ethiopians, ſtrangers to God, children of wrath, and of the family of hell, when God adopts them into his family.

Q. Is it not wonderful grace and love in God, not only to pardon ſuch rebels, but alſo to make them his ſons and heirs?

A. Yes.

Q. Upon whom is this favour conferred? Is it upon all?

A. No, but only upon thoſe who receive Chriſt by faith, John i. 12. Gal. iii. 6.

Q. Have not God's adopted children a right to many privileges above others?

A. Yes.

Q. What are theſe?

A. They are under God's fatherly protection, proviſion, and conduct while here below: They are allowed acceſs to God as a Father, the Spirit's aſſiſtance in their prayers, and hearing of them: They have the miniſtry of angels, and are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt of an inheritance incorruptible.

Q. Do not theſe peculiar privileges call for ſpecial duties anſwerable to them from us?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the duties of adopted children to their father?

A. They ſhould love and honour him; they ſhould aſk his counſel in all things, ſubmit to his fatherly correction, fear to offend him, truſt him and depend on his care.

Q. By what ſigns may we know whether we be God's adopted children?

A. By ſuch as theſe: if we reſemble our Father, love him above all, and be heartily concerned for his glory. If we have the Spirit of adoption, who always, where he is, doth excite to prayer and the ſtudy of holineſs, Rom. viii. 14. Gal. iv. 6. 1 John ii. 29.

Q. Wherein doth the children of God reſemble their Father?

A. In holineſs, mercy, and beneficence to all, even to their enemies.

Q. Are not all God's adopted children his ſons alſo by regeneration?

A. Yes, they are all born again, and have new natures given them, John i. 12, 13.

QUEST. XXXV.

Q. What is ſanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs.

Q. What is it to ſanctify a thing or perſon?

A. In the ſcripture ſenſe, it is to devote a thing to God's uſe, or to cleanſe from ſin and make us holy.

Q. Are not juſtification and ſanctification inſeparable?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the difference betwixt them?

A. Juſtification is God's act or ſentence without us, abſolving us from the guilt of ſin; but ſanctification is God's work within us, cleanſing us from the filth of ſin: Juſtification is perfect and equal in all believers, and is done at once; but ſanctification is unequal and imperfect in this life, and is carried on by degrees.

Q. What is the difference between regeneration and ſanctification?

A. Regeneration is the firſt change of the nature by the infuſing of all gracious habits into the ſoul at our converſion or effectual calling, which are all much the ſame; but ſanctification is the continued exerciſe and advancement of the work of grace in the believer thro' his whole life.

Q. Whoſe work is it to ſanctify us?

A. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 2.

Q. Why is ſanctification called a work, and not an act?

A. Becauſe it is wrought and carried on by degrees.

Q. Can we not ſanctify ourſelves?

A. No; we can no more actuate or increaſe grace, than we can implant it at firſt. We can defile ourſelves, but cannot cleanſe ourſelves.

Q. May not the view of our graces humble us as well as our ſins?

A. Yes.

Q. Why ſo?

A. *Our ſins*, becauſe they are ours; *our graces*, becauſe they are none of ours: For every degree of grace is freely beſtowed by God upon undeſerving creatures.

Q. What is the procuring cauſe of our ſanctification?

A. The blood of Chriſt.

Q. By what means is it carried on in believers?

A. By means of God's ordinances and providences as he pleaſeth to bleſs them.

Q. What is the ſubject of our ſanctification? Or what part of us is it that is ſanctified?

A. The whole man.

Q. What do you mean by the whole man?

A. The whole powers and faculties of the ſoul, and the whole ſenſes and members of the body, both inward and outward man is ſanctified.

Q. How are the powers and faculties of the ſoul renewed and ſanctified?

A. By the Holy Spirit's diffuſing his gracious influences upon the heart, underſtanding, will, conſcience, memory, and affections of the ſoul, whereby they are cleanſed from ſin, made new, ſpiritual and holy, and remarkably fitted for ſerving and glorifying God.

Q. How are the ſenſes and members of the body ſanctified?

A. By changing them into a holy uſe, making theſe that before were inſtruments of ſin, now become inſtruments of righteouſneſs; ſo that outward converſation is ordered aright according to the rule of God's word.

Q. After what pattern is the change made in ſanctification?

A. After the image of God.

Q. Wherein doth this image conſiſt?

A. In reſembling God, and becoming like him in holineſs and purity; in hatred to ſin, and love to righteouſneſs.

Q. Is the image of God perfectly reſtored to us while in this life?

A. No; For the work of ſanctification is imperfect in the beſt of God's people while on this ſide of heaven.

Q. How doth that appear?

A From the complaints they make of the remainders of ſin in them, which make a continual ſtruggle between grace and corruption: And hence it is that our beſt duties are marred with ſin.

Q. Why doth God leave corruption in his people as long as they are here?

A. 1. To keep them always humble under a ſenſe of ſin, and their need of a Saviour. 2. To teach them to make continual uſe of Chriſt for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. 3. To magnify his power in preſerving weak grace, in midſt of corruption. 4. To looſe their hearts from this world, where they have ſuch a ſtruggling life, and make them long for heaven, where they ſhall triumph over corruption, and have perfect purity for ever.

Q. Will ſanctification never be perfected till that time? A. No.

Q. Do ſanctification and glorification differ ſpecifically?

A. No, but only in degrees; for grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected.

Q. What are the parts of ſanctification mentioned in the anſwer?

A. They are two, to wit, *mortification*, and *vivification*; or dying to ſin, and living to righteouſneſs.

Q. What do you mean by mortification, or dying to ſin?

A. The gradual weakening and ſubduing the power of ſin in our ſouls.

Q. By what marks may we know whether we be dying to ſin?

A. 1. If we be growing in our hatred of ſin, and be labouring for its utter deſtruction. 2. If we be careful to withdraw every thing that proves fewel to our corruptions, and to check the firſt motions of ſin. 3. If we bewail it before the Lord when we feel its ſtrength, and pray earneſtly againſt it. And, 4 If we be ſtudying to improve the death of Chriſt for the death of ſin.

Q. What is imported in the other part of ſanctification, living more and more unto righteouſneſs?

A. It is to have a growing principle of ſpiritual life in our ſouls, prompting us to obey the will of God in all things, and to aim at further advancement in true holineſs.

Q. What is the difference betwixt morality in natural men, and true ſanctification in believers?

A. The firſt is the product of nature, and makes ſome change only upon the outward life; but the ſecond is the fruit of the Spirit, and makes a gracious change upon the heart. The firſt proceeds from ſelf, and tends to ſelf; but the ſecond proceeds from a principle of love to God, and tends to his glory. In the firſt Chriſt is neglected; but in the ſecond his ſtrength and righteouſneſs are ſought to and employed.

Q. Is there an abſolute neceſſity of ſanctification here, in order to ſalvation hereafter?

A. Yes; for we are aſſured of it, that "without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. An unſanctified man can have no communion with a holy God.

Q. Is it poſſible that great and notorious ſinners can be ſanctified?

A. Yes; for the apoſtle Paul, ſpeaking of the vileſt of ſinners, ſaith to the Corinthians, "Such were ſome of you, but ye are ſanctified," 1 Cor. vi. 11.

QUEST. XXXVI.

Q. *What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from juſtification, adoption and ſanctification?*

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from juſtification, adoption and ſanctification, are, aſſurance of God's love, peace of conſcience joy in the Holy Ghoſt, increaſe of grace, and preſervance therein to the end.

Q. How many benefits belonging to juſtified and ſanctified perſons are there ſet forth in the anſwer?

A. Five.

Q. Which is the firſt?

A. Aſſurance of God's love.

Q. Doth God bear a ſpecial love to juſtified perſons above others?

A. Yes; they are the ſpecial objects of God's love.

Q. May believers in this life attain to the perſwaſion or aſſurance of this love?

A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear.

A. From the command of God injoining all Chriſtians to ſeek after it; and from the inſtances of many believers who have actually attained to the ſure knowledge and perſwaſion of the love of God to them, 2 Pet. i. 10. Heb. vi. 11. Rom. v. 2. 3. Rom. viii. 16. 38. 39. 2 Cor. v. 1. 1 John iii. 14. 19. 21. 24. 1 John v. 13. Cant. vi. 3. Job xix. 25. 2 Tim. i. 12.

Q. Can any perſon attain to this aſſurance without ſpecial revelation from God?

A. Yes.

Q How do they come at it?

A. Two ways; 1. By rational evidence and proofs from the word of God, namely, when they diſcover the inward evidences of theſe graces wrought in their ſouls, to which the promiſes of God's ſpecial love are annexed. 2. By the teſtimony of God's Spirit, bearing witneſs with their ſpirits, that they are the children of God, 1 John ii. 3. 1 John iii. 14. 19. Rom. viii. 16.

Q By what marks and evidences may we know our intereſt in God's love?

A. By our receiving of Chriſt in the goſpel offers, and truſting in him; by our love to Chriſt and to his people; by our affection to God's laws, and care to obſerve them; by our oppoſing of all ſin, and particularly beloved luſts; by our deſires after holineſs, and the like, Mark xvi 16. John i. 12 Prov. viii. 17. 1 John iii. 14 Pſal cxix. 165 Pſal. xviii 23. 1 John iii. 3. Phil. iii. 3 Pſal. cxxx. 5. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

Q. What do ye mean by the Spirit's witneſſing with our ſpirits? Rom. viii. 16.

A. His ſhining upon our graces, and enabling us to diſcern them: his concurring with the rational inferences of our ſpirits therefrom, and ſtrengthening us to conclude that we are the children of God.

Q. Is this aſſurance eſſential to faith, and the attainment of every believer?

A. No; for ſome of them may walk in darkneſs, and have no light, Iſa. l. 10.

Q. Do any true believers loſe their intereſt in God's love?

A. No; for nothing can ſeparate them from the love of God which is in Chriſt: but they may be without the ſenſe and aſſurance of that love.

Q. Whence is it that God's people loſe the ſenſe and aſſurance of his love?

A. It proceeds frequently from their ſloth and negligence in duty, and from their venturing upon ſin, againſt light; and ſometimes from God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, for wiſe and holy ends, 2 Pet. i. 10. Cant. v. 3. 6. Pſal. li 8. 12. 14. Pſal. lxxvii. 7. 8. 9

Q. Why doth God withdraw from his people, and deny them the ſenſe of his love?

A. He doth it ſometimes to hide pride from their eyes, and to teach them to live by faith rather than by ſenſe: hence it may be that ſome of weaker grace are allowed more ſenſible comfort than theſe who are ſtronger.

Q. How may we diſtinguiſh true aſſurance from preſumption?

A. True aſſurance humbles the ſoul, and makes it watchful againſt ſin; but preſumption puffs up, and makes men ſecure. True aſſurance is willing to come to the light for trial, but preſumption ſhuns the light Gal. ii. 20. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Pſal. cxxxix. 23. 24. John iii. 20. 21.

Q. Should not all Chriſtians preſs for the aſſurance of God's love, as a thing of great advantage to them?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the advantage of having it?

A. It quiets the mind, and removes the fear of death; it inlarges the heart with love and thankfulneſs to God, and gives ſtrength and cheerfulneſs in the performance of commanded duties.

Q. Doth this aſſurance tempt or incline men to negligence or looſeneſs?

A. No; but rather excites and quickens them to diligence in holy duties.

Of peace of Conſcience.

Q. Is peace of conſcience a benefit that belongs to thoſe who are juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified?

A. Yes.

Q. Do all ſanctified perſons enjoy this benefit at all times? A. No.

Q. What ſhould hinder it, ſeeing God ſpeaks peace to ſuch perſons, and forgives all their ſins?

A. Many times theſe whoſe ſins are forgiven them, cannot be brought to forgive themſelves; ſometimes clouds of unbelief and temptations do ſadly darken their evidences, and they relapſe into untender walking, whereby their conſciences may be much diſquieted, Pſal. xxxviii. 3. 8. Iſa. lix. 2.

Q. What is it that doth pacify conſcience when troubled or wounded?

A. Conſcience being God's deputy in us, nothing leſs can pacify it than what pacifieth divine juſtice, namely, the blood of Chriſt.

Q. How doth the blood of Chriſt pacify conſcience?

A. By obtaining the removal of the guilt and power of ſin from us, and the lifting up of God's countenance on us.

Q. Can any unbeliever have peace of conſcience?

A. He may have a falſe peace, but it is only the believer in Chriſt that hath true peace of conſcience, Luke xi. 21. Rom. v. 1.

Q. Whence doth the peace of unbelievers proceed?

A. Partly from the deceitfulneſs and flattery of their own hearts; and partly from the devil, that, as a ſtrong man armed keeps the houſe, Luke xi. 21.

Q. What is the difference between a true and falſe peace of conſcience?

A. True peace of conſcience is attained by the uſe of means, ſuch as the ordinances, earneſt prayer, brokenneſs of heart for ſin, tender and holy walking before God: It ariſes from faith in Chriſt the Peace-maker, and makes the man careful of pleaſing God, and fearful of offending him. Whereas a falſe or preſumptuous peace comes not this way, and hath no ſuch attendants; nay, it is grounded upon vain imaginations, and is attended with carnal ſecurity, neglect of duty and untender walking, 2 Theſſ. iii. 16. 1 Sam. i. 12, 18. Iſa. lvii. 15. Pſal. cxix. 165. Gal. vi. 16. Rom. v. 1, 2. Rev. iii. 17. Deut. xxix. 19.

Q. Doth the believer's inward peace come and go with his outward peace?

A. No; for he may have great tribulation in the world, when yet he may have much inward peace thro' Chriſt, John xvi. 33. Heb. iii. 17, 18.

Q. What is the beſt way to maintain our inward peace?

A. By making much uſe of Chriſt who is our peace, looking daily to him for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and ſtrict walking by goſpel rules, Eph. ii. 14. Gal. vi. 16.

Q. Doth the believer's peace with God ſtill alter with his peace of conſcience?

A. No.

Q. How is it that the believer's ſtate of peace is maintained, when his ſenſe of peace is loſt?

A. By reaſon of the ſtability of God's covenant, and the prevalency of Chriſt's continued interceſſion with God for his people, Pſal. lxxxix. 31, 32, 33, 34. 1 John ii. 1.

Of joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. What do you mean by joy in the Holy Ghoſt?

A. That ſpiritual joy, delight and complacency, which the Holy Ghoſt works in his people, when he clears up their evidences, or allows them ſpecial favours to their ſouls.

Q. Why is this ſpiritual joy called joy in the Holy Ghoſt?

A. Becauſe he breeds and feeds this joy; hence it is called the *Fruit of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22.

Q. What are the chief grounds of this joy?

A. Ordinarily they are a ſenſe of our intereſt in Chriſt, and of our juſtification by his righteouſneſs; or his gracious preſence with us, his work in us, the ſucceſs of his goſpel, or a proſpect of heaven, Pſal. cl. 2. Iſa. lxviii. 10. Heb. iii. 18. Phil. i. 25. Acts ii. 46, 47. Acts viii. 1. Pſal. li. 12. Rom. v. 2.

Q. Wherein doth this ſpiritual joy differ from the joy of the world?

A. Spiritual joy is inward and pure, deep and ſolid; it bears up under outward troubles, and diſpoſes the ſoul for all ſpiritual performances: But worldly joy is muddy and ſenſual, blown away by every croſs wind, leaves the mind under uneaſy reflections, indiſpoſeth for holy duties, and evaniſheth at the approach of death.

Q. What is it that is moſt deſtructive to the true Chriſtian's joy?

A. Sin, eſpecially when it is ventured upon againſt light, Pſal. li. 8.

Q. May not hypocrites have flaſhes of ſpiritual joy at ſome times?

A. Yes; for ſo had the ſtony ground hearers, and John's followers, Mat. xiii. 20. John v. 35.

Q. What is the difference between the true ſpiritual joy of believers and the temporary joy of hypocrites?

A. True ſpiritual joy comes in the way of godly ſorrow for ſin, and of faith in Jeſus Chriſt; it diſpoſeth a man to humility and lowlineſs of mind, to hate ſin more vehemently, reſiſt temptations more ſteadily; and perform duty more chearfully: But the hypocrite's joy being without any true foundation or right views of Chriſt, it keeps ſin in its ſtrength, puffs up the man with a conceit of himſelf, and very ſoon leaves him as carnal and unholy as ever.

Of Growth in Grace.

Q. What is meant by the word grace?

A. Sometimes grace is taken for God's good-will towards us, that is, his mercy and favour to ſinners through Chriſt; and it is by this grace we are ſaid to be elected, called, juſtified and ſaved, Rom. xi. 5. Gal. i. 15. Rom. iii. 24. Eph. ii. 8. Sometimes again grace is taken for God's good work in us, or theſe gracious qualites which he infuſes and plants in all juſtified perſons, ſuch as repentance, faith, love, &c. whereby they are ſanctified and made meet for heaven, 2 Pet. iii. 18. Jam. iv. 6. Col. iii. 19. Eph. iv. 7. John i. 16. And in this laſt ſenſe grace is to be underſtood in the anſwer.

Q. Is all true grace of a growing nature?

A. Yes.

Q. What doth the ſcriptures compare it to in its growing?

A. To the morning light, that increaſeth more and more unto the perfect day: And to the huſbandman's ſeed, which ſprings and groweth up, he knoweth not how, Prov. iv. 18. Mark iv. 26, 27.

Q. Wherefore is it that all true grace muſt grow?

A. Becauſe it is the ſeed of God, and every ſoul poſſeſſed of it is united to Chriſt: Likewiſe there is a ſtature appointed, to which every Chriſtian muſt gradually advance, that ſo he may be made meet for the inheritance above, 1 John iii. 9. John xv. 5. Eph. iv. 12, 13. Col. i. 12.

Q. When may grace be ſaid truly to grow in a believer?

A. When it receiveth new additions or degrees of ſtrength, which may be perceived, either, 1. When its growth is inward, in reſpect of heart-ſincerity and livelineſs: Or, 2. When it is outward, in reſpect of the fruits of holineſs produced in the life: Or, 3. When it is downward, in reſpect of ſelf-abaſement, and the rooting of gracious habits in the ſoul: Or, 4. When it is upward, in ſpirituality and heavenly-mindedneſs.

Q. Do believers at all times actually grow in grace?

A. No; but they are ſtill in a growing diſpoſition, and deſirous to grow.

Q. May not true grace ſometimes decay?

A. Yes; for ſometimes believers do leave their firſt love, and the good things which remain in them may be ready to die, Rev. ii. 4. and iii. 2.

Q. Whence is it that grace doth decay in believers?

A. Sometimes it proceeds from violent ſtorms of temptations; but ordinarily from their unwatchfulneſs, their neglect of employing Chriſt, their grieving of the Spirit, or harbouring of known ſin.

Q. What are the ordinary ſymptoms of grace in decay?

A. 1. Loſs of ſpiritual appetite, and of delight in duty. 2. Loſs of wonted hatred of ſin, and of tenderneſs of conſcience. 3. Loſs of deſire for the coming of Chriſt's kingdom. 4. A growing love to the world and time's things.

Q. How may we know whether grace be real or true, though it be very weak?

A. Wherever grace is true, ſin will be felt as a burden, the ſoul will eſteem Chriſt precious, his ordinances and people will be loved, and more grace and holineſs will be earneſtly deſired.

Q. What means ſhall we uſe to get weak and languiſhing grace brought to thrive and grow?

A. We muſt be duly ſenſible of the ſpiritual conſumption, and apply to the phyſician for help; we muſt ſearch if there be any unmortified luſt at the root of grace, and remove it; we muſt look to Chriſt for his Spirit's influences and bleſſing upon ordinances and providences, earneſtly pleading his promiſes of quickening and ſtrength, and that he may come as the dew to Iſrael, Pſal. lxxxv. 6. Hoſ. xiv. 4, 5, 6. Pſal. cxix. 25, 28.

Of Perſeverance in Grace.

Q. Is perſeverance in grace a privilege of juſtified perſons? A. Yes.

Q. What do you mean by perſeverance in grace?

A. A continuing ſtill in the ſtate of grace, and in the practice of godlineſs to the end.

Q. Can no juſtified perſon fall totally and finally from grace? A. No.

Q. How are you aſſured of that?

A. From the unchangeableneſs of God, and the nature of grace; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; and grace in believers is a well of water ſpringing up unto everlaſting life, Rom. xi. 29. John iv. 14.

Q. Do all that profeſs Chriſt perſevere in their profeſſion?

A. No; for we read of many who have fallen from it, John vi. 66.

Q. Why do not all the profeſſors of Chriſt perſevere?

A. Becauſe many of them are not rooted in ſincerity; and they who begin in hypocriſy do commonly end in apoſtaſy, Mat. xiii. 20, 21. Pſal. lxxviii. 37.

Q. May not truly gracious ſouls fall very foully into groſs ſins? A. Yes.

Q. Have we any examples of ſuch upon record?

A. Yes; we have Lot, Noah, David and Peter.

Q. Why are ſuch inſtances recorded?

A. To teach us to diſtruſt our own ſtrength, to avoid all temptations to ſin, to live and rely upon our Surety, and not to deſpair of mercy upon our penitent returning to the Lord.

Q. Did not theſe who fell ſo foully fall from grace?

A. 1. Not totally: For tho' they fell from many degrees of grace, yet not from all grace; they came to have little faith, but not to be quite without faith. 2. Not finally, or without recovery; for tho' they fell from God for a time, yet repentance and recovery was ſecured to them.

Q. Are there not many who have once looked well, who have become final apoſtates from God?

A. Yes; but, when they fall totally and finally from God, we may conclude they were never that in ſincerity which they appeared to be: They were only ſaints in profeſſion, but not in reality, 1 John ii. 19.

Q. Is it not ſaid, The branches in Chriſt that bear not fruit ſhall be taken away, John xv. 2. Is not that a falling from grace?

A. Theſe fruitleſs branches, there ſpoke of, were not in Chriſt by faith, but by profeſſion only.

Q. Did not Adam and Solomon, who were gracious perſons, fall totally and finally ?

A. As for Adam, he had no promiſe of perſeverance, tho' yet it is moſt probable he was recovered by believing in Chriſt upon the promiſe that was freely tendered to him by God himſelf. And as for Solomon, we have ground to believe he was recovered by the mercy of God unto repentance, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15.

Q. Why have we ſo many cautions and warnings given to believers in ſcripture, if they could not fall away from grace ?

A. Theſe warnings and dehortations are ſome of the means which God makes uſe of to prevent their falling away.

Q. Is it owing to the free-will or ſtrength of grace in believers that they fall not away finally ?

A. No; for Adam and angels, who had ſtronger grace, fell; and ſo would believers, if they were not upheld by a power ſuperiour to any thing in themſelves.

Q. What are the main grounds of the ſaints perſeverance ?

A. The immutability of God's covenant and electing love; their being the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood, and united to him; Chriſt's potent interceſſion, together with the power and promiſe of God, John x. 11. 28. Luke xxii. 32. 1 Pet. i. 5.

Q. What promiſe have believers for their perſeverance in grace to the end ?

A. They have among others, that in Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me."

QUEST. XXXVII.

Q. *What benefits do believers receive from Chriſt at death ?*

A. The ſouls of believers are at their death made perfect in holineſs, and do immediately paſs into glory; and their bodies being ſtill united to Chriſt do reſt in their graves till the reſurrection.

Q. Do the benefits which believers receive from Chriſt end with their lives ?

A. By no means; for they receive far greater benefits than ever at death, and after death.

Q. Whom do you underſtand by believers here ?

A. Theſe who give credit to the word of God, and do heartily receive and reſt upon Chriſt for ſalvation as he is offered to ſinners in the goſpel.

Q. Whether is it upon believers ſouls or bodies that Chriſt doth beſtow his benefits at death ?

A. It is both upon their ſouls and bodies.

Q. What are the benefits granted to their ſouls at death ?

A. There are two mentioned in the anſwer; 1. They are made perfect in holineſs. 2. They do immediately paſs into glory.

Q. Do all believers arrive at perfection in holineſs ?

A. Yes

Q. When do they arrive at it ? A. At their death.

Q. Can none attain to it during their life ? A. No.

Q. Why ſo ?

A. Becauſe ſin is never wholly rooted out of the ſoul till death.

Q. How doth that appear ?

A. Both from the word of God, and our own experience. 1 John i. 8. Rom. vii 23. 24.

Q. Why muſt all believers be made perfectly holy at death ?

A. Becauſe no unclean thing can enter within the gates of the new Jeruſalem. Rev. xxi. 27.

Q. How is it that believers are made perfectly holy at death ?

A. Their graces are perfected, and the roots of ſin plucked up out of their nature, which cannot be till the earthly fabric be diſſolved.

Q. Do the ſouls of believers die or ſleep with their bodies ?

A. No; they live, and act in a ſeparate ſtate.

Q. Whither do they go upon leaving the body ?

A. Into glory.

Q. How ſoon after death ?

A. Immediately, without any delay.

Q. Do they not go to Purgatory by the way, that they may be purged from ſin, and made pure to enter into heaven ?

A. There is no ground for that popiſh fiction in the word of God, there being no purgatory, but the blood of Chriſt.

Q. How do you prove from ſcripture that they paſs immediately into glory ?

A. From theſe paſſages which tell us, that Lazarus's ſoul was preſently carried by angels into Abraham's boſom; that the penitent thief was immediately glorified; that death is gain to the believer, and brings him to the Lord's preſence: all which made the apoſtle deſire to depart that he might be with Chriſt, Luke xvi. 22. Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 21. 23.

Q. What do you mean by that glory which believers immediately paſs into at death ?

A. The immediate preſence, viſion and fruition of God, which they are preſently admitted to after death. Well may believers be ſaid then to paſs into glory; for then it is that they paſs into a glorious ſtate, a glorious place, a glorious company, and glorious employment.

Q. What is that glorious ſtate which believers enter into at death ?

A. It is a ſtate of eternal reſt and nearneſs with God, Heb. iv. 9 Rev. xiv. 13. 2 Cor. v. 8.

Q. What is that glorious place which they paſs into ?

A. It is their Father's houſe in heaven, called the King's palace, in which Chriſt hath prepared manſions for them, Pſal. xliii. 15. John xiv. 2.

Q. What is the glorious company they are admitted to ?

A. The company of God, of Chriſt, of the angels, and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect. 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 21. 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. Heb. xii 22. 23. 24.

Q. What is the glorious employment they enter upon ?

A. They will be employed continually in admiring and praiſing of God.

Q. What is it in God that will be the ſubject of their admiration and praiſe ?

A. His glorious perfections, and wonderful works; and eſpecially his redeeming love, and that amazing work of *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, and dying for us, Rev. i. 5. and iv. 11. and v. 9. 12.

Q. What benefits have believers from Chriſt at death in reſpect of their bodies ?

A. Their bodies at death do remain in union with Chriſt, and do reſt in their graves as in beds until the reſurrection, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. Iſa. lvii. 2.

Q. Wherefore is it that believers muſt meet with death ?

A. Becauſe it is appointed unto men once to die ; and death doth paſs upon all men, for that all have ſinned, Heb. ix. 27. Rom. v. 12.

Q. Are none excepted from this law of death ?

A. None, but Enoch and Elias, who were tranſlated to heaven without taſting of death ; and theſe who will be found alive on the earth at Chriſt's ſecond coming, 1 Cor. xv. 51. 1 Theſſ. iv. 15.

Q. Was death appointed as the puniſhment of ſin ?

A. Yes, Rom. vi. 23.

Q. Why then do believers die, ſeeing they are freed from all the puniſhment of ſin, by Chriſt's ſuffering it for them ?

A. Chriſt might have removed death altogether from believers if he had pleaſed ; but he hath thought fit only by his death to change the nature of it, and take all that was penal out of it : ſo that he hath now quite altered death to believers, turning it from an enemy to be a friend, from a puniſhmenet to be a purgation, or a ſpecial mean for bringing about their perfect ſanctification, and thorough cleanſing from all ſin : and hence it is that death is ranked among the believer's bleſſings or privileges, 1 Cor. iii. 22.

Q. Is there not a great difference between the death of a believer, and of an unbeliever ?

A. Yes ; for to the one it is the effect of God's love, to the other it is the puniſhment of ſin ; to the one it is his Father's ſervant ſent to bring him home to his Father's houſe, to the other it is an officer of juſtice ſent to arreſt him for his fearful debts and crimes.

Q. What is the difference between the graves of believers, and unbelievers ?

A. The graves of believers are beds of reſt, wherein they ſleep in Jeſus ; and it is by virtue of the union ſubſiſting between him and them, that they ſhall be awaked from their ſleep in the morning of the reſurrection : but the grave is a priſon to unbelievers, wherein their bodies are kept in cuſtody until the judgment of the great day ; and from which they ſhall be raiſed by the power of God their terrible Judge.

Q. How can there be any union between ſo glorious a perſon as Chriſt, and our vile bodies when rotting in the grave ?

A. Not only becauſe the covenant which Chriſt ſtands in to believers reacheth to their very duſt, but more eſpecially becauſe there is a myſtical union between Chriſt as the head, and believers as the members of his myſtical body ; and, their duſt being parts of that body myſtical, Chriſt doth ſtill look upon the ſame as related to him.

Q. Since death doth diſſolve the union that is between the ſoul and body, why doth it not alſo diſſolve the union between Chriſt and the body ?

A. Becauſe the myſtical union that is between Chriſt and his people is in its nature indiſſolvable, ſo that death cannot looſe it, as it doth other unions and relations ; but in this reſpect it is like the hypoſtatical union that is between the divine and human nature in the perſon of Chriſt : for, when Chriſt died, the hypoſtatical union ſtill remained, his divine nature being united both to his ſoul in heaven, and to his body in the grave ; ſo, when believers die, the myſtical union ſtill remains, Chriſt their head being united both to their ſouls in heaven, and to their bodies lying in the grave.

Q. Are all believers bodies laid in the graves ?

A. No, ſtrictly ſpeaking ; for ſome martyrs have been burnt in fires to aſhes, ſome devoured by wild beaſts, and ſome drowned in the ſea : But the places whereſoever the bodies of ſuch are put to corrupt, are to them as their graves ; and thence will Chriſt bring them.

Q. In what reſpect is the believer's death called a ſleep ?

A. Becauſe, as ſleep doth eaſe and refreſh the man that is weary with toil and labour ; ſo death doth eaſe the weary believer of all his toil and ſtruggling with ſin, ſatan, and the world. Again, death is a ſleep to the believer, in regard he is to be wakened again from it in the morning of the reſurrection, Pſal. xvii. 15. and xlix. 14.

Q. Why are believers graves called beds of reſt ?

A. Becauſe therein they reſt from all their afflictions and labours in this world ; from the wicked's perſecutions, ſatan's temptations, and ſin's workings.

Q. How long ſhall they reſt in their graves ?

A. Till the reſurrection.

QUEST. XXXVIII.

Q. *What benefits do belivers receive from Chriſt at the reſurrection ?*

A. At the reſurrection, believers, being raiſed up in glory, ſhall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfely bleſſed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Q. What is meant by the reſurrection here ſpoken of ?

A. The raiſing of all the dead from their graves, ſmall and great, juſt and unjuſt, who have lived in all ages of the world, from the creation of it, unto the laſt day, Acts xxiv. 15. Rev. xx. 12.

Q. How doth the reſurrection differ from creation ?

A. Creation is the making of a new body out of the earth, that did not ſubſiſt before ; but reſurrection is the raiſing up again of the ſame body out of its former duſt.

Q. When is this univerſal reſurrection to be ?

A. At the laſt day, when Chriſt ſhall come to judgment.

Q. How do you prove the truth and certainty of ſuch a reſurrection ?

A. From the almighty power of God, that is abundantly able to raiſe the dead ; and from the holy ſcriptures, wherein God expreſsly declares he will raiſe them.

Q. What was the cauſe of the Sadducees error, who denied the reſurrection ?

A. Their not knowing the two great foundations of this doctrine, namely, the ſcriptures, and the power of God, as Chriſt told them, Mat. xxii. 29.

Q. How could they be ignorant of this doctrine of the reſurrection from the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, ſeeing Job and Daniel plainly told them of it ? Job xix. 26, 27. Dan. xii. 2.

A. The Sadducees had little regard to any of theſe writings, except the five books of Moſes, which they imagined gave no hint of the reſurrection, or of a future ſtate; But our Lord did plainly evince the contrary from theſe very books, to the conviction of all, Mat. xxii. 31, 32, &c. Mark xii. 26, 27.

Q. How did Chriſt prove the reſurrection, and a future ſtate, from the books of Moſes?

A. From Exod. iii. 6. where God in the buſh ſpoke to Moſes long after Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob were dead, ſaying, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob.* Now, ſeeing he ſaith not I *was* their God; but, I *am* their God; Our Lord reaſons from it, *He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.* And, ſeeing the covenant-relation ſtill ſtands, their ſouls muſt then be living, and ſo alſo muſt be united again to their bodies, to which they have an innate inclination, that ſo they may be made for ever happy in the enjoyment of their covenanted God.

Q. But have we not far clearer diſcoveries of this doctrine in the New Teſtament?

A. Yes, in many places of it.

Q. How is it credible, the dead bodies of men, after undergoing innumerable different alterations, ſhould afterwards be raiſed again to what they were?

A. It ſhould in no wiſe be thought incredible, that God ſhould raiſe the dead: For, if his power was able to raiſe the whole world out of nothing, it cannot be thought hard for him to raiſe our bodies out of the former duſt, Acts xxvi. 8.

Q. Hath not God given us many proofs aud inſtances of his power to raiſe the dead?

A. Yes, as in the raiſing of the widow of Zarephath's ſon by Elijah, the Shunamite's ſon by Eliſha, the dead man at the touch of Eliſha's bones, Dorcas by Peter, Eutychus by Paul, beſides the reſurrection of Chriſt himſelf, and many that were raiſed by him while he was on earth, 1 Kings xvii. 2 Kings iv. 2 Kings xiii. Acts ix. Acts xx. Mat. xxvii. Luke vii. Mat. ix. John xi.

Q. Doth not the nature and perfection of God's infinite juſtice require that there ſhould be a reſurrection?

A. Yes; For, ſeeing the bodies of the wicked have been actors in their ſins, it is juſt they ſhould ſhare in the puniſhment of them; and believers bodies having been inſtruments in God's ſervice, it is agreeable to equity that they ſhould ſhare in the reward and glory conferred upon them.

Q. Have you not ſome peculiar arguments for the reſurrection of believers bodies?

A. Yes; the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt their head, and the nature of God's covenant with believers, are certain and ſatisfying arguments for it.

Q. Will the dead be raiſed with the ſame very bodies they had when they were alive?

A. Yes.

Q. How do you prove that?

A. Becauſe, theſe very bodies being the inſtruments of piety or vice, it is juſt that theſe, and no other, ſhould partake of the reward or puniſhment. Again, if they were not the ſame bodies, it would be more properly a new creation, than a reſurrection. But Job puts the matter out of doubt, by aſſuring us that the bodies will be the very ſame, Job xix. 26, 27. "And though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God; Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another."

Q. Will not the bodies of believers, when raiſed, differ from what they are now?

A. Not in regard of their ſubſtance or eſſence, tho' they will differ very much in reſpect of qualities.

Q. What will be the different qualities of believers bodies when raiſed again?

A. Here they were weak, ſickly, corrupt and dying bodies, and called vile bodies, as being the inſtruments of much ſin; but then they ſhall be ſtrong, healthful, pure, ſpiritual, incorruptible, immortal and beautiful bodies. Phil. iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44, 52, 53, 54.

Q. How are believers bodies ſaid to be raiſed in glory, and to be made conform to Chriſt's glorious Body?

A. In regard they ſhall partake of his glory: For Chriſt's body ſhall ſhine as the ſun, and theirs ſhall ſhine as ſo many bright ſtars round about him; only all their glory will be borrowed from Chriſt their head.

Q. Will there not be a great difference betwixt the reſurrection of the juſt and unjuſt?

A. Yes: for the ſaints will be raiſed to eternal life, and that by virtue of Chriſt's reſurrection, and of their union with him; but the wicked ſhall be raiſed to condemnation by virtue of the power and juſtice of God, which ſhall bring them like malefactors from priſon to the judgment ſeat. The ſaints ſhall riſe with glory and triumph amidſt angels attending them; but the wicked ſhall riſe with trembling and horror, having muſt deformed and ghaſtly looks, as men going to be ſentenced to everlaſting burnings.

Q. What will be the great means of raiſing the dead at the laſt day?

A The voice of the archangel, and ſound of the laſt trumpet, which ſhall give ſuch a powerful ſummons to the dead, that none can ſit; all thereupon muſt riſe and appear before their judge.

Q. Will there not be a ſpeedy ſeparation made betwixt the righteous and wicked in that day?

A. Yes; the angels will then be employed to ſeparate the godly from the wicked, and gather them altogether in one bleſſed company.

Q. How ſhall believers be then diſpoſed of?

A. They will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

Q. What privileges ſhall believers have at the judgment-ſeat above others?

A. Chriſt will place them on his right hand: He will openly acknowledge and acquit them: He will declare their right to the glorious inheritance prepared for them, and invite them to take poſſeſſion of it: He will cauſe them ſit with him as aſſeſſors in judging wicked angels and men.

Q. What do you mean by Chriſt's open acknowledging of believers in that day?

A. His public owning of them as his elect and redeemed ones.

Q. Whom doth Chriſt ſay he will acknowledge for his at that day?

A. Theſe who own and confeſs Chriſt now.

Q. Whom will Chriſt deny in that day?

A. Theſe who diſown and deny Chriſt now, Mat. x. 32, 33. "Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father who is in heaven. But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father who is in heaven."

Q. What do you mean by Chriſt's open acquitting of believers in that day?

A. His public juſtifying and abſolving of them from all the guilt of their ſins; and his vindicating and clearing them from all the world's ſlanders and aſperſions.

Q. Are not believers acknowledged and acquitted by Chriſt before this time?

A. Yes; he doth it in this world when their ſins are pardoned, and he intimates this to them by his Spirit's bearing teſtimony with their conſciences, Rom. viii. 16, 33. 1 John iii. 21.

Q. How doth Chriſt's acknowledging and acquitting of believers, now, differ from his doing it at the judgment ſeat?

A. 1. In reſpect of promulgation; the firſt is ſecret in the believers boſom, the ſecond is public before men and angels. 2. In reſpect of ſubjective certainty; the believer may doubt of the firſt, but he cannot doubt of the ſecond, it being a judicial ſentence pronounced by the judge's own mouth with the greateſt ſolemnity.

Q. What will be the effect of this acknowledgment and acquittance?

A. It will for ever remove all doubts and fears from believers hearts, and fill them with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. Hence this day is called the *time of refreſhing* to them, Acts iii. 19.

Q. Should not the faith of this acknowledgment and acquittance by Chriſt, encourage us to own Chriſt in his perſon, offices, and truths, in the face of all dangers?

A. Yes.

Q. How ſhall we attain to that happy reſurrection and acquittance at the laſt day?

A. We muſt labour to be found in Chriſt, and clothed upon with his righteouſneſs: We muſt conſtantly adhere to Chriſt and his truths, advance in the work of mortification, and ſtudy holineſs in all manner of converſation.

Q. When Chriſt the Judge ſhall pronounce the ſentences of abſolution and condemnation, will not the execution thereof ſpeedily follow?

A. Yes; for after paſſing of them, it is added Mat. xxv. 46 "And the wicked ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Q. Will not the wicked be made to acknowledge the juſtice of the ſentence againſt them?

A. Yes, becauſe Chriſt, in paſſing the ſentence, gives them what was their own former wiſh and deſire.

Q. What was that?

A. The abſence of God: As they ſaid to God here, *Depart from us*: ſo Chriſt ſaith to them then, *Depart from me.*

Q. Will not the ſaints after their ſentence enter immediately upon perfect happineſs? *A.* Yes.

Q. What will be their happineſs after the judgment is over?

A. They ſhall be made perfectly bleſſed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

Q. What is included in perfect bliſs?

A. Perfect freedom from all evil, and full enjoyment of all good.

Q. What evils will believers be freed from in heaven?

A. From all manner of ſin, guilt, or pollution; from all inclinations or temptations to ſin; and from all the bitter fruits and effects of ſin, ſuch as complaints, fears, or trouble of any kind.

Q. When is it that a man enjoys all that is good?

A. When he attains to the full enjoyment of God.

Q. Can we attain to that here upon earth?

A. No: for tho' God may be enjoyed by his people in ſome meaſure here, when they attain to communion with him in his ordinances; yet the full enjoyment of God is reſerved for heaven hereafter.

Q. Wherein doth the full enjoyment of God in heaven conſiſt?

A. 1. In being admitted to his glorious preſence. 2. In having the immediate beatifick viſion of his face. 3. In having the full perſwaſion and ſenſe of his love. 4. In being made like him. 5. In having fulneſs of delight and ſatisfaction in God as our everlaſting portion.

Q. Is it poſſible that any creature can fully enjoy God?

A. No creature can enjoy God fully, as God enjoys himſelf; but believers have ſuch enjoyment of God in heaven as fills them, in the meaſure they are capable of.

Q. How can any man ſee his face, when he is the inviſible God?

A. He is inviſible to the eye of the body, but not to the eye of the mind.

Q. How can a creature be made like to him that is infinite?

A. The holineſs and purity of the rational creature is ſome ſhadow or picture of the infinite holineſs of God.

Q. How long ſhall believers be bleſt with the full enjoyment of God in heaven?

A. Not for days or years, but for all eternity; and this is the ingredient that will exceedingly ſweeten their happineſs above, that it is without end, and they ſhall ever be with the Lord, 1 Theſſ. vi. 17.

Q. How is God ſaid to be *All in All* in heaven?

A. It imports theſe things; 1. That ſaints will be ſatisfied there from God alone. 2. That there will be no need there of theſe ſubordinate things, out of which they uſed formerly to bring comfort. 3. That every thing they before have found comfortable, will all be eminently found and enjoyed in God.

Q. Will not the ſaints be continually employed in adoring, praiſing and worſhipping God in heaven?

A. Yes.

Q. Will not their worſhip and adoration above, far tranſcend the moſt refined worſhip upon earth?

A. Yes, in regard there will be no mixture of ſin, no wandering, no hypocriſy, no imperfection in the worſhip above: They will act above with the higheſt delight and conſtancy, without any wearineſs or intermiſſion for ever.

QUEST. XXXIX.

Q. *What is the duty which God requireth of man?*

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Q. Doth this queſtion begin the ſecond part of the catechiſm? A. Yes.

Q. What is the difference between the firſt and ſecond part of the catechiſm?

A. The firſt part doth treat of matters of faith, and what man is to believe concerning God: The ſecond part doth handle matters of practice, and what is man's duty towards God.

Q. Are not theſe the two great leſſons which the ſcriptures principally teach us?

A. Yes: And as we have heard the firſt, ſo we ought to be attentive to the ſecond; for man has ſomething to do as well as ſomething to believe.

Q. What do you mean by duty here?

A. That which a man oweth to God, or ought to do for God.

Q. What do you mean by obedience?

A. A man's going in with the will of God, either in what he commands or forbids.

Q. What is the rule of our duty and obedience?

A. The revealed will of God.

Q. What do you mean by God's revealed will?

A. God's mind diſcovered and made known to us in the ſcriptures.

Q. Why may not the traditions or inventions of men be our rule?

A. Becauſe God doth reject all will-worſhip and ſuperſtitious performances; ſaying, *Who hath required this at your hand?* Iſa. i. 12.

Q. Hath God any other will beſides his revealed will?

A. Yes his ſecret will.

Q. What is the difference between God's ſecret and revealed will?

A. God's ſecret will is his eternal counſel and decrees concerning all events whatſoever, which is not known till they come to paſs; but God's revealed will is that which he declares and lays before us as our duty, that we may practiſe and follow it.

Q. Is God's ſecret will no part of our rule?

A. No; "for ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God, but thoſe things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children," Deut. xxix. 29.

Q. Upon what account is our obedience and ſervice due to God?

A. Becauſe God is our Creator, our Preſerver, our Benefactor, and our ſupreme Lord and Lawgiver.

Q. Is there not obedience due to others beſides to God?

A. Yes; ſervants muſt obey their maſters, children their parents, and ſubjects their magiſtrates, but not as we are bound to obey God.

Q. What is the difference between the obedience we owe to God, and what we owe to man?

A. We muſt obey God for his own ſake, and becauſe of his ſupreme authority; but we muſt obey men our ſuperiors, chiefly becauſe God enjoins it, and becauſe their commands are agreeable to his will.

Q. What is to be done when the commands of God and of men are oppoſite one to another?

A. In that caſe we are to obey God rather than man, Acts iv. 19.

Q. What ſort of obedience is it that is acceptable to God?

A. It muſt be ſincere, univerſal and conſtant; it muſt proceed from right principles, namely, from a renewed heart; from faith, and from the love of God, and of Jeſus Chriſt, and it muſt be directed to right ends, namely, to advance the honour and glory of God.

Q. Can we merit any thing at God's hands by our obedience?

A No, but muſt count ourſelves unprofitable ſervants after we have done our beſt. Our beſt performances are imperfect, ſo that it is by Chriſt's obedience, not our own, that we muſt be ſaved.

Q. Is it our duty notwithſtanding to ſtudy to obey God in the beſt manner we can?

A. Yes, becauſe God commands it.

Q. Will not God accept of our obedience if ſincere, tho' attended with imperfection?

A. Yes, upon the account of Chriſt's merits and interceſſion.

Q. Is it not a yoke for men to be bound to conſtant obedience and ſervice to God all the days of their lives?

A. No; for theſe who know God, and love him, count his ſervice their greateſt freedom, Pſal. cxix. 45.

Q. Will they be free from this ſervice in heaven?

A. No; for there his ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and count this their greateſt happineſs, Rev. xxii. 3.

Q. Will not their ſervice in heaven differ much from what it is now?

A. Yes; for there they will ſerve God without ſin or wearineſs.

QUEST. XL.

Q. *What did God at firſt reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

A. The rule which God at firſt revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.

Q. Is man appointed to be under the obligation and direction of a law?

A. Yes.

Q. Why ſo?

A. Becauſe, being made with rational faculties for the ſervice of his Creator, he muſt needs be accountable to God for his actions.

Q. What is the uſe of a law to men?

A. To ſhew to them what is ſin, and what is duty.

Q. What is the law that was firſt given to men?

A. The moral law.

Q. What do you mean by the moral law?

Q. That law which is the perpetually binding rule of our manners and practice, being the unalterable declation of the will of God concerning the duties of righteouſneſs, which all men do owe to God and their neighbours, in all ages of the world; which law is briefly ſummed up in the commandments.

Q. Why is it called moral?

A. Becauſe it is a perpetual rule for regulating our manners and converſation both towards God and man.

Q. How can the moral law be ſaid to be the firſt rule revealed to man, ſeeing the ten commandments were only given at Sinai, above two thouſand years after man was created?

A. The moral law notwithſtanding was the firſt rule, ſeeing it was written on the heart of man at his firſt creation, he being made after the image of God.

Q. Doth this law ſtill remain written upon man's heart?

A. The moral law being agreeable to the light of nature, though it be ſadly obſcured by the fall, yet ſome relicks of it are to be found on the hearts of all mankind,

Q. Is the moral law binding upon the heathen world, who have not the ſcriptures to make it known to them?

A. Yes; it is binding upon all mankind, ſeeing it was fully made known to man at his firſt creation, and which knowledge he loſt by his own fault. And tho' the heathen want the benefit of ſcripture light, yet ſo much of the moral law is made known to them by the light of nature, as is ſufficient to leave them without excuſe for their diſobedience, Rom. ii. 14, 15.

Q. If the moral law be natural, what need was there for writing it to us in the Bible?

A. 1. Becauſe the fall of man had wofully darkened our minds, and obſcured the knowledge of this law. 2. God would hereby ſhew that he is the Author of the law and light of nature. 3. He deſigned to leave ſinners the more inexcuſable.

Q. Can any man obtain ſalvation by his obedience to the moral law? *A.* No.

Q. Can any man now obey this law perfectly?

A. No.

Q. Is it juſt for God to require perfect obedience to the law when no man is able to give it?

A. Yes; for God may juſtly demand what he hath a right to, tho' we have loſt it by our own fault. God gave man at his creation power to obey perfectly, which he ſquandered away: now, tho' a debitor do diſable himſelf for paying his debt, the creditor doth not thereby loſe his right to aſk it.

Q. Why is the law given to men, ſeeing none can obtain life by it?

A. To be a reſtraint to ſin, and a rule of righteouſneſs; and particularly, the law is given to be a ſchoolmaſter to bring men to Chriſt, Gal. iii. 24.

Q. How doth the law as a ſchool-maſter bring men to Chriſt?

A. As a ſchool-maſter by his threats and whips doth excite dull ſcholars to learn knowledge for their good; ſo the law by its challenges, convictions, threatenings and curſes doth awake ſecure ſouls to ſee their ſins and dangers, and to flee to Chriſt for a perfect righteouſneſs to anſwer the demands of the law, and to ſhelter them from its curſes.

Q. Doth the law lead all men to Chriſt? *A.* No.

Q. For what uſe is the law to them who are not led to Chriſt?

A. It ſerves to render them inexcuſable, if they continue ſtill in their Chriſtleſs ſtate, after their ſin and danger are diſcovered to them by the law.

Q. Is the law of any uſe to the regenerate, who are already brought to Chriſt?

A. Yes; it ſerves to ſhew them how much they are bound to Chriſt for fulfilling it, and enduring its curſe for them; and to engage them to live holy and thankful lives to his glory: and particularly, the law is given to them as a rule of life, that they may order their converſations by it.

Q. How can the moral law be a rule of obedience under the goſpel, ſeeing it is ſaid of believers, that they are not under the law, but under grace? Rom. vi. 14.

A. The meaning is, that believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, being delivered from the curſing and condemning power of the law by their Surety Chriſt. But tho' it be not a covenant to them, whereby they are either to be juſtified or condemned; yet it is ſtill continued as a rule, by which they are to regulate both their hearts and lives, Rom. iii. 31. Rom. vii. 7, 12. Tit. ii. 11. 12. 1 Cor. ix. 21.

Q. How is Chriſt ſaid to be the end of the law for righteouſneſs to us? Rom. x. 4.

A. In regard Chriſt doth anſwer the primary deſign of the law under the firſt covenant, which was to bring men to a perfect obedience of righteouſneſs for their juſtification; this we cannot now find by the law, therefore we muſt ſeek it in Chriſt where it is to be found. The end and ſcope of the law is now gain'd in Chriſt, ſeeing he is that to a believer, which the law would have been to him if he could have perfectly kept it, namely, righteouſneſs, juſtification, and ſalvation.

Q. Doth the moral law preach Chriſt to us?

A. No; but God mercifully makes uſe of it as a ſpur to excite men to flee to Chriſt for ſalvation.

Q. How doth it that?

A. By ſhewing to men that they have deſtroyed themſelves, and that they cannot be their own ſaviours; and ſo it becomes a ſchool-maſter to bring them to Chriſt, as was before explained.

Q. What is it then that preacheth Chriſt to men and ſhews them plainly the way of ſalvation?

A. The goſpel.

Q. What do ye mean by the goſpel?

A. Any part of the Old and New Teſtament that brings to us the glad tidings of ſalvation, or points out the way to it; for the word *goſpel* ſignifies glad tidings, or good news.

Q. Are any news ſo welcome or refreſhing to ſenſible ſinners, as the news which the goſpel brings?

A No news are ſo joyful as the doctrine of free grace, no tidings ſo ſweet as the news of pardon, the news of a Saviour and of ſalvation to the chief of ſinners.

Q. Are the law and goſpel oppoſite to one another?

A. No; for the one is ſubſervient to the other, Gal. iii. 21. 1 Tim. i. 9. 10. 11. Rom. iii. 31.

Q. Did God give any other laws to men beſides the moral law?

A. Yes; he gave alſo to the Jews the judicial and the ceremonial law, which were explained before under the 14th queſt. page 294.

QUEST. XLI.

Q. *Where is the moral law ſummarily comprehended?*

A. The moral law is ſummarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

Q. What mean you by the law its being ſummarily comprehended?

A. That the law of God, or moral law, which is contained at large in the whole bible, is briefly, or in few words, ſummed up in the ten commandments: and theſe ten commandments are no more but a very ſhort ſum of the moral law, tho' they be a moſt comprehenſive ſum of it.

Q. How are the ten commandments commonly divided?

A. Into two tables; the firſt four commandments make the firſt table, containing our duty to God; the laſt ſix commandments make the ſecond table, containing our duty to our neighbour.

Q. How do the Papiſts divide theſe commandments?

A. Tho' they cannot refuſe them to be ten in number and theſe ten to be divided into two tables, ſeeing the ſcripture ſo expreſly doth aſſert both, Deut. iv. 13. Yet they make but three in the firſt table, and ſeven in the ſecond; deſigning this way to cloke their worſhipping of images: For they would gladly conceal the ſecond command, which ſtrikes directly againſt them, by making it a pendicle of the firſt; and ſo they reckon the firſt and ſecond commandment to be but one. And that they may ſtill have the number of ten commandments, they divide the tenth into two.

Q. What abſurdity is there in this way of doing?

A. It is againſt the plain ſenſe and ſcope of the words of the decalogue. For the firſt and ſecond commandments are evidently diſtinct, the firſt preſcribing the right object of worſhip. and the ſecond the right way of worſhip. And as for the tenth commandment, it appears plainly from the tenor of it, to be but one; the ſcope of it being to prohibit men to covet any thing that belongs to their neighbours: So that, if it was at all to be divided, it ſhould be divided at leaſt into ſix commands, or rather into as many commands as there are things which are our neighbours.

Q. Where were theſe ten commandments firſt promulgated?

A. At mount Sinai.

Q. After what manner was it done?

A. With the greateſt ſolemnity and terror: For the mount was railed about, that none might touch it: the angels attended; the glory of God viſibly deſcended in a cloud; there were thunderings, lightnings, the ſound of a trumpet, and God's voice was heard; the mountain ſhook; the people trembled, and even Moſes himſelf did quake: And laſtly, God with his own finger did engrave the ten commands upon two tables of ſtone.

Q. Why was the law given in this manner?

A. To poſſeſs the world with awful thoughts of the Lawgiver, and to ſhew them the danger of breaking his holy law.

Q. What are the properties of this law?

A. Is it holy, juſt, good, ſpiritual, and exceeding broad, Rom. vii. 12, 14. Pſal. cxix. 96.

Q. Why is it called ſpiritual?

A. Becauſe it reacheth to the thoughts and frame of the heart, as well as to the outward life and converſation.

Q. Why is it called exceeding broad?

A. Becauſe of the large extent and comprehenſiveneſs of its meaning.

Q. In what reſpect is the law ſo comprehenſive?

A. In many reſpects: As for inſtance, when it forbids any ſin, it doth at the ſame time command the contrary duty; and, when it commands any duty, it doth forbid the contrary ſin: and, when any ſin is forbidden, all inward motions and affections to it, all degrees and appearances of it, all temptations, means, words, or geſtures tending to it, are alſo forbidden; and, when any duty is commanded, the inward frame and affections ſuitable to it, and the means and helps for promoting it, are likewiſe injoined.

Q. Why did God write his law upon tables of ſtone

A. To teach us the laſting obligation of it, and that we ſhould write it on the tables of our hearts, or pray to God to do it for us.

Q. Can any man obtain to a conformity to this holy law in all things, in reſpect of his heart, words, and actions?

A. No.

Q. Are we not liable to the curſe and condemnation of the law, if we break it, or come ſhort of it in any thing.

A. Yes.

Q. How then ſhall we be ſheltered from this curſe?

A. By looking by faith to our Surety Jeſus, and to his perfect obedience and righteouſneſs to anſwer for us.

QUEST. XLII.

Q. *What is the ſum of the ten commandment?*

A. The ſum of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our ſoul, with all our ſtrength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourſelves.

Q. What do you mean by the ſum of the ten commands.

A. The main ſubſtance or life of them.

Q. What is the ſum of the firſt table of the law?

A. Love to God.

Q. What is the ſum of the ſecond table?

A. Love to our neighbour.

Q. Why are the two tables ſummed up in love to God, and our neighbour?

A. Becauſe love is the great ſpring of all obedience to them; for, where true love is to God and our neighbour, all the duties required in both tables will certainly follow.

Q. How is it that we ought to love the Lord?

A. As our God, and, with all our heart, ſoul, ſtrength, and mind, Mat. xxii. 37.

Q. What is imported in loving the Lord as *our God*?

A. That we muſt chuſe him for our God, and give up ourſelves unto him.

Q. What is imported in loving the Lord with all our *heart, ſoul, ſtrength, and mind*?

A. It imports the ſincerity, ardency, activity, and ſupremacy of our love to God; that we ought to love and ſerve him with our whole powers and faculties, and above all other things whatſoever.

Q. What are theſe things we ought to love the Lord above?

A. Above all things that we enjoy on earth, ſuch as our money or eſtates, our houſes or lands, our children or relations, our liberties, or even our very lives.

Q. What reaſon is there for loving the Lord above all things?

A. Becauſe he is the Author of all; his excellency infinitely tranſcends all; and from him we have our all, even our being, our breath, our ſouls, our ſtrength, our relations, and every thing elſe.

Q. May not a man lawfully love his relations and poſſeſſions in this world?

A. Yes, providing his love be not exceſſive.

Q. How may we know if our love to things in the world be exceſſive?

A. It is a token it is ſo, when the thoughts of theſe things juſtle out ſpiritual thoughts; and when they come to get our firſt thoughts in the morning, or our laſt at night: Or when the impreſſions of worldly things abide longer with us, than of things ſpiritual.

Q. How ſhall we know if we love God above all things?

A. It would be a good ſign if we could ſay, That we value the favour of God more than that of any creature; and that we are more affected with the loſs of

God's favour than with any worldly loſs; and that we would chuſe rather to diſpleaſe all the world, than to offend him.

Q. Who is meant by our *neighbour* that we ought to love?

A. Every man is our neighbour, and therefore we ſhould bear affection to all men.

Q. What mean you by loving our neighbour as ourſelves?

A. That we ſhould love others with the ſame truth and ſincerity of love, as we do ourſelves; or as our Saviour explains it in that golden rule, Mat. vii. 12. We ſhould be ready to do to others as we would have them doing to us: And we ſhould not do that to others, which we would not have done to us, were they placed in our circumſtances, and we in theirs.

Q. Should (according to this rule) a robber be ſpared, becauſe he would ſpare thoſe who would puniſh him; or a drunkard have what liquor he demands from us, becauſe he would give it to us if it was in his power?

A. The rule is not to be underſtood of ſelf-love that is corrupt and vitious, but of ſelf-love that is natural and innocent; it is this only that ought to be the ſtandard of doing to our neighbour In doing as we would be done to, we muſt act from a well-informed judgment, and not from any corrupt biaſs to ſin or vice.

Q. Are we bound to love our neighbour with the ſame degree of love as we bear to ourſelves?

A, No, but with the ſame ſincerity of love only.

Q. Ought we to love all mankind alike?

A. No, we ought to love all men indeed with the love of benevolence, but the ſaints only with the love of complacency, Pſal. xvi. 6.

Q. Are there not many who break this law of love to their neighbour?

A. Yes; namely, theſe who backbite their neighbour, who wiſh them evil, are grieved at their proſperity, or are inwardly glad of their hurt.

QUEST. XLIII.

Q. *What is the Preface to the Ten Commandments?*

A. The Preface to the Ten Commandments is in theſe words, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage.*

QUEST. XLIV.

Q. *What doth the Preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?*

A. The Preface to the Ten Commandments teacheth us, that, becauſe God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer; therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Q. What mean you by a Preface?

A. Something that is ſpoken or written before, in order to introduce another thing?

Q. What is the deſign of the preface to the decalogue?

A. To lay before us ſome reaſons and arguments to enforce the keeping of the commands.

Q. Why doth God make uſe of arguments to perſwade men to obedience, ſeeing he is the abſolute Sovereign of the world, who may command what he will?

A. 1. To ſhew his condeſcenſion in dealing with man, who is a rational crature, according to the principles of his nature. 2. To teach us that obedience to God is our reaſonable ſervice. 3. To teach us that he would have all his people to ſerve him willingly, and from free choice.

Q. What arguments doth God make uſe of in this preface to enforce obedience to his law?

A. They are three: The firſt is taken from God's ſovereignty over us, *I am the Lord;* The ſecond from his covenant-relation to us, *I am thy God;* The third from the redemption he hath wrought for us, "I have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage."

Q. How it is ſaid, of this preface and the ten commands, that *God ſpake all theſe words*, Exod. xx. 1. Was it only as he ſpoke the reſt of the bible?

A. No: For other parts of the bible, God ſpoke only mediately by the mouth of his prophets; but theſe words were ſpoke immediately by God himſelf.

Q. How can God be ſaid to ſpeak, who hath no mouth, tongue, or organs of ſpeech?

A. God ſpeaks not as we do; but it is eaſy for his almighty power to form a voice in the air, and to utter articulate words when he pleaſeth.

Q Should it not engage us to a ſpecial regard of theſe words, that God ſpake them himſelf?

A. Yes; for, where God hath a mouth to ſpeak, we ſhould have an ear to hear. Let us carefully hear God when he ſpeaks his laws to us, as we would have God to hear us when we ſpeak in prayer to him.

Q. What force is there in that argument for our obedience, *I am the Lord?*

A. It doth import, that he is JEHOVAH, the eternal, independent, ſelf-ſufficient, immutable, and almighty Creator, and ſupreme Sovereign, who hath being in and from himſelf, and gives being to all things; and therefore we his creatures and ſubjects owe to him all obedience.

Q. What is the force of that argument, *I am thy God?*

A. It imports that we have choſen God for our God: and that he hath owned us for his people, and beſtowed peculiar mercies on us: And therefore our covenant intereſt in him ſhould ſweeten all his commands, and ſtrongly engage us to obey them.

Q. Doth not the promiſe to believers, *I will be your God*, include greater bleſſings in it than any other promiſe in the covenant of grace?

A. Yes: For it hath in it, I'll not only give you pardon, give you heaven; but I'll give you myſelf, a whole Deity, a JEHOVAH; all I am, all I have, all I can do, ſhall be yours. I'll not only be your Friend, your Father, your Huſband; but I will be your God. All the divine attributes are yours, to make you happy; yea, all the Perſons of the glorious Trinity are yours, to contrive, carry on, and accompliſh the work of your ſalvation.

Q. How ſhall we come to get an intereſt in God as our God?

A. We muſt believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and heartily accept of him as our Mediator, who by his death hath made atonement for all who believe in him, yea hath purchaſed for them reconciliation with God, and a covenant-relation to him as their God.

Q. What force is there in that argument *(I have brought thee out of the land of Egypt)* to engage us to obedience who were never in Egypt ?

A. Tho' we were not in the earthly Egypt ; yet we are all by nature in the ſpiritual Egypt, and under the bondage of the devil and our luſts, which is worſe than Egyptian bondage. And the Iſraelites temporal deliverances from Egypt was typical of our ſpiritual deliverance from ſatan's bondage : ſo that the argument hath the ſame force with us as with the Jews.

Q. Why was the Iſraelites deliverance from Egypt ſo much made uſe of as an argument for their obedience ?

A. Becauſe Egypt was full of groſs idolatry, a plague with which they were in danger of being infected : and there they groaned under cruel bondage ; from which God delivered them in a moſt miraculous manner.

Q. Why ſhould it be reckoned ſo great a mercy to be delivered from places overſpread with idolatry.

A. Becauſe idolatry is a damnable ſin, and brings on great wrath : upon which account, the mercy of our anceſtors deliverance from myſtical Egypt (Rome's idolatry and bondage) ſhould engage us to thankful obedience to God's law, as well as the Iſraelites deliverance did their poſterity.

Q. Are not theſe who are redeemed by Chriſt from the bondage of ſatan and his luſts, ſtrongly obliged to keep his commands ?

A. Yes, Luke i. 74.

Q. Is not ſatan's ſlavery worſe than any other ?

A. Yes ; for other captives groan under their ſlavery, and long for deliverance, but ſatan's ſlaves are content and eaſy ; other tyrants rule only over the bodies of their ſlaves, but ſatan rules over the ſoul and all its faculties.

Q. How may we know if we be redeemed by Chriſt from this bondage ?

A. It will be a good ſign, if the Redeemer be precious to us, particularly in his kingly office ; and if we find the power of indwelling ſin ſo broken in us, that this boſom enemy doth not triumph over us.

QUEST. XLV.

Q. *Which is the firſt commandment ?*

A. The firſt commandment is, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me.*

QUEST. XLVI.

Q. *What is required in the firſt commandment ?*

A. The firſt commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God ; and to worſhip and glorify him accordingly.

Q. Why doth this and the reſt of the commands ſtill run in the ſingular number, Thou, and not You ?

A. Becauſe God would have every man to notice the directions thereof as particularly as if they were ſpoke to himſelf by name.

Q. How is the firſt command ſaid to require things of us, when it ſeems only to forbid ?

A. Becauſe it is a rule for the right underſtanding of the commands. That where a ſin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded ; and, where a duty is commanded the contrary ſin is forbidden : and ſo we find the ſcripture explains the law, Mat. v. 21. 23. Eph. iv. 28. Iſa. lviii. 13. Mat. xv. 4. 5. 6.

Q. How many duties doth the firſt commandment chiefly require ?

A. Four ; 1. To know God. 2. To acknowledge God. 3. To worſhip God. 4. To glorify God.

Q. Doth God expreſly command us to ſtudy to know him ?

A. Yes, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. *And thou,* Solomon *my ſon, know thou the God of thy father.*

Q. Is it not highly dangerous to live without the knowledge of God ?

A. Yes, Jer. x. 25. "Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not."

Q. Is not ignorance of God yet more dangerous to theſe who live in a land of light and enjoy the means of knowledge ?

A. Yes, ſeeing they are without all excuſe.

Q. Is it ſufficient to know that there is a God ?

A. No ; we muſt alſo know what God is, and what are his works.

Q. What are theſe things we muſt know of God ?

A. We ſhould ſtudy to know God, 1. In his unity of eſſence. 2. In his Trinity of perſons. 3. In his attributes and perfections. 4. In his works of creation, of providence, and of redemption.

Q. What ſort of knowledge of God is it that we muſt ſeek after ?

A. A literal knowledge of God is not ſufficient ; a comprehenſive knowledge of God is unattainable : but an experimental, practical, ſoul-affecting, humbling, and transforming knowledge of God, is what we ſhould ſeek after, and labour to attain.

Q. Beſides knowing God, are we alſo bound to acknowledge God ?

A. Yes, Deut. xxvi. 17. "Thou haſt avouched the Lord this day to be thy God."

Q. What ſhould we acknowledge concerning God ?

A. We ſhould acknowledge him to be the only living and true God, and that he is the only object of divine worſhip ; we ſhould acknowledge him to be the Creator and Governour of the world, and own our dependence upon him for all things ; and we ſhould acknowledge him as our Lawgiver and Judge, to whom we are accountable for all that we do.

Q. Is it ſufficient to own and acknowledge God to be the true God ?

A. No, unleſs we alſo take him and acknowledge him to be our God, and ſerve him accordingly.

Q. What is imported in acknowledging God as our God ?

A. 1. It imports our renouncing all idols that would rival it with him. 2. Our making choice of God as our portion and chief good, and the God whom we will ſerve and pleaſe above all the world. 3. Our covenant-dedication, ſurrendering, and engaging ourſelves to be the Lord's. 4. Our owning of God, and of his truths and ways before the world, which is called a confeſſing or profeſſing of him before men, Mat. x. 32. John xii. 42. Rom. x. 9. 1 John iv. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 10. and vi. 12.

Q. What is the third duty required in this command ?

A. To worſhip God, Mat. iv. 10. "Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve."

Q. How is God to be worſhipped by us ?

A. Both inwardly and outwardly.

Q. When is it that we worſhip God inwardly ?

A. When we remember him, love him, highly eſteem him, deſire him, delight in him, honour and adore him, fear him, believe him, truſt and hope in him, Mal. iii. 16. Eccl. xii. 1. Deut. vi. 5. Pſal. lxxi. 19. Mal. i. 6. Iſa. xxvi. 4. 8. Pſal. cxxx. 7. Pſal. xxxvii. 4.

Q. How do we worſhip God outwardly?

A. By offering up our prayers and praiſes to God, attending to his word, and partaking of the ſacraments.

Q. What is the fourth duty required in this command?

A. To glorify God.

Q. Is there any difference between worſhipping and glorifying of God?

A. Yes, in regard glorifying of God is of larger ſignification than worſhipping of him, ſeeing it comprehends all obedience to his laws, and hath reſpect to all parts of our converſation. We are bound to glorify God, not only in our religious, but alſo in our civil and natural actions; whether we buy or ſell, eat or drink, or whatſoever we do; we ſhould *do all to the glory of God*, Pſal. l. 23. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Cor. x. 31.

Q. What is the import of the word *accordingly* in the anſwer?

A. It imports that we ſhould worſhip and glorify God in ſuch a manner, as to make it appear that we really know him and own him both as the true God and as our God.

Q. Why is worſhipping God and glorifying him joined together?

A. To teach us, that we muſt not only worſhip God devoutly, but muſt alſo walk circumſpectly, and live holy lives in the world.

Q. What if a man worſhip God, and yet live in ſin?

A. His prayers cannot be heard, but will be an abomination to the Lord, Pſal. lxvi. 18. Prov. xxviii. 9.

Q. Who is the worſhipper that will be accepted of God?

A. The man that hath a tender walk, and makes conſcience of his ways, John ix. 31. "We know that God heareth not ſinners; but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth."

Q. Can we be ſaid to glorify God in the ſame ſenſe that God is ſaid to glorify us?

A. No: For our glorifying God is only *declarative*, but God's glorifying us is *effective*: We only declare God to be glorious, but God makes us glorious.

Q. How are we to declare God's glory?

A. By making known his glorious excellencies and perfections, and honouring him both with our lips and lives. See more of this before on the firſt queſtion, Page 281.

QUEST. XLVII.

Q. *What is forbidden in the firſt commandment?*

A. The firſt command forbiddeth the denying, or not worſhipping and glorifying the true God, as God, and our God; and the giving that worſhip and glory to any other which is due to him alone.

Q. What are the chief ſins here forbidden?

A. There are five mentioned in the anſwer; 1. Denying the true God. 2. Not worſhipping him. 3. Not glorifying him. 4. Giving his worſhip to another. 5. Giving his glory to another.

Q. Who are theſe that are guilty of the ſin of denying the true God?

A. 1. Atheiſts, who deny the being of a God. 2. Deiſts and infidels, who deny the truth of the holy ſcriptures, and do not believe what God ſaith in them. 3. Theſe who deny the true Deity of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, or diſown the doctrine of the Trinity; ſuch as Arians, Socinians, Quakers, and others. 4. Theſe who deny the providence of God in governing the world, and aſcribe events to other things.

Q. How many ſorts of Atheiſts are there?

A. Three ſorts; 1. Atheiſts in opinion. 2. Atheiſts in affection. 3. Atheiſts in converſation.

Q. Who are theſe that are Atheiſts in opinion?

A. Theſe who profeſs to believe that there is not a God. Some few have done ſo, and have been put to death for it. This truth of the exiſtence of God having the light of nature and general conſent of all nations to vouch for it, it is not eaſy to imagine how there can be a ſpeculative Atheiſt, or one that hath got the impreſſions of God entirely blotted out, which are naturally ingraven upon man's heart.

Q. Are there any ſuch Atheiſts in hell?

A. Atheiſm is a ſin that cannot have place there, no devil is guilty of it, Jam. ii. 19.

Q. Is not Atheiſm a dreadful ſin?

A. Yes; for it tends to open the flood-gates for all impiety and wickedneſs, and to deſtroy all order and government in the world; for thus a man might cheat, ſteal, rob, murder, and do the vileſt things, and yet not ſin, nor have any thing to fear hereafter.

Q. Who are theſe that are Atheiſts in affection?

A. Theſe who in their hearts wiſh there were no God, as all wicked men ſecretly do, Pſal. xiv. 1.

Q. Why do wicked men wiſh there were no God?

A. That ſo they might be freed from theſe reſtraints, which mar their ſinful pleaſures.

Q. Who are theſe that are Atheiſts in converſation?

A. Practical Atheiſts, or theſe who live as if there were no God, Tit. i. 16. "They profeſs they know God, but in works they deny him."

Q. Are there not many of theſe practical Atheiſts in the world? A. Yes.

Q. Who may be reckoned ſuch?

A. All theſe, 1. Who neglect the worſhip of God. 2. Who live in hypocriſy. 3. Who indulge ſecret ſins. 4. Who mock at the holy ſcriptures or holy perſons. 5. Who never think on death or judgment. 6. Who ſet their hearts wholly upon the world, or upon ſenſual things.

Q. What is the ſecond ſin mentioned in the anſwer?

A. Not worſhipping of God.

Q. Who are theſe who are guilty of this ſin of not worſhipping God?

A. Theſe who do not think of God, do not eſteem him, do not love him, do not believe him, do not honour him, do not fear him, do not humble themſelves before him, do not attend God's ordinances, do not offer prayers or praiſes to God in the public aſſemblies, nor in their families or cloſets.

Q. What is the third ſin forbidden in this command?

A. Not glorifying of God.

Q. Who are theſe that are guilty of this ſin?

A. 1. Theſe who neglect the knowledge of God, and live in ignorance of him. 2. Theſe who forget God, or hate the thoughts of him. 3. Theſe who do not admire and praiſe him, or are unthankful to him. 4. Theſe who deſire the creatures, or delight in objects of ſenſe more than God. 5. Theſe who are profane and ungodly in their lives and converſations.

Q. What is the fourth ſin forbidden in this command?

A. Idolatry, or the giving that worſhip to another which is due to God alone.

Q. How many kinds of idolatry are there?

A. Two kinds, 1. Idolatry that is outward and inviſible. 2. Idolatry that is more ſecret and inviſible.

Q. Who are guilty of the idolatory that is outward and inviſible?

A. 1. The Pagans, who worſhip their idol-gods, their demons and deified heroes, the ſun, the moon, the ſtars, the fire, ſeveral kinds of beaſts, *&c.* 2. The Papiſts, who worſhip other gods beſides the true God: For they deify ſeveral things both in heaven and earth, to which they pay religious worſhip and homage.

Q. What are theſe other gods in heaven which the Papiſts do worſhip?

A. They worſhip angels, the Virgin Mary, and ſaints departed.

Q. What are theſe other gods on earth which they worſhip?

A. They worſhip the Pope, the bread in the ſacrament, the ſign of the croſs, the images and relicks of ſaints.

Q. How doth it appear that the Papiſts give religious honour and worſhip to theſe things?

A. Both by their practice, and by their books: for they build churches, erect altars, and inſtitute holydays in honour of them; they burn incenſe, make and pay vows to them; they bow their knees and pray to them; they ſeek bleſſings from them, and make them their hope and truſt. As for inſtance, they adore the wood of the croſs, ſaying, *O crux ave, ſpes unica*, &c. that is, O holy croſs, our only hope and truſt, increaſe to the godly their righteouſneſs, and give unto ſinners grace and remiſſion of their ſins.

Q. But why may we not worſhip ſaints and angels?

A. It is idolatry to worſhip creatures; for men to pray to them, is to aſcribe divine honours, and perfections to them, as omniſcienee and omnipotence. God forbids this, as a giving of his glory to another; and tells us, that the ſaints in heaven do not know our wants, for proof of which, ſee Mat. iv. 10. Acts x. 25, 26. Rev. xix. 10. Iſa. xlii. 8. Iſa. lxiii. 16. And if it be idolatry to worſhip ſaints in heaven, far more is it to worſhip the bones, teeth, or relicks of ſaints on earth, as Papiſts do. To avoid this, God buried the body of Moſes ſecretly, that none might worſhip his body.

Q. Is there not idolatry more ſecret and inviſible, which others are guilty of beſides Pagans and Papiſts?

A. Yes; all carnal and unregenerate perſons are guilty of it, by putting the creature in room of the Creator, loving it and depending on it more than God. For whatever thing it be that hath moſt of our love, or of our truſt, or of our fear and dread, or hath moſt of our thoughts, or of our time and ſervice, that is really our god; ſeeing it is put in God's room, and hath the honour and glory which is only due to him.

Q. What are thoſe idols which men do commonly ſet up in God's room?

A. 1. Self is the great idol which men generally adore by ſeeking themſelves in all they do: And this idol appears in many different ſhapes, as ſelf-profit, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-righteouſneſs, ſelf-ability, ſelf-eaſe, ſelf-credit and applauſe. 2. The world is the great clay idol which worldly men adore; hence covetous men are called idolaters, and covetouſneſs idolatry. 3. The belly is the god of drunkards and gluttons, Phil. iii. 19. 4. Children and relations are the idols of many. 5. Great men or ſuperiors are put in the room of God, when we truſt in the arm of fleſh, or make them Lords of our faith and conſcience. 6. The devil is called the God of this world. 2 Cor. iv 4. So that we may hence ſee how ſadly idolatry abounds even among profeſſed proteſtants, who have renounced the Romiſh idolatry.

Q. In what reſpect is the devil called the God of this world?

A. Becauſe he is put in the room of the true God by the moſt part of the world. Why? in the firſt place we read and hear of many of the Indians who directly worſhip him, and he appears to them in a bodily ſhape: Beſides, it is at his inſtigation that the infidel world run into all manner of wickedneſs. Again, how much is he adored, honoured and ſerved among profeſſed Chriſtians! By witches who enter into compact with the devil, and give up themſelves to him; by theſe who conſult with witches and charmers, and theſe who uſe his ſpells and charms; by theſe who in their common diſcourſe pray to the devil, bidding him take them, or their neighbours; and by theſe who hearken to the devil's temptations more than God's counſels.

Q. What is the fifth ſin forbidden in the firſt command?

A. The giving of the glory, which is due to God to another.

Q. Who are guilty of this ſin?

A. Not only theſe who give divine worſhip to creatures, as above; but alſo theſe who aſcribe events, not to God's providence, but to luck or chance, or to ſecond cauſes only; and theſe who aſcribe the praiſe of any good thing they receive, and their ſucceſs in any buſineſs, to themſelves and their own induſtry, to creatures, or to fortune; and likewiſe theſe who have mens perſons in too great admiration, they are chargeable with this ſin of giving God's glory to others, 1 Sam. vi. 9. Deut. viii. 17. Dan. iv. 30. Heb. i. 16. Acts xii. 22, 23. Jude 16.

QUEST. XLVIII.

Q. What are we ſpecially taught by theſe words (Before me) *in the firſt commandment.*

A. Theſe words *(Before me)* in the firſt commandment, teach us, that God, who ſeeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much diſpleaſed with the ſin of having any other god.

Q. What is the argument in this command to diſwade or reſtrain us from the ſin of idolatry?

A. The conſideration of God's omniſcience, that the ſin is committed before him, or in his ſight, who exceedingly hates and abhors it.

Q. How doth it appear that God doth ſee all things?

A. In regard that he is preſent in all places, and infinite in knowledge, Pſal cxxxix. 7, 8, &c. Jer. xxiii. 24. Pſal. cxlvii. 5.

Q. What are theſe things which God doth ſee?

A. He ſeeth all paſt things, all preſent things, all future things, and all poſſible things: He ſees all his creatures, all their thoughts, all their words, and all their actions.

Q. Doth God take ſpecial notice of the ſin of idolatry above other ſins? A. Yes

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By the many tokens of diſpleaſure which God evidenced againſt it, both in threatening and puniſhing men for it, Deut. xxix. 24, 25, &c.

Q. Why is God ſo much diſpleaſed with the ſin of idolatry?

A. Becauſe God, who is jealous of his own glory, cannot but take it as a great indignity to ſee another put in his room, and ſet upon his throne, and that in his very ſight and preſence.

Q. Is not the attribute of God's omniſciency much affronted by the world?

A. Yes; namely, by their idolatry, hypocriſy and ſecret wickedneſs.

Q. Ought not God's omniſcience to be a powerful check to all ſins? *A.* Yes.

QUEST. XLIX.

Q. *Which is the ſecond commandment?*

A. The ſecond commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeneſs of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou ſhalt not bow down thyſelf to them nor ſerve them: For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, viſiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: And ſhewing mercy to thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

QUEST. L.

Q. *What is required in the ſecond commandment?*

A. The ſecond commandment requireth the receiving, obſerving, and keeping pure and intire, all ſuch religious worſhip and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

Q. Is the worſhip required, and idolatry forbidden in the ſecond commandment the ſame with that in the firſt commandment?

A. No: For the firſt command directs us as to the right object of worſhip; but the ſecond command directs us as to the right way and means of worſhip; The firſt forbids the worſhipping of any falſe god; The ſecond forbids the worſhipping of the true God in a falſe way or by any means but what he himſelf appoints.

Q. Hath God appointed all that religious worſhip, and all theſe means and ordinances, in and by which only he will be ſerved and worſhipped?

A. Yes.

Q. Where do we find theſe?

A. In his word.

Q. What are theſe ordinances and means of divine worſhip appointed us?

A. 1ſt, There is prayer in public, in private, and ſecret, Luke i. 10. Jer. x. 25. Mat. vi. 6.——2dly, There is thankſgiving and ſinging of Pſalms, Eph. v. 20. Iſa. lii. 8. Jam. v. 13.——3dly, There is the reading, preaching and hearing of the word, Acts v. 21. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Acts x. 33.——4thly, The adminiſtration and partaking of the ſacraments of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, Mat. xxvii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, *&c.*——5thly, There is faſting, Luke v. 35.——6thly, Swearing by the name of the Lord when lawfully called, Deut. vi. 13.——7thly, Vowing to the Lord, Pſal. lxxvi. 11.——8thly, Inſtructing of children and ſervants, Gen. x. 18, &c.

Q. What doth God require of us concerning all theſe ordinances?

A. That we ſhould receive them, obſerve them, and keep them pure and intire.

Q. What is it to receive and obſerve them?

A. It is to approve them, attend upon them, and continue ſtedfaſtly in the practice of them.

Q. What is it to keep theſe ordinances pure and intire?

A. It is to uſe our beſt endeavours to preſerve them free from all corruption or mixture of human inventions; and to keep them ſo as nothing be added to them, nor taken away from them.

QUEST. LI.

Q. *What is forbidden in the ſecond commandment?*

A. The ſecond commandment forbiddeth the worſhipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

Q. What is the chief ſin forbidden in this command?

A. Idolatry, or the worſhipping of the true God by images.

Q. What do you mean by an image?

A. The picture, ſhape, or likeneſs of any creature in heaven, on earth, or in the ſea.

Q. When is a perſon guilty of worſhipping God by images?

A. 1ſt, When he frames or takes any material picture or ſimilitude, and ſets it before him in worſhip; as the Papiſts do, who paint God the Father under the likeneſs of an old man; and Jeſus Chriſt in the likeneſs of a young man, or of a lamb; and the Holy Ghoſt by the figure of a dove; which is plainly to "change the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beaſts;" which the apoſtle condemns, Rom. i. 23.—2dly, A perſon is guilty of it, when he hath any carnal imagination or repreſentation of God in his mind while worſhipping him, as if he was like to a man or any creature.

Q. May not an image or picture, to look upon in time of prayer, be ſome help to us in devotion, as Papiſts ſay?

A. No; inſtead of a help, it is a great hinderance to it.

Q. How is it a hinderance?

A. In regard it promotes carnal and low thoughts of God, who is a glorious ſpirit, and infinitely exalted above all things viſible or earthly. It is as great a diſhonour and diſparagement to the majeſty of God to repreſent him by a dead image of a creature, as it would be to repreſent a king by the picture of a frog.

Q. But, may we not have ſuch images of God or of the Perſons of the Trinity by us, if we do not worſhip them?

A. No; for it is an abomination which God expreſſly forbids, Deut. iv. 15, 16. 'Take ye good heed to yourſelves (for ye ſaw no manner of ſimilitude on the day that the Lord ſpake to you in Horeb out of midſt the of the fire) leſt ye corrupt yourſelves, and make you a graven image, the ſimilitude of any figure, *&c.*' And further it is impoſſible to frame an image of him that is infinite, ſpiritual and inviſible; and therefore he frequently aſks the queſtion, as in Iſa. xl. 18. 25. and xlvi 5. *To whom will ye liken God*? Surely no ſhape of any creature, no dead image, can be a fit repreſentation of the living God.

Q. May we not have a picture of Jeſus Chriſt, who is truly a man?

A. No; becauſe, 1. His divine nature, which makes him to be God, cannot be pictured at all. 2. He left no picture of his body when he left the earth, nor any account of his features, as it were on purpoſe to diſcourage any to draw his picture. 3. His body, as now glorified, cannot be repreſented by any artiſt whatſomever; ſo that the pictures now made of him muſt be greatly debaſing of his glorious perſon. 4. If any ſuch picture be deſigned to excite devotion, it is a breach of this command, which forbids all worſhipping of God by images.

Q. Why do Papiſts leave the ſecond command out of their catechiſm and public offices?

A. Becauſe it ſo expreſly condemns their images, crucifixes and idolatrous practices.

Q. Will it free them from idolatry to ſay they only worſhip God or Chriſt before or by them, but not the images themſelves?

A. No; for the command forbids even bowing or kneeling before them. And, if this ſhift could excuſe the Papiſts, it had alſo excuſed the Iſraelites in worſhipping the golden calf; for they had it to ſay that they intended to worſhip Jehovah before the calf, Exod. xxxii. 4, 5.

Q. Is there any other ſin forbidden in the ſecond command beſides idolatry, or the worſhipping of God by images?

A. Yes; namely, the ſin of ſuperſtition or will-worſhip.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Mens preſuming to worſhip God by means of their own deviſing, adding human inventions to God's inſtitutions, or contriving other ways to ſerve and worſhip God than what he hath appointed or warranted in his word.

Q. Who are guilty of this ſin?

A. All theſe who add new ſacraments to the two of Chriſt's inſtitution, or theſe who add the ſign of the croſs to baptiſm, the poſture of kneeling to the Lord's ſupper, the keeping of holy-days to the Lord's day, playing with organs to ſinging with the voice, reading of a book to prayer: Or they who erect altars, pictures or croſſes in places of worſhip, and bow unto them, or bow to the eaſt, and at the name of Jeſus, or the like. All theſe are ſuperſtitious inventions in God's worſhip, and human additions to God's inſtitutions, without any warrant in his word, and therefore againſt the ſecond command.

Q. Why may not wiſe, holy and learned men add ſome ſuch things for beautifying the worſhip of God?

A. 1ſt, Becauſe an infinitely holy and wiſe God who hath unqueſtionable right to appoint the means and manner of his own worſhip, hath expreſly forbidden men to add any thing to the directions he hath given concerning the ſame, Deut. xii. 30, 31, 32.——2dly, He ſharply cenſures all ſuch additions, by calling them will-worſhip and vain worſhip, and ſaying, they had only a ſhew or pretence of wiſdom in them, Col. ii. 23, Mat. xv. 9. Nay, he looks upon it as a preſumptuous attempt to rival it with him, for men to add their own inventions to his inſtitutions; and calls it a ſetting of their threſholds by his threſhold, and their poſts by his poſts, Ezek. xliii. 8. and even ſaith it is a going a-whoring with their inventions, Pſal. cvi. 39.

Q. Why would God cenſure things which are ſo well deſigned for his glory, and beautifying his worſhip?

A. 1ſt, Becauſe he accounts it great pride and preſumption in men to take upon them to mend the ordinances of God as if they were wiſer than he. 2dly, Inſtead of beautifying his worſhip thereby, they rather disfigure it; for God's worſhip is moſt beautiful in its own native ſimplicity and luſtre: For to paint glaſs doth darken its light, to gild a diamond mars its ſparkling rays. 3dly, It is only the preſence and bleſſing of God that can make ordinances profitable to us; but God hath no where promiſed his bleſſing to mens inventions, but allenarly to his own inſtitutions, Mat. xxviii. 20.

Q. Had not the Jews ſeveral ſignificant ceremonies in their worſhip under the law?

A. Yes; but theſe were appointed by God's authority, as they were aboliſhed again by it at Chriſt's coming, and a plain ſimple way of worſhip inſtituted under the goſpel. And it is nowiſe likely that God would remove the ceremonies of his own inſtitution, merely to make way for mens inventing others in their room.

Q. May not the church appoint ſome rites or ceremonies for ſake of decency and order, by virtue of that command, 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

A. The text doth not warrant the church to add new parts to the worſhip of God, as ſignificant ceremonies would be, but only to keep and obſerve the ordinances as God has delivered them to us, with decency and order; and to take care that there be no undecency or diſorder in the worſhip of God, namely, as to the circumſtances of time and place and the like, which the command of God appointing the worſhip itſelf doth virtually include, ſeeing without ſuch circumſtances it cannot be performed.

Q. Is there any other ſin forbidden by the ſecond commandment?

A. Yes; ſuch as the countenancing, approving, or promoting of any falſe religion or ſuperſtitious worſhip; the neglecting, contemning, hindering or oppoſing of the true worſhip of God, or any of his ordinances; the reproaching or perſecuting theſe who worſhip God according to his word.

QUEST. LII.

Q. What are the reaſons annexed to the ſecond commandment?

Q. The reaſons annexed to the ſecond commandment are, God's ſovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worſhip.

Q. What mean you by a reaſon annexed to a command?

A. An argument joined to it, to enforce the keeping of it.

Q. How many ſuch reaſons are annexed to this command?

A. Three; 1. God's ſovereignty over us. 2. God's propriety in us. 3. God's zeal for his own worſhip.

Q. What mean you by God's ſovereignty over us?

A. His abſolute power and authority over us, ſo that he may do with us as he pleaſeth.

Q. In what words of the command is this reaſon contained.

Q. In theſe, *I the Lord.*

Q. What do theſe words import ?

A. That he is the ſovereign Lord over us, and has a right to make what laws he pleaſes about his own worſhip ; and that we, as God's ſubjects are bound to obſerve the laws, and to worſhip him no other way.

A. In what words is the ſecond reaſon contained ?

A. In theſe words, *Thy God*, I the Lord thy God.

Q. What do theſe words import ?

A. That God hath a propriety or ſpecial intereſt in us, we belong to him by creation, redemption, or profeſſion ; and therefore we ought to keep cloſe to our God and his inſtitutions, and beware of idolatry and ſuperſtition in worſhip which tend to eſtrange the heart from God, Pſal. cvi. 19. 21.

Q. In what words of the command is the third reaſon contained ?

A. In theſe, *I am a jealous God.*

Q. What do theſe words import ?

A. That God hath a great jealouſy, zeal, or tender concern for his own worſhip, and is highly diſpleaſed with thoſe who corrupt it, by bringing mens inventions into it, Exod. xxxiv. 14. Pſal. cvi. 29.

Q. Wherein doth God ſhew his zeal and jealouſy for his own worſhip ?

A. In threatening to puniſh them as haters of God, who break this command, to the third and fourth generation ; and in ſhowing mercy to thouſands of them that love him, and keep his law.

Q. Is it juſt with God to puniſh children for the ſins of their parents ?

A. Yes, if the children go on in their parents ſins ; but if they forſake them, God will not puniſh them for them, Ezek. xviii. 14. 17.

Q. Doth not God eſteem any perſons as lovers of him, but ſuch as keep his commandments ?

A. No, John xiv. 21.

Q. Do not all theſe reaſons oblige us to the greateſt caution that we do not alter nor add to divine ordinances and inſtitutions of worſhip ? *A.* Yes.

Q. Have theſe who ſuffer for non-conformity to ſuch additions, ſufficient warrant for their ſufferings ?

A. Yes ; as it is evident from Deut. xii. 32. compared with Deut. iv. 2. *Ye ſhall not add unto the word which I command you.*

QUEST. LIII.

Q. Which is the third commandment ?

A. The third commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain : For the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.*

QUEST. LIV.

Q. What is required in the third commandment ?

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverend uſe of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.

Q. In what manner muſt we uſe God's name ?

A. In a holy and reverend manner ; that is, with a humble and awful regard to God's infinite greatneſs and excellencies.

Q. What is meant by the name of God here ?

A. Any thing that is commonly aſcribed to God, and by which God makes himſelf known to us, as a man is known to us by his name.

Q. What are theſe things whereby God makes himſelf known to us ?

A. They are ſix, to wit, God's names, his titles, his attributes, his ordinances, his word, and his works.

Q. What are the names given to him which we muſt reverently uſe ?

A. They are ſuch as Jehovah, Lord, God, Jah, I Am, the Father, the Son, Jeſus Chriſt, the Holy Ghoſt, the Spirit.

Q. What are the titles of God, which we muſt uſe with reverence ?

A. They are his uſual deſignations taken from ſome of his peculiar excellencies, ſuch as, the Lord of Hoſts, King of kings, Lord of lords, Father of lights, Holy One of Iſrael, Creator of the ends of the earth, Preſerver of men, and the like.

Q. What are the attributes of God which we ſhould uſe reverently ?

A. The eſſential perfections, whereby his nature is deſcribed to us, and he is diſtinguiſhed from all his creatures, ſuch as Omnipotence, Omnipreſence, Eternity, Immutability, Infinite Wiſdom, Infinite Holineſs, Goodneſs, Faithfulneſs, Mercy, *&c.*

Q. Why are theſe called God's attributes ?

A. Becauſe God doth claim them to himſelf, excluſive of all others.

Q. What are the ordinances of God, which we muſt uſe reverently ?

A. The ſacraments, prayer, praiſe, preaching, oaths, vows, lots, *&c.*

Q. What is meant by God's word in the anſwer ?

A. Not his eſſential word, but his written word, or the Bible.

Q. What is meant by God's works ?

A. The works of Creation, of Providence, and of Redemption.

Q. When may it be ſaid that the names, titles, and attributes of God are uſed by us in a holy and reverend manner ?

A. When we entertain awful, admiring, and loving thoughts of them in our hearts, and mention them with gravity, reſpect, and tenderneſs with our lips.

Q. When do we make uſe of God's ordinances in a holy and reverend manner ?

A. When we make conſcience of attending upon them, ſeek to have a humble reverential frame of heart in all our approaches to God, and earneſtly deſire communion with God in every ordinance of his.

Q. When do we uſe God's word in a holy and reverend way ?

A. When we read it with ſeriouſneſs, attend to the majeſty of God as ſpeaking therein to us, and endeavour to yield preſent obedience to his holy will when revealed to us.

Q. When do we uſe God's works in a holy and reverend way ?

A. When we contemplate God's glory in his works of creation, and have an awful regard to his diſpenſations of providence, ſubmitting patiently to his corrections for ſin, and praiſing him for all his mercies, and eſpecially for Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.

QUEST. LV.

Q. *What is forbidden in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abuſing of any thing whereby God maketh himſelf known.

Q. When do we take God's name in vain?

A. When we uſe it irreverently, ſuperſtitiouſly, or profanely; or when we abuſe any thing whereby he makes himſelf known to us, ſuch as his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, *&c.*

Q. How is it that people are guilty of profaning or abuſing of God's names, titles or attributes?

A. Many ways; as, 1. By ſwearing falſly when called to it before a judge. 2. By curſing or ſwearing profanely in common diſcourſe. 3. By blaſphemy, or ſpeaking reproachfully of God. 4. By uſing the name of God in charms. 5. By offering prayers or praiſes to God with formal or careleſs minds. 6. By uſing God's name irreverently in common diſcourſe, crying without any awe, *O Lord, O God, God help me, bleſs me,* or the like. 7. By repeating the oaths of others without concern for them. 8. By raſh appeals to God, *&c.*

Q. Is it lawful to ſwear by the name of God when called to it by authority?

A. Yes, if what we ſwear be right and true, and if we have an awful ſenſe of God upon our hearts when we do it, Deut. vi. 13. Heb. vi. 16.

Q. Is it lawful for a man to ſwear by his ſoul, conſcience, faith, or the like?

A. No; for theſe being creatures, to ſwear by them is idolatry, or a putting of them in God's room, by giving them the worſhip and attributes which belong to him.

Q. What is the evil or ſin of profane ſwearing and curſing?

A. *1ſt,* It is againſt God's command both here and in other texts, as Mat. v. 34. Rom. xii. 14.——*2dly,* It is a raſh way of appealing to the great Judge of heaven upon every trifling occaſion, which God doth look on as a horrid baffling of his name.—*3dly,* It is a ſad evidence of a graceleſs and profane heart: hence the Lord makes it a diſtinguiſhing character of the wicked and the righteous Eccl. ix. 2. *He that ſweareth, and he that feareth an oath.*

Q. Doth God look upon profane ſwearers as his enemies?

A. Yes; as in Pſalm cxxxix. 20. 'Thine enemies take thy name in vain.'

Q. What is the danger of profane or falſe ſwearing?

A. The Lord will deal with ſwearers as his enemies, by ſending his curſe into their houſes, Zech. v. 3. 4. and purſuing them with his judgments both here and hereafter: For with an awful voice from mount Sinai hath he declared, 'The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.'

Q. When are people guilty of profaning or abuſing God's ordinances?

A. 1. When they attend them hypocritically, or with dead and wandering hearts. 2. When they behave irreverently or indecently in the time of them, by talking, laughing, or ſleeping.

A. May lots be uſed in plays and games as cards or dice?

A. No; for lots being an appeal to God, for deciding things which cannot otherwiſe be determined, ought to be gone about with reverence, Prov. xvi. 33. & xviii. 18. Acts i. 26.

Q. How do men profane or abuſe God's word?

A. By profane jeſting upon it, or by perverting it to ſupport error or ſinful practices.

Q. How do men profane or abuſe God's works?

A. By deſpiſing God's workmanſhip, by uſing his creatures in exceſs to the pampering of their luſts, by impatience under afflictions, and unthankfulneſs for mercies.

QUEST. LVI.

Q. *What is the reaſon annexed to the third commandment?*

A. The reaſon annexed to the third commandment is, That however the breakers of this commandment may eſcape puniſhment from men, yet the Lord our God will not ſuffer them to eſcape his righteous judgment.

Q. What is the argument for enforcing this commandment?

A. It is contained in that dreadful threatening, 'For the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.'

Q. What is the import of that threatening?

A. It imports, That, tho' men ſhould ſuffer ſwearers and ſuch profane perſons to paſs, God will not let them eſcape without puniſhment, if they do not repent.

Q. How come the breakers of this commandment to paſs without puniſhment from men?

A. Partly becauſe human laws cannot extend to all profanations of God's name, and partly becauſe many of theſe who ſhould execute the laws againſt the profaners of God's name, are either guilty of the ſame or like ſins themſelves, or they are little concerned for God's glory.

Q. Tho' men let them paſs, will God let them go unpuniſhed?

A. No: For tho' he do not always puniſh them in this life with remarkable ſtrokes, yet he will do it in his own time; For he ſays, 'He will not hold him guiltleſs.'

Q. Will he keep an exact account of the ſins of the breakers of this commandment?

A. Yes; for he is much concerned for the glory of his name.

Q. When is it that God doth puniſh the breakers of this command?

A. Sometimes he inflicts judgment upon them in this life, according to Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. Zech. v. 3. 4. and theſe plagues are ſometimes outward, and ſometimes inward. But however they may eſcape temporal judgments, there are eternal judgments abiding them, which they cannot eſcape. Rom. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Q. Is it not great folly to venture to break God's law, becauſe of his patience in forbearing to execute his judgments preſently againſt ſinners?

A. Yes.

QUEST. LVII.

Q. *Which is the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment is, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; Six days ſhalt thou labour and do all thy works: But the ſeventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou ſhalt not do any work, thou* *nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter, thy man ſervant, nor thy maid ſervant, nor thy cattle, nor thy ſtranger that is within thy gates. For in ſix days the Lord made heaven and earth, the ſea, and all that in them is, and reſted the ſeventh day: Wherefore the Lord bleſſed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

QUEST. LVIII.

Q. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God ſuch ſet times as he hath appointed in his word, expreſly one whole day in ſeven, to be a holy Sabbath to himſelf.

Q. What mean you by a Sabbath-day?

A. A day of holy reſt, wherein men are to ceaſe from worldly buſineſs, to attend upon the worſhip of God.

Q. How often is this day for the Sabbath to recur?

A. It is to be every ſeventh day, or ſtill one day after ſix days labour.

Q. Is this fourth commandment ceremonial and temporary, binding only upon the Jews before Chriſt's coming?

A. No; it is a command moral and perpetual, binding upon all men, Jews and Gentiles, to the end of the world.

Q. How do you prove the morality and perpetuity of this command?

A. 1. From its being firſt appointed in paradiſe. 2. From its being written by the finger of God upon ſtone, and put into the ark with the other nine commands, which was not done with any ceremonial precept. 3. The reaſons and arguments made uſe of to enforce this command are moral and perpetual. 4. The Gentiles and ſtrangers, who were not under the ceremonial law, were bound to keep the Sabbath as well as the Jews, Iſa. lvi. 4, 6. 5. Both the Old Teſtament Prophets, and Jeſus Chriſt, do ſpeak of the keeping of the Sabbath as a duty in force under New Teſtament times, when the ceremonial law was to be aboliſhed, Iſa. lvi. 1, 2. Mat. xxiv. 20. 6. The conſcience of men do ſtill challenge them moſt ſeverely from breaking of this command, and God doth ſtill purſue the breakers of it with his judgments.

Q. Whether is the fourth command authoriſed by the light of nature and ſound reaſon, as the other nine are, or only by expreſs revelation and a poſitive law?

A. It is authoriſed by both: For the light of nature doth require that a due part of our time be allotted for the public worſhip of God, which ſhould frequently recur; and that this time ſhould be the ſame over all, that ſo one man's buſineſs may not interfere with another man's devotions. Now, the Author of nature, who beſt knows what portion of time is moſt ſuitable to the exigencies both of our bodies and ſouls, our preſent and future ſtate, hath by expreſs revelation wiſely determined it to be the ſeventh part of our time.

Q. Doth not God ſhew ſpecial regard to this command, by putting ſeveral marks of honour and reſpect upon it above the reſt?

A. Yes: For, 1. As it is placed in the firſt table, ſo it is larger, and enforced with more arguments than any of the reſt. 2. It is delivered both poſitively and negatively (which no other of the ten is) for it is not only ſaid *Keep holy the Sabbath*, but alſo, *In it thou ſhalt do no manner of works.* 3. It hath a ſolemn *memento* prefixed to it, which the reſt have not, *Remember to keep holy the Sabbath; q. d.* See that ye remember this command; forget what ye will, forget not this. 4. It is placed in the midſt of the decalogue, as the heart in the body, for enlivening the ſeveral parts of it; it is ſet in the cloſe of the firſt table, and immediately before the ſecond, to ſhew that the keeping of both tables doth greatly depend upon the obſerving of this command.

Q. For what ſpecial ends hath God appointed a Sabbath to the world?

A. 1. For his own glory, and for the converſion of ſinners to himſelf, by the preaching of the word on that day. 2. For promoting ſpiritually and heavenly mindedneſs in us. He well knew that carnal things would be apt to dull our affections, and make us forget God and heaven; and therefore he thought fit to recal us every week from ſenſual objects to mind divine things by enjoining us to keep the Sabbath, which is a lively emblem of heaven, where the ſaints continually adore, praiſe and enjoy communion with God, without any mixture of worldly buſineſs.

Q. How much of the day appointed for the Sabbath is to be kept holy to the Lord?

A. One whole day in ſeven; a whole natural day, conſiſting of twenty four hours, commencing from midnight to midnight, ought to be dedicated unto the Lord, ſeeing he claims a ſeventh part of our time. It is true, time for eating and ſleeping muſt be allowed upon the Sabbath as well as on other days, being the works of neceſſity, ſeeing without theſe we cannot perform the duties of the Sabbath.

Q. Is it not ſinful for men to encroach upon this day for their own work?

A. Yes: As it was ſinful in Ananias and Sapphira to halve their dedicated goods, and give but a part to the Lord; ſo it is in us to halve it with God in reſpect of his holy day.

Q. Should not every day be a Sabbath to a Chriſtian?

A. Tho' Chriſtians ſhould ſerve God every day, yet they cannot make every day a Sabbath for the public worſhip of God; becauſe God calls us to other duties relating to ſecular affairs, which are inconſiſtent with the work of the Sabbath. And tho' we are bound to be holy and religious at all times, yet we are enjoined to expreſs our religion in outward acts of worſhip more at ſome times than others.

Q. To whom is the fourth command, and the charge of keeping the Sabbath holy more eſpecially directed.

A. To maſters of families and other ſuperiors, as the command itſelf bears, under which ſurely magiſtrates are included; for theſe words, *within thy gates*, may be underſtood of the magiſtrates dominions, and particularly of city-gates, and theſe who dwell within them, Neh. xiii. 15, 19. Jer. xvii. 24, 25, &c.

Q. Why is this command more eſpecially directed to them?

A. Becauſe God would have them not only to keep it themſelves, but to overſee the keeping of it by all that are under their authority, as Nehemiah did, Neh. xiii. 15, 16, &c.

Q. Why doth the Lord prefix the word *remember* to this command?

A. 1. To teſtify his ſpecial regard unto it, as being a fence to the other commands, and a help to the keeping of them all. 2. Becauſe he foreſaw that ſatan and his inſtruments would ſeek to extinguiſh the memory of the Sabbath, if they could; and men of themſelves would be ready to forget the duties of it, ſeeing nature's light doth not enforce them ſo ſtrongly as ſome others. 3. Becauſe he would have us much to think upon his works of creation and redemption, the compend of all religion, which this command brings to our view. 4. Becauſe he would have us to remember the Sabbath before it come, ſo as to prepare ourſelves for the keeping of it when it doth come.

Q. What reaſon is there for preparing for the Sabbath before hand?

A. 1. Becauſe we are naturally carnal and unfit for ſpiritual work; and being involved in worldly buſineſs through the week, ſome previous care is needful to abſtract our thoughts from earthly things, in order to fit us for Sabbath employments and enjoyments. 2. Becauſe God calls us to make near and ſolemn approach to him, who is infinitely holy, in the ordinances of the Sabbath; and this requires preparation, according to the Pſalmiſt's example, Pſal. xxvi. 6. *I will waſh mine hands in innocency: So will I compaſs thine altar, O Lord.* 3. It was the practice of God's ancient people to prepare for the Sabbath upon the foregoing day, which therefore was called the day of preparation, Luke xxiii. 54.

Q. What ought we to do by way of preparation for the Sabbath before it come?

A. 1. Let us remember the great end and deſign of the Sabbath, ſo as to inſtruct theſe committed to our charge about it; and to break off from worldly buſineſs, ſo as we may have a time to think of the work of the approaching day; and to get the guilt of the bygone week removed, that we may have a reconciled God to meet with upon his own day. 2. Let us order all our worldly affairs before-hand with ſuch prudence and foreſight, that the buſineſs of the Sabbath may not be interrupted thereby.

Q. Hath God appointed any other ſet times to be kept holy to the Lord beſides the Sabbath?

A. None but the Jewiſh feſtivals or ceremonial Sabbaths, which being only ſhadows of things to come, they expired with Chriſt's coming; but the command for the weekly Sabbath being moral, it continues ſtill in force, Col. ii. 16, 17. Gal. iv. 9, 10, 11. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

Q. Are we bound to keep the holy-days obſerved by others, ſuch as days for Chriſt's birth, paſſion and aſcenſion: days dedicate to angels, as Michaelmas, to the Virgin Mary, as Candlemas, beſides many others dedicate to the apoſtles and other ſaints?

A. Though it be pretended that theſe days ſerve to promote piety and devotion, yet we have no warrant from God to obſerve any of them; nay, it appears to be unlawful to do it: For, 1ſt, God doth quarrel men for uſing any device of their own for promoting his ſervice or worſhip, without having his command or warrant for it, as in Deut. xii. 32. Iſa. i. 12. Jer. vii. 30. 2dly, The apoſtle Paul doth expreſsly condemn the Galatians for obſerving ſuch holy-days, Gal. iv. 10, 11. 3dly, It is a diſparaging of the Lord's day which God hath appointed, and an uſurping of his legiſlative power, for men to ſet days of their appointing on a level with his day, as the inſtitutors do, by hindering people to labour thereupon. 4thly, It is an idolatrous practice to conſecrate days to the honour of ſaints and angels, for commemorating their acts, and publiſhing their praiſe; ſuch honour and worſhip being due to God alone.

Q. Were not theſe days appointed by the ancient church, and authoriſed by great and holy men?

A. It was will-worſhip in them, ſeeing they had no power to inſtitute holy days: For, 1ſt, Under the law, when ceremonies and feſtivals were in uſe, the church appointed none of them, but God himſelf. 2dly, We read nothing of the apoſtles appointing or obſerving ſuch holy-days; not a word of their conſecrating a day for Chriſt's birth, his paſſion, or aſcenſion; nor a day to Stephen the protomartyr, nor to James, whom Herod killed with the ſword. We read of the apoſtles obſerving the Lord's day and keeping it holy, but not of any other. 3dly, Theſe other days are left unrecorded and uncertain, and ſo are concealed like the body of Moſes, that men might not be tempted to abuſe them to ſuperſtition. 4thly, Theſe days have not the divine bleſſing upon them; for they are the occaſions of much looſeneſs and immorality. 5thly, Tho' the obſerving of theſe days had been indifferent or lawful at firſt, yet the defiling of them with ſuperſtition and intemperance ſhould make all forbear them.

Q. May not the church appoint days for faſting and thankſgiving?

A. Yes, if there be be juſt occaſion for them; and the church is warranted ſo to do, both by ſcripture precepts and examples, Joel i. 14. Joel ii. 15. Ezra viii. 21. Neh. xii. 27, &c. Dan. ix. 3. And that ſuch days are to be continued in goſpel-times, is plain from Zech. xii. 11, 12, &c. Mat. ix. 15. Acts xiii. 2, 3. Acts xiv. 23. 1 Cor. vii. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 27. Moreover, it is God who by his providence doth call us to faſting or thankſgiving; the church only doth name the days convenient for theſe purpoſes.

QUEST. LIX.

Q. *Which day of the ſeven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?*

A. From the beginning of the world to the reſurrection of Chriſt, God appointed the ſeventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath, and the firſt day of the week ever ſince to continue to the end of the world, which is the Chriſtian Sabbath.

Q. Was the Sabbath ever changed from one day of the week to another?

A. Yes, it was changed from the *laſt* day of the week to the *firſt*.

Q. How long was the ſeventh or laſt day of the week obſerved for the Sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world to the reſurrection of Chriſt, which was about four thouſand years.

Q. If the fourth command be moral, how could the day appointed in it for the Sabbath be ever altered?

A. The preciſe day of the week is an alterable circumſtance, and ſeparable from the eſſence of the fourth command; and the changing of it makes no more againſt the morality of the fourth command, than the change of the means of worſhip under the goſpel makes againſt the morality of the ſecond.

Q. How doth it appear that the preciſe day of the week is ſeparable from the ſubſtance of the command ?

A. Becauſe neither the firſt part of the command which is the mandatory, nor the laſt part of it which is the benedictory, do mention the ſeventh day of the week: For the one ſaith, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, and the other, *Wherefore the Lord bleſſed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.* He ſaith not, Remember the ſeventh day, nor that he bleſſed the ſeventh day, but only the Sabbath; to teach us, that the ſeventh day in order from the creation is not of the eſſence of the command, but only a ſeventh day in number; and that the ſeventh in order might be altered, without infringing the morality of the command.

Q. Wherefore did God at firſt appoint the ſeventh in order from the creation for the Sabbath ?

A. Becauſe it was the day of God's reſt from his works of creation; and therefore God would have men to reſt from their works on this day, and to remember his works.

Q. When did God inſtitute the Sabbath at firſt ?

A. Immediately after the creation of the world, when Adam was in paradiſe, Gen. ii. 3.

Q. What need had Adam of a Sabbath, while in that ſinleſs place and ſtate ?

A. Becauſe Adam, though ſinleſs, was but a finite creature, and his ordinary employment of dreſſing the garden would be ſome interruption to the ſolemn worſhip of God; wherefore God thought fit to appoint him a day in ſeven, wherein he might have uninterrupted freedom for it.

Q. By what authority was the day for the Sabbath changed ?

A. By the ſame authority which inſtituted the Sabbath at firſt, even Chriſt's, who is true God, and Lord of the Sabbath: For whether Chriſt did it immediately by himſelf, or directed his apoſtles to do it, it is all one. But it is evident that the apoſtles both obſerved the firſt day of the week, and gave directions about it, which they would not have done without inſtructions from their Lord.

Q. What was the neceſſity of a new day for the Sabbath ?

A. 1. To manifeſt the greatneſs and glory of Chriſt, and his headſhip over the church. 2. He would bury the ſeventh-day Sabbath, to ſhew that therewith he was to abrogate and bury the Levitical worſhip and ceremonies which were practiſed on that day.

Q. Why was the change made to the firſt day of the week ?

A. Becauſe on this day the Lord did reſt from his work of redemption, which was greater than that of creation. When God gave the ten commands, creation was his greateſt work; but now he having wrought a greater, it was fit the one ſhould cede to the other. The amazing work of redemption, wherein God had ſo wonderfully diſplayed his glorious perfections, being now finiſhed, it was neceſſary that the day of God's reſting from it, ſhould be kept in everlaſting remembrance. Of all days the firſt day of the week was the moſt honourable to our Redeemer, and the moſt joyful to the redeemed: For this day Chriſt was born from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power; This day our glorious Surety was diſcharged of all our debt, was liberate from priſon, and triumphed over all his and our enemies.

Q. Have we an expreſs command for keeping the Sabbath on this day ?

A. No, tho' yet we have good warrant from ſcripture for doing it. The fourth command expreſly obligeth us to obſerve one day of ſeven as a Sabbath; and the example of Chriſt and his apoſtles in keeping the firſt day of the week, being univerſally notour to the whole church, was ſufficient to enter them upon the uniform obſervation of it: And accordingly it hath been the uninterrupted practice of all the churches of Chriſt thro' the world, ſince the apoſtles days, to keep the firſt day of the week as the Chriſtian Sabbath.

Q. What grounds have we from ſcripture for keeping the firſt day of the week ?

A. 1ſt, We are told this was Chriſt's reſurrection-day. 2dly, We have Chriſt's own example in meeting frequently with his diſciples on this day for religious work; on this day he met with his two diſciples going to Emmaus, and opened the ſcriptures to them; on this day he came to the eleven, ſhewed them his hands and feet, and opened their underſtandings; on this day he came and bleſſed them, and gave them the Holy Ghoſt; on this day he met with them, and graciouſly convinced Thomas; as we may ſee in Luke xxiv. 15, 27, 36, 40, 45. John xx. 19, 22, 26, 27. 3dly, Upon this day, being Pentecoſt, God ſent down that extraordinary effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon the apoſtles and brethren being met together, Acts ii. 1. &c. 4thly, Upon this day the diſciples uſually met for divine worſhip, for preaching and hearing the word, and celebrating the Lord's ſupper, Acts xx. 7. 5thly, Upon this firſt day of the week the apoſtles ordered their collections to be made for the poor, becauſe of their public aſſemblies on it, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. 6thly, As Chriſt hath put his name upon the ſacrament of the ſupper, calling it the Lord's ſupper, becauſe it derives its inſtitution from him; ſo upon the ſame account he hath put his name upon the firſt day of the week, calling it the Lord's day, Rev. i. 10.

Q. Doth the fourth command, transfer all the honour and dignity of the ſeventh-day Sabbath upon the firſt day of the week ?

A. Yes; becauſe God on this day reſted from a far greater work than that of creation (mentioned only in the fourth command, becauſe then it was the greateſt) and which now by all men ought to be remembered with more thankfulneſs and praiſe than it.

QUEST. LX.

Q. How is the Sabbath to be ſanctified?

A. The Sabbath is to be ſanctified, by a holy reſting all that day, even from ſuch worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and ſpending the whole time in the public and private exerciſes of God's worſhip, except ſo much as is to be taken up about the works of neceſſity and mercy.

Q. In what ſenſe is God ſaid to ſanctify the Sabbath or hallow it ?

A. By conſecrating or ſetting it apart to holy uſes and employments.

Q. In what ſenſe is God ſaid to ſanctify the Sabbath ?

A By keeping it holy to God, or applying it to theſe holy ends and exerciſes for which God hath ſet it apart.

Q. What is the holy reſt which is required upon the Sabbath ?

A. It is a total ceſſation from worldly enjoyments and recreations.

Q. Why muſt we abſtain from theſe upon the Sabbath ?

A. Becauſe God hath forbidden them, and becauſe they would prove a hinderance to his worſhip and ſervice upon it.

Q. How long muſt we abſtain from our enjoyments and recreations ?

A. Through the whole Sabbath-day.

Q. May we not uſe ſome recreations after public worſhip is over, ſuch as walking in the fields, or the like ?

A. No; 1. Becauſe the whole day is the Lord's, and ought to be kept holy to him; and it is ſacrilege to alienate any part of what is the Lord's to our own uſe or pleaſure. 2. We are expreſly prohibited to find our own pleaſure upon God's holy day, Iſa. lviii. 13.

A. Why are worldly recreations or diverſions forbidden on this day ?

A. Becauſe they hinder the ſpiritual work of the Sabbath and indiſpoſe the mind more for ſpiritual exerciſes than mens ordinary employments would do.

Q. Is there no kind of work or buſineſs of ours lawful on the Sabbath-day ?

A. No, except it be the works of neceſſity and mercy.

Q. What are theſe works of neceſſity which are lawful on the Sabbath ?

A. They are ſuch actions as could not be prevented by our previous care, nor ſafely delayed till afterwards; as the defending ourſelves againſt enemies, or fleeing from them; quenching fire, putting on clothes, and the like.

Q. What are the works of mercy lawful on the Sabbath ?

A. Actions for preſerving life; ſuch as the feeding of our bodies and of our beaſts, relieving them when in diſtreſs, attending and viſiting the ſick, collecting for the poor, and the like.

Q. How ought we to manage in doing works of neceſſity this day, ſo as not to offend ?

A. We muſt have no active hand in bringing them on, nor any ſecret complacency in their falling out; we muſt ſtudy to keep our hearts in a ſpiritual frame while doing them, and diſpatch them as ſoon as poſſible, that we may return to the main work of the Sabbath.

Q. What is the frame of ſpirit proper for us on the Lord's day ?

A. It is a holy ſpiritual frame of heart, ſuch as John ſpeaks of Rev. i. 10. *I was in the ſpirit on the Lord's day ?*

Q. What is imported in that expreſſion, *I was in the ſpirit* ?

A. It imports, to have our thoughts abſtracted from earthly things, and to lay our ſouls open to the influences of God's Spirit, and to depend upon his aſſiſtance in all the duties of the day. It is to have the graces of the Spirit in exerciſe, and to have ſpiritual ends in all our Sabbath exerciſes, not to be ſeen of men, but to glorify God, and enjoy communion with him.

Q. What are the holy duties which are the proper work of the Sabbath ?

A. The public, private, and ſecret exerciſes of God's worſhip.

Q. What are the public exerciſes requiſite ?

A. The joining in prayers and praiſes with the aſſemblies of God's people, the hearing of the word read and preached, and partaking of the ſacraments.

Q. What are the private exerciſes required on this day ?

A. It is neceſſary for families to join together this day in the worſhip of God, by reading his word, ſinging his praiſe, and calling upon his name; and to ſpend ſome time in catechiſing of children and ſervants, repeating the ſermons, or Chriſtian conference.

Q. Are all maſters of families bound to worſhip God with their families ? A. Yes.

Q. How do you prove that ?

A. *1ſt*, From the fourth command, that enjoins every head of a family, with all that are within his gates, be they his children, his ſervants, or ſtrangers, to keep holy the Sabbath day, which muſt be by worſhipping of God as well as reſting from labour, otherwiſe he would keep it no better than the beaſts: and this worſhip is not to be reſtricted to what is public only; for the command is ſtill binding upon maſters of families, tho' no public worſhip could be had: they muſt ſanctify the Sabbath in their dwellings, Lev. xxiii. 3. *2dly*, Maſters of families are bound to rule their families as miniſters do the church which partly is by going before them in the worſhip of God, 1 Tim. iii. 4. 5. *3dly*, We are enjoined to pray every where, and with all manner of prayer, and conſequently with family-prayer, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Eph. vi. 18. *4thly*, Upon the Lord's returning to his people, he promiſes to pour out a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication upon families, ſo as every family ſhall mourn apart, Zech. xii. 10. 12. 13. *5thly*, Wrath hangs over the families who call not upon God, Jer. x. 25. *Laſtly*, Family worſhip is powerfully recommended by the examples of Chriſt and the ſaints, as Abraham, Joſhua, David, Daniel, and Cornelius, Mat. xxvi. 30. Luke ix. 18. Gen. xii. 8. and xiii. 4. and xxi. 23. Joſhua iv. 15. 2 Sam. vi. 20. Pſal. ci. 2. Dan. vi. 10. Acts x. 2.

Q. What are the ſecret duties requiſite on the Lord's day ?

A. Secret prayer, reading the ſcriptures and other pious books, meditations upon divine ſubjects, and ſelf-examination.

Q. What ſhould we pray for upon the morning of the Lord's day ?

A. For ſuitable ſpiritual frames for the work of the day; for the Lord's gracious preſence to be with miniſters and hearers; and particularly that he may give us the aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit in all the duties of the day, that he may give us attention to hearken, underſtanding to conceive, wiſdom to apply, judgment to diſcern, faith to believe, memory to retain, and grace to practice what we areto hear, that ſo the word may prove to us the ſavour of life unto life, and not the ſavour of death unto death.

Q. What ſhould we pray for in the Sabbath evening ?

A. For pardon of all our ſhortcomings in our Sabbath performances, for the ſake of Chriſt's atoning blood: At which times we ſhould confeſs and bewail our earthlineſs, formality, wanderings, wearyings, and byends in duty; or dark underſtanding, hard hearts, cold affections, and treacherous memories: and alſo we ſhould bleſs God for the Sabbath, and the joyful ſound that we hear therein; and pray that our Sabbath-day's frame may laſt in ſome meaſure thro' the week, that we may walk with God, and live ſtill in the view of the everlaſting Sabbath above.

Q. Is the happineſs of heaven like the keeping of a Sabbath?

A. Yes, it is called ſo Heb. iv. 9. The word *reſt* is in the original a ſabbatiſm, or the keeping of a Sabbath; and ſo it is in theſe reſpects, 1. As the Sabbath is a reſt from the toil of the week, ſo heaven is a reſt from the toil which the ſaints had here with an ill heart and an ill world. 2. As the Sabbath is a day of thankful remembrance of Chriſt's finiſhing the work of our redemption, ſo in heaven they will be always commemorating Chriſt's mighty acts, and offering eternal thankſgiving and praiſe for redeeming love. 3. As the Sabbath is a day of holy convocation, ſo in heaven there is a glorious gathering of all the ſaints in one body. 4. As the Sabbath is a day of communion with God in ordinances, ſo in heaven there is eternal communion with God in an immediate way.

Q. Wherein will the Sabbath above excel the Sabbath below.

A. 1. The ſaints hearts will never be out of frame for keeping the heavenly Sabbath, as they are often here. 2. There will be no mixture of mourning with their ſongs of praiſe, as here. 3. Their Sabbath-work will never be interrupted thro' the neceſſities of the body, by ſleeping, clothing, eating, *&c.* as here. 4. The Sabbath above hath no night to ſucceed it, nor weekly day to come after it; yet none there ſhall ever ſay, *What a wearineſs is it?* as many do here.

QUEST. LXI.

Q. *What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omiſſion or careleſs performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleneſs, or doing that which is in itſelf ſinful, or by unneceſſary thoughts, words or works, about our worldly employments and recreations.

Q. What are the evils forbidden in this command?

A. They are three, namely, the omiſſion of the duties required by it, the careleſs performing of theſe duties, and all profaning of this holy day, which may be done ſeveral ways, as in the anſwer.

Q. What mean you by the omiſſion of the duties required?

A. The neglect of the duties enjoined upon this day, either by forſaking the public aſſemblies of God's people or by neglecting the worſhip of God in our families, or in ſecret.

Q. Are ſins of omiſſion great ſins?

A. Yes; for by them God's authority is ſlighted, and conſcience wounded: And hence ſome eminently pious have been made to cry out on a death bed, *Lord, forgive me my ſins of omiſſion.*

Q. What is the evil of neglecting to attend upon public ordinances upon the Sabbath?

A. 1. It is a denying God that public homage and ſervice which he hath a juſt title to from all men, Iſa. lxvi. 23. "From one Sabbath to another ſhall all fleſh come to worſhip before me, ſaith the Lord." 2. It is a deſpiſing the ordinary means which God hath appointed for converting of ſouls, weakening of corruptions, and ſtrengthening of grace. 3. The damned will bewail the neglecting of opportunities to all eternity.

Q. Is it a ſufficient excuſe for ſuch neglect, for perſons to ſay they were taking phyſic or letting blood on this day, or they wanted ſuch apparel, or the day was cold, or ſtormy, or the like?

A. The excuſes of perſons for neglecting God's ordinances, which would not detain them from a gainful worldly market, will not be ſuſtained at God's bar.

Q. What mean you by the careleſs performances of the duties of the Sabbath, here forbidden?

A. When people attend ordinances without any care or delight, or in a formal, dead, wandering, wearying or drowſy manner.

Q. Is not the Sabbath otherwiſe profaned than by ſins of omiſſion, or the careleſs performance of duty?

A. Yes, by manifold ſins of commiſſion, ſins both of the heart and of the life.

Q. What are the ſins of the heart, whereby the Sabbath is profaned?

A. They are many, ſuch as Atheiſm or unbelief of God's truths preached to us on this day, ignorance of theſe truths, averſion to the duties of the Sabbath, hypocriſy and formality in theſe duties, wearying of them, drowſineſs or ſleeping in time of them, thinking upon worldly things, prejudice at Chriſt's truths and theſe who publiſh them, undervaluing of goſpel-news, and ſlighting the offers of precious Chriſt made to us.

Q. What are the ſins of the life or outward man, by which the Sabbath is profaned?

A. There are many of them, ſuch as, 1. Speaking our own words upon this day, or talking of worldly affairs. 2. Doing our own works, to wit, pieces of ſervile work, which might either have been done the day before, or delayed until the day after. 3. Finding our own pleaſures, by uſing worldly diverſions or recreations upon the Lord's day; all which are expreſsly forbidden, Iſa. lviii. 13. (ſee before, page 340.) 4. Doing things on this day which are in themſelves ſinful, whereby ſin is greatly aggravated; which perſons are guilty of, when inſtead of attending upon God's worſhip upon the Sabbath, they ſpend this holy day in drinking, ſwearing, unclean practices, jeſting upon ſacred things, or reproaching the ſerious worſhippers of God.

QUEST. LXII.

Q. *What are the reaſons annexed to the fourth commandment?*

A. The reaſons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us ſix days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a ſpecial propriety in the ſeventh, his own example, and his bleſſing the Sabbath-day.

Q. What is the firſt reaſon for enforcing this command?

A. The firſt is taken from the great goodneſs and condeſcenſion of God in allowing us ſix days of ſeven for our own affairs, and reſerving but one of them for himſelf; when he might have taken ſix, and left us but one.

Q. In what words of the command is this reaſon contained?

A. In theſe words, *Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy works.*

Q. What is the ſecond reaſon for enforcing this command?

A. It is taken from God's right and title to the ſeventh day of our time; he challengeth a ſpecial propriety in it.

Q. In what words of the command do we find this reaſon?

A. In theſe words, *But the ſeventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.*

Q. But are not all the days of the week the Lord's?

A. Yes; but he hath a peculiar intereſt in the ſeventh above the reſt, as having ſanctified and ſet it apart from common uſe, for his own worſhip and ſervice.

Q. Would it not be a high degree of ſacrilege to rob God of his own day, or any part of it, ſeeing he claims it as his own?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the third reaſon for enforcing this command?

A. God's example, in reſting from his works of creation upon the ſeventh day, which ſhould prevail with us to imitate him by keeping every ſeventh day as a holy reſt after ſix days labour.

Q. In what words of the command is this reaſon contained?

A. In theſe, "For in ſix days the Lord made heaven and earth, the ſea, and all that in them is, and reſted the ſeventh day."

Q. How can it be ſaid that God reſted then from creating, ſeeing he ſtill creates mens ſouls, and daily produceth multitudes of creatures?

A. The meaning is, that God reſted from creating any new ſpecies or kinds of creatures after the firſt ſix days, but not new individuals.

Q. What is the fourth reaſon for keeping this command?

A. God's bleſſing the Sabbath day, in theſe words; "Wherefore the Lord bleſſed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Q. What is the import of theſe words?

A. That God hath not only ſanctified this day for his ſervice, but he hath ordained the Sabbath to be a means and time for conveying bleſſings to theſe that keep it; and we may hope for a bleſſing from God, if we duly wait on him this day in his ordinances.

QUEST. LXIII.

Q *Which is the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment is, *Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

QUEST. LXIV.

Q. *What is required in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preſerving the honour, and performing the duties belonging to every one in their ſeveral places and relations, as ſuperiors, inferiors, or equals.

Q. Who are meant by *father* and *mother* in the fifth command?

A. Not only our natural parents, but all our ſuperiors: for theſe alſo get the title of fathers and mothers in ſcripture; kings and queens are our fathers and mothers in a political ſenſe, Iſa. xlix. 23. Aged perſons are ſo called, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. Miniſters are ſpiritual fathers, 1 Cor. iv. 15. Heads of families are oeconomical fathers, 2 Kings v. 13. And theſe who are eminent in gifts, grace or ſtation in the world, are ſtiled fathers, Gen. iv. 20, 21, 22. 2 Kings ii. 12. Gen. xlv. 8. Acts vii. 2.

Q. Why are ſuperiors ſtiled father and mother?

A. To teach them, like natural parents, to treat their inferiors with love and tenderneſs, as if they were their children, and not to ſlight or deſpiſe them.

Q. What is meant by the honour we are required to give our ſuperiors by this command?

A. It comprehends all that eſteem, reſpect, ſubmiſſion, obedience and duty which we owe unto them by the law of God.

Q. What is the general ſcope of the fifth command?

A. It is to enjoin us the performance of theſe duties which we owe to our neighbours in their ſeveral ſtations and relations, whether they be our ſuperiors, inferiors or equals.

Q. Why is this command called *the firſt commandment with promiſe*? Eph. vi. 2.

A. Becauſe it is the firſt command of the ſecond table, and is the foundation of obedience to all the other commands of it; and it hath a promiſe annexed to it, to ſhew its dignity above them.

Q. Who are meant by ſuperiors in the anſwer?

A. Not only our natural parents, but alſo magiſtrates, miniſters, maſters, huſbands, the aged, and theſe who excel us in gifts or grace.

Q. Who are meant by inferiors?

A. Theſe who are in lower ſtations, as ſubjects, children, and ſervants, and theſe who are weak in gifts and grace.

Q. Who are meant by equals?

A. Theſe who are in like ſtations and conditions in the world.

Q. Why is the mother mentioned in the command as well as the father?

A. That children might not diſregard her upon the account of her weakneſs or ſubjection to her huſband. Nay, the Lord mentions the mother before the father, Lev. xix. 3. "Ye ſhall fear every man his mother and his father:" Why? To meet with the humour of thoſe who would diminiſh the reſpect and duty they owe to their mother.

Q. What duties are required of children to their parents?

A. To eſteem and love them; to honour, reverence, and to obey them; to hearken to their counſels and inſtructions, and to ſubmit to their reproofs and corrections; to marry with their conſent; to cover their infirmities; and to ſupply them when in ſtraits, Mal. ii. 6. 1 Kings xix. 29, 1 Kings ii. 19, Eph. vi. 1. Heb. xii. 9, Prov. xxiii. 22. Judg. xiv. 2. Gen. ix. 23. and xlvii. 12.

Q. What ſhall children do when parents adviſe any thing contrary to God's word?

A. Children are only to obey parents in the Lord, and they muſt love and obey God before all men; for "he that loveth father or mother (ſaith our Lord) more than me, is not worthy of me, Mat. x. 37."

Q. What duties are required of parents to their children?

A. To love them tenderly; to educate them in the knowledge and fear of God; to reprove, chaſten, and keep them in ſubjection; to pity and pray for them; to inſtruct them in the ways of the Lord, and be good examples to them; to encourage them therein with endearing language; to provide and lay up for them, and put them in ſuitable callings, and to be concerned for a better portion to them than things of the world, Tit. ii. 4, Prov. xxii. 6, 1 Tim. iii. 4, Prov. xxix. 15, 17, Eph. vi. 4, Pſal. ciii. 13, Gen. xvii. 18, 2 Sam. xii. 16. Exod. xii. 26, 27, Deut. iv. 9, 10, Pſal. ci. 2, 3, Prov. xxxi. 2, 3, 1 Tim v. 8, 2 Cor xii. 14, Gen. xxv. 5. 6. 2 Chron. xxi. 3, Luke xv. 12, Gen. iv. 1, 2, Gen. xlviii. 1, Mat. xix. 13, 14.

Q. May parents reprove their children when they are in paſſion?

A. Reproofs at that time ſeldom do good; it were better for them to forbear until their paſſion be over, that they may reprove in the ſpirit of meekneſs, Gen. iii. 8. Gal. vi. 1.

Q. May we not lawfully be angry with children for their faults?

A. The beſt way to be angry and not ſin, is to be angry at ſin; wherefore, when children offend, we ſhould not be angry ſo much with them as with their ſin.

Q. What duties are required of ſubjects to their magiſtrates?

A. To pray for them, to honour them, and be ſubject to them, to obey their juſt laws, to pay them tribute, to protect and defend them, to bear injuries from them patiently, and to be faithful to them, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13. 14, 17, Rom. xiii. 1, 6, 7, 1 Sam. xxvi. 9, 10, 15.

Q. What are the duties of magiſtrates to their ſubjects?

A. To make good laws, and appoint faithful officers to execute them; to be careful of the peace and ſafety of the ſubjects; to be encouragers of virtue, and puniſhers of vice; to govern with prudence, juſtice and clemency; to relieve the oppreſſed; to provide means of grace for all the ſouls in their dominions; and to be nurſing fathers to the church, 2 Chron. xix. 5. 6. 7. and xvii. 8, 9, 12, 1 Pet. ii. 14, 2 Chron. i. 10, and ii. 1, Iſa. xlix. 23, 2 Kings xii. 7, and xviii. 4, and xxiii. 21, Neh. xiii. 10, 11.

Q. What duties are required of people to their miniſters?

A. To eſteem and love them dearly for their office and works ſake; to pray for them, and attend upon the ordinances diſpenſed by them; to ſubmit to their reproofs and cenſures; to hearken, to apply and conform to their doctrine; to ſhut their ears againſt malicious reports raiſed againſt them, and communicate to them in temporal good things, 1 Theſ. v. 12, 13, 25, Rom. xv. 30. Luke x. 16 Heb. xiii. 17, 18, James i. 21, 1 Tim. v. 19, Gal. vi. 6, 1 Cor. ix. 14.

Q. What are the duties of miniſters to their people?

A. To preach the word faithfully, and diſpenſe all ordinances to them; to have tender love and affection to their ſouls; to pray fervently for them; to reſide amongſt them, and watch carefully over them; to be patterns of godly living unto them; and to be willing to make the greateſt condeſcenſions for the edification and good of ſouls, 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3, 5, 1 Theſſ. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10. Eph. i. 15, 16, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3, Tit. ii. 7, 1 Cor. ix. 19, 21, 22, 2 Cor. xii. 19.

Q. What duties are required of ſervants to their maſters?

A. To love, honour and obey them; to be faithful in all things intruſted to them; to be diligent in their work, and ſtudy to pleaſe them in all things; to bear their rebukes patiently, not anſwering again, Mat. vi. 24, 1 Tim. vi. 1, Col. iii. 22, Tit. ii. 9, 10, 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19, Gen. xxiv. 12.

Q. What are the duties of maſters to their ſervants?

A. To rule over them with gentleneſs, and not with rigour; to give them ſufficient food, and pay them their wages juſtly; to be careful of them under ſickneſs; to reprove ſin in them, inſtruct them, and command them to keep the ways of the Lord, and particularly his Sabbaths, Eph. vi. 9. Lev xxv. 43. Prov. xxvii. 27, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15, Mat. viii. 6, Prov. xxix. 19, Gen. xviii. 19, Exod. xx. 10.

Q. What are the duties of wives to their huſbands?

A. To love them and be faithful to them in all things; to give them due reſpect and reverence, and to be obedient to them; to ſtudy to pleaſe them, and to be helps to them in family-affairs; to warn them of any evils or dangers they may be expoſed to; to ſtudy, by a meek, quiet, chaſte, and loving converſation, to adorn religion, and win over their huſbands to the love of it, Tit. ii. 4, Prov. xxxi. 12, 1 Tim. iii. 11, Heb. xiii. 4, Eph. v. 33, 1 Pet. iii. 1, to 7, 1 Cor. vii. 21. Prov. xxxi. 27, Gen. ii. 18, Mat. xxvii. 19.

Q. What are the duties of huſbands to their wives?

A. To love them, and live chaſtely with them; to nouriſh and cheriſh them; to cover their infirmities, and protect them from injuries; to ſtudy to pleaſe them; to counſel and adviſe them, pray with them and for them, and praiſe them when they do well, Eph. v. 28, 29, Prov. v. 18, 19, 20, 1 Pet. iv. 8, 1 Sam. xxx. 18, 1 Cor. vii, 33, 1 Pet. iii. 7, Gen. xxv. 21, Prov. xxxi. 28, 29.

Q. What are the duties of the younger and inferior in gifts and grace, to the aged and ſuperior?

A. To riſe up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man; to ſpeak to them with reſpect, give them the place in ſpeaking, ſubmit to their advice, and imitate their holy lives, Lev. xix. 32, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2, Job xxxii. iv. 6, 7, 1 Pet. v. 5, 1 Cor. xi. 1.

Q. What are the duties of the aged and ſuperior to the younger and inferior?

A. To bear with their weakneſs, and to lay themſelves out for their good, by inſtructing them, and praying for them; to ſtudy to adorn their old age by a holy and exemplary life, Rom. xv. 1, Gen. xlviii. 15, 16, Tit. ii. 2, 3, 4.

Q. What are the duties of equals one to another?

A. To ſubmit to one another, to be pitiful, to be courteous, to be at peace among themſelves, to be kindly affectioned one to another, in honour preferring one another; to ſeek one another's wealth, and rejoice in others welfare, 1 Pet. v. 5, and iii. 8, Rom. xii. 10. 15, 1 Cor. x. 24.

QUEST. LXV.

Q. *What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing any thing againſt the honour and duty which belong to every one in their ſeveral places and relations.

Q. How many ways may this command be broken?

A. Two ways; 1. By neglecting the duties of the ſtations and relations in which God hath placed us, whether we be ſuperiors, inferiors, or equals. 2. By doing things directly contrary to the honour and duty which we owe to our ſuperiors, inferiors or equals.

Q. What are theſe ſins which inferiors are commonly guilty of againſt their ſuperiors?

A. They are many, ſuch as ſlighting and deſpiſing them, envying their elevation, reviling and curſing them; diſobedience to their juſt commands and counſels, contempt of their reproofs and corrections, mocking and ſtudying to expoſe them, making a ſhew of reverence and obedience without reality, not imitating their good examples, and the like.

Q. What are the ſins which ſuperiors are commonly guilty of againſt their inferiors?

A. They are, ſuch as commanding unlawful things, enjoining things not in their power to perform; adviſing and encouraging them to what is evil, diſſuading and diſcouraging them from what is good; cruel treating of them, and provoking them to wrath; proud imperious carriage toward them; reproving with bitterneſs, or correcting with rigour, oppreſſion and tyranny; debaſing themſelves, and loſing their authority; not giving good examples, and the like.

Q. What are the ſins of equals againſt one another?

A. Hatred, anger, malice, envy, evil ſpeaking, injuring, reproaching or backbiting one another; affecting preheminence one over another, tempting and encouraging one another to ſin, and the like.

Q. Is it a ſin in children to diſpoſe of their parents goods as their own?

A. Yes, Prov. xxviii. 24. "Whoſo robbeth his father or his mother, and ſaith, It is no tranſgreſſion, the ſame is the companion of a deſtroyer."

Q. Is it not a great diſhonour done to parents for children to diſpoſe of themſelves in marriage without their conſent?

A. Yes, Exod. xxii. 17. Num. xxx. 5. Deut. vii. 3. Jer. xxix. 6 1 Cor. vii. 38. Col. iii. 20.

Q. What if children ſet light by their parents, or expoſe their weakneſſes?

A. They draw down the curſe of God upon themſelves, Deut. xxvii. 16. "Curſed be he that ſetteth light by his father or his mother: And all the people ſhall ſay, *Amen.*"

Q. Do you read of any upon whom this curſe came for ſo doing?

A. Yes, of Ham the ſon of Noah, Gen. ix. 22, 25, 26.

Q. What ſhall become of theſe who curſe their parents?

A. Whoſo curſeth his father or his mother, his lamp ſhall be put out in obſcure darkneſs, Prov. xx. 20. Nay death is threatened to them, Exod. xxi. 17.

Q. What is threatened againſt theſe who not only diſobey, but mock their parents?

A. The eye that mocketh at his father, and deſpiſeth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley ſhall pick it out, and the young eagels ſhall eat it, Prov. xxx. 17.

Q. What is due to theſe children who beat their parents?

A. He that ſmiteth his father or his mother, ſhall be ſurely put to death, Exod. xxi. 15.

Q. What if the magiſtrate neglect to puniſh ſuch diſobedient children?

A. God will take the puniſhing of ſuch into his own hand.

Q. Do you read of any inſtances of his ſo doing?

A. Yes, I read of Eli's ſons, 1 Sam. ii. 25. "They hearkened not to the voice of their father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them." And of David's rebellious ſon Abſalom, that was taken up by an oak between the heaven and the earth, to hang as a monument of God's juſtice for breaking the fifth command, 2 Sam. xviii. 9.

Q. What became of the little children of Bethel who mocked Eliſha as he paſſed by, ſaying, *Go up, thou baldhead,* &c.

A. God ſent forth two ſhe-bears out of the wood, that tare forty and two children of them, 2 Kings ii. 24.

Q. Are not theſe children guilty of diſhonouring their parents, who deſpiſe them when they are poor or old, or ſuffer them to be in want. A. Yes.

Q. Is it not monſtrous ingratitude in children to requite their parents ſo badly for their love and tenderneſs toward them?

A. Yes.

Q. What may ſuch expect for it?

A. To meet with the ſame uſage from their own children in this world, and with dreadful puniſhment in the other, if they repent not.

QUEST. LXVI.

Q. What are the reaſons annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reaſons annexed to the fifth commandment is a promiſe of long life and proſperity (as far it ſhall ſerve for God's glory and their own good) to all ſuch as keep this commandment.

Q. Since the light of nature doth ſo clearly teach us to honour our parents, why is there ſuch a promiſe annexed to it?

A. To ſhew how greatly concerned God is to ſupport the authority of parents.

Q. How is the fifth commandment called the firſt with promiſe Eph. vi. 2. ſeeing the ſecond hath a promiſe in it of God's ſhewing mercy to thouſands?

A. The promiſe in the ſecond doth likewiſe extend to the keeping of all the other commands, but the promiſe in the fifth is made to the keeping of it only.

Q. What doth God here promiſe to theſe who keep the fifth command?

A. Long life.

Q. What is included in the promiſe of long life here?

A. It includes a promiſe of proſperity, with the bleſſings and comforts of life: For, without this, long life would not be a reward; death being more eligible than long life in miſery, Eph. vi. 3. Rev. ix. 6.

Q. What courſe then ſhould children take to live long and happy lives?

A. They ſhould honour and obey their parents.

Q. Is this promiſe of long life and proſperity to obedient children, to be underſtood abſolutely, or with limitation?

A. It is to be underſtood, as other temporal promiſes, with this limitation, ſo far as the beſtowing of it ſhall ſerve for God's glory and their own good.

Q. What if God ſometimes take away obedient children in their youth?

A. We are then to think that God did not ſee long living here to be for their good, but thought fit in place of it to give them a long life in heaven, which is far better, Phil. i. 23.

Q. May not then diſobedient children look for ſhort and miſerable lives here?

A. Yes.

QUEST. LXVII.

Q. *Which is the ſixth commandment?*

A. The ſixth commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not kill?*

QUEST. LXVIII.

Q. *What is required in the ſixth commandment?*

A. The ſixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preſerve our own life, and the life of others.

Q. Is there not a comely order among the commands of the ſecond table?

A. Yes; for the fifth command, or firſt of the ſecond table, preſcribes in general, what reſpect men ſhould ſhew to one another in their ſeveral ſtations and relations. In the next place, we have particular directions with reſpect to theſe things which are moſt valuable to men; the firſt is with reſpect to our lives, in the ſixth command; the next relates to our chaſtity, in the ſeventh command; the third is concerning our eſtates, in the eighth command; the fourth is with reſpect to our good name, in the ninth command; the laſt is concerning the inward frame of our hearts in reference to our own eſtate and the eſtate of others, in the tenth command.

Q. Whoſe life is it that we are bound to preſerve by the ſixth commandment?

A. Both our own life and the life of others; and this is to be underſtood, not only of the life of the body, but alſo of the ſoul.

Q. Doth this command require us to ſtudy and endeavour by any means whatſoever to preſerve our own life and other mens?

A. No; we are only to uſe all lawful means and endeavours for that end.

Q. May we uſe no unlawful endeavour, or venture upon any ſin, to preſerve our own life, or the life of others?

A. No.

Q. Did not Iſaac tell a lie, in calling his wife his ſiſter, to ſave his life, Gen. xxvi. 7. And did not Peter deny Chriſt, to preſerve his life?

A. Iſaac's lie and Peter's denial were ſins againſt God, and are recorded, not for imitation, but for caution; for *we muſt not do evil that good may come*, Rom. iii. 8. Nay, to go about to ſave our lives by ſuch ſinful means is the way to loſe our lives and our ſouls for ever, Mat. xvi. 25, 26. and x. 33.

Q. What are the lawful endeavours which we ſhould uſe to preſerve the life of our bodies?

A. Juſt ſelf-defence againſt violence; the temperate uſe of meat, drink, clothes; bodily exerciſe, and phyſick when needful, likewiſe we ſhould ſtudy a cheerful, peaceable and contented temper of mind, without harbouring anger, envy, grief, or ſuch paſſions as prejudge the healthy, Luke xxii. 36. Eph. v. 29. Prov. xxv. 16, 27. 1 Tim. v. 23. Iſa. xxxviii. 21. Prov. xvii. 22. Col. iii. 12. 13.

Q. What are the endeavours we ſhould uſe for preſerving the bodily life of others?

A. A pleading for, and labouring to reſcue, the innocent in danger of death; hiding the perſecuted, or warning them of danger; relieving thoſe that are in wants; bearing injuries without revenging them, and the like, Prov. xxxi. 8, 9. 1 Sam. xiv. 45. and xix. 4, 5. 1 Kings xviii. 4. Acts xxiii. 16. Rom. xii. 17, 20. Job. xxxi. 19 Mat. xxv. 35.

Q. What endeavours ſhould we uſe for preſerving the life of our ſouls?

A. Attending upon the outward means of ſalvation, believing, repenting, mortifying ſin, and ſtudying holineſs, Prov. viii. 34, 35, 36, Mark xvi. 19, Ezek. xviii. 31, 32, Rom. viii. 13, Heb. xii. 14.

Q. What endeavours muſt we uſe for preſerving the ſouls of others?

A. We muſt uſe all the means which God hath appointed for reclaiming men from evil, and promoting their converſion; ſuch as warning, reproof, inſtruction, prayer, holy example, and recommending Chriſt to them, James v. 20, 1 Cor. vii. 16, 1 Pet. iii. 1. 1 Theſſ. v. 14. Rev. xix. 17, Acts xx. 26, 27, and xvi. 31.

QUEST. LXIX.

Q. *What is forbidden in the ſixth commandment?*

A. The ſixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjuſtly, and whatſoever tendeth thereunto.

Q. Whoſe life is it that this command forbids to take away?

A. Our own life, or the life of our neighbour.

Q. Doth it forbid the taking away of our neighbour's life in any caſe?

A. No, but the taking it away unjuſtly.

Q. When is it that our neighbour's life may be juſtly taken away?

A. 1. In caſe of public juſtice by a magiſtrate. 2. In caſe of a lawful war. 3. In caſe of neceſſary ſelf defence.

Q. Is killing in any other caſe to be looked upon as murder?

A. Yes, except when it is done by pure accident without knowledge or deſign of harm, in which caſe there were of old cities of refuge for the ſlayer to flee to, Deut. xix. 5, 6.

Q. How doth it appear that the magiſtrate hath power to take away mens lives, notwithſtanding of the ſixth command?

A. Becauſe God hath appointed ſeveral crimes, particularly murder, to be puniſhed with death, Gen. ix. 6. "Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed." Exod. xxi 12. "He that ſmiteth a man ſo that he die, ſhall be ſurely put to death." And this is confirmed in the New Teſtament, Mat. xxvi. 52. Rev. xiii. 10.

Q. May the magiſtrate ſpare or pardon a murderer?

A. No; for God hath forbidden it, Num. xxxv. 31. 33. "Ye ſhall take no ſatisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he ſhall be ſurely put to death: For blood it defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleanſed of the blood that is ſhed therein, but by the blood of him that ſhed it."

Q. How doth it appear to be lawful to kill in a juſt war?

A. Becauſe it is done by the authority of the ſupreme magiſtrate, who even under the New Teſtament is warranted to bear the ſword againſt evil-doers, Rom. xiii. 4. And we are frequently aſſured, that true piety is very well conſiſtent with the office of a ſoldier, Luke iii. 14. Matth. xviii. 9, 10. Acts x. 1, 2. and xiii. 12. And theſe ſoldiers are recorded with ſignal honour, who through faith ſubdued kingdoms, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens, Heb. xi. 33. 34.

Q. How doth it appear to be lawful to kill in our own defence, when attacked by robbers or murderers?

A. From Exod. xxii. 2. "If a thief be found breaking up, and be ſmitten that he die, there ſhall be no blood ſhed for him." And Luke xxii. 36, 38. Chriſt approves of the diſciples having ſwords for their protection, although they might not uſe them when Chriſt's hour was come. And Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. we are called to defend our neighbour in danger, and much more ourſelves.

Q. What are we to think of thoſe who ſhed blood in duellings?

A. They are the devil's martyrs, and murderers in God's ſight; for they uſurp God's right of vengeance, which he hath expreſly reſerved to himſelf, Rom. xii. 19.

Q. If another challenge me to fight, how can I avoid to accept of it without loſing my honour?

A. In that caſe we muſt leave our name and credit with God, and not to be drawn on by airy notions of honour to the God diſhonouring ſin of murder, or to ſet ourſelves above all laws both of God and man, and thereby throw our precious ſouls a prey to the devil.

Q. Did not David fight a duel with Goliah?

A. He did that by public authority in a lawful war for the good of his country, by the motion of God's Spirit, and not from any paſſion or corrupt affection of his own. For God forbids all men to be their own avengers, Rom. xii. 19.

Q. Is it not the worſt kind of murder for a man to kill himſelf?

A. Yes; for, in other murders, a man may live to repent of his ſins; but in this, if he die immediately, the man dies in his ſin, without time for repentance.

Q. What are the temptations which uſually prompt men to deſtroy themſelves?

A. It was impatience under a croſs, or diſhonour he met with, that provoked Ahithophel to do it, 2 Sam. xvii. 23. It was horrour of conſcience, under guilt and deſpair of mercy, that drove Judas to it, Matth. xxvii. 4, 5. It was fear of torture, or an ignominious death from others, that puſhed Saul to do it, and the jaylor to attempt it, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. Acts xvi. 27.

Q. Are not the temptations of men to ſelf-murder contrary to all reaſon?

A. Yes, ſeeing it is moſt fooliſh and unreaſonable for a man to adventure upon unſpeakable torture and anguiſh which will laſt for ever, that he may ſhun a ſmall diſtreſs here that would ſoon be over.

Q. Did not many of the ancient heathens applaud mens killing themſelves, in ſome caſes as an act of heroiſm and magnanimity?

A. Theſe men were not illuminated by goſpel light, otherwiſe they would have reckoned it an act of rebellion and treachery for a man to break priſon or deſert his poſt until he was fairly diſmiſt by his ſovereign Lord; yea, an act of puſillanimity and cowardice for a man to flee from a ſmall conflict or trial, which God had appointed for the diſcovery of his valour.

Q. Did not Samſon kill himſelf in pulling down Dagon's temple? Judges xvi. 30.

A. His intention was not againſt his own life, but againſt Iſrael's enemies; beſides, he acted as a judge in Iſrael, being moved by the Spirit of God to deliver God's people, but not from deſpair; and ſo his action is not imitable by us.

Q. Doth the ſixth command forbid only the direct taking away of our own or our neighbour's life?

A. It doth alſo forbid whatſoever tendeth thereunto.

Q. May not a man thus be guilty of ſelf-murder without putting violent hands on himſelf?

A. Yes; as when he neglects or refuſes food or phyſic, or neceſſary means of preſerving life. Or, 2dly, When he is guilty of ſurfeiting, drunkenneſs, or any kind of intemperance. 3dly, When he indulges exceſſive ſorrows, diſtracting cares, ſinful anger, envy, or ſuch hurtful paſſions which breed diſtempers in the body, Luke xxi. 34. Eccl. ii. 22, 23. and vi. 2. Prov. xiv. 30. and xvii. 22.

Q. How may a man be guilty of murdering his own ſoul?

A. By neglecting the outward means of ſalvation, refuſing Chriſt the only remedy for ſin, deſpiſing warnings, counſels and reproofs, and continuing obſtinate in ſinful courſes, Prov. viii. 36. Ezek xviii. 30, 31. John v. 40. Prov. vi. 32.

Q. How may a man be guilty of murder with reſpect to others?

A. He may be guilty of murder with reſpect to their bodies, and with reſpect to their ſouls; and this he may be guilty of in thoughts, in words, and in deeds.

Q. How may a man be a murderer in his thoughts?

A. By entertaining ſinful anger, hatred, envy, and deſire of revenge; by contriving or conſenting to the death of others, 1 John iii. 15, "Whoſo hateth his brother is a murderer," Mat xv. 19, "Out of the heart proceeds murders." See alſo Mat. v. 21, 22, Zech. viii. 17. Eph. iv. 31, Gen. xxxvii. 11, 20, and xlix. 6, Acts xxii. 20.

Q. How may a man be a murderer in words?

A. By backbiting his neighbour, or uſing opprobrious words againſt him, which cauſe murders; by curſing or imprecating evil upon him; by informing or bearing falſe witneſs againſt the innocent, or ſwearing to kill him, Mat. v. 22. Eph. iv. 31. Prov. xii. 18, and xv. 1, Pſal. lvii. 4, and lxiv. 3, Jer. xviii. 18, 1 Sam. xxii. 9, 10, *&c.* 1 Kings xxi. 10, 1 Sam. xxv. 10, 11, Acts xxiii. 12.

Q. How may men be murderers by their deeds?

A. Many ways, both directly and indirectly; as by ſtriking, wounding or hurting the bodies of men, or doing any thing that tends to the deſtruction of their lives; by oppreſſing or robbing the poor, or not relieving them when ready to ſtarve; by murdering the innocent under the forms of law and juſtice; by ſetting them in dangerous poſts to be cut off; by not hindering their death when in their power; by not executing the law againſt murderers, ſo that they are ſpared to ſhed more blood, Num. xxxv. 16, 17, 18, *&c.* Ezek. xxiii. 7. 2 Sam. xi. 15, and xii. 9, 1 Kings xxi. 12, 13, Prov. xxiv. 11. Iſa. i. 15.

Q. How are men guilty of murdering the ſouls of others ?

A. By counſelling or commanding them to do evil; by tempting and enticing them to ſin; by giving a bad example to them; by not reproving ſin, and giving warning againſt it; by miniſters not warning ſinners of their danger, or teaching them unſound doctrine, 1 Sam. xxii. 18, 2 Sam. xiii. 5, Prov. vii. 10, 2 Kings x. 29, Lev. xix. 17, Ezek. iii. 18, 2 Pet. ii. 1..

Q. Have we not many evidences of God's ſpecial hatred and abhorrence of the ſin of murder ?

A. Yes, in his commands and threatenings againſt it, his ſtrict injunctions concerning its puniſhment, in his making inquiſition for blood, and the ſtrange methods of his providence for bringing ſecret murder to light and the judgments he inflicts for it, when it is paſt unpuniſhed by men.

Q. Wherefore is murder ſo hateful to God ?

A. 1. Becauſe it deſtroys a creature made after the image of God, and a creature which the Son of God ſhed his blood to ranſom. 2. It is an uſurping of the power and prerogative of God, who ſaith, *Vengeance is mine*. 3. It is an imitating of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning: upon all which accounts the blood of murdered perſons cries loudly to God for vengeance. And therefore all who are guilty in any degree, ſhould flee to the blood of Chriſt for refuge and cleanſing, crying, *Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God*, Gen. ix. 6, Rom. xii. 19, John viii. 44, Gen. iv. 10, Pſal. li. 14.

QUEST. LXX.

Q. Which is the ſeventh commandment ?

A. The ſeventh commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.*

QUEST. LXXI.

Q. What is required in the ſeventh commandment ?

A. The ſeventh commandment requireth the preſervation of our own and our neighbour's chaſtity in heart, ſpeech and behaviour.

Q. What is it that ought to be the deareſt to us next to our life ? A. Our chaſtity.

Q. Whoſe chaſtity doth the ſeventh command require the preſervation of ?

A. Our own and our neighbour's.

Q. In what muſt we preſerve our own and our neighbour's chaſtity ?

A. In heart, ſpeech, and behaviour.

Q. What is meant here by chaſtity ?

A. Not abſtinence from marriage, but abiſtnence from all uncleanneſs and filthineſs, whether in a married or unmarried ſtate.

Q. May perſons be both chaſte and married ?

A. Yes; for the apoſtle recommends to married women a "chaſte converſation coupled with fear," 1 Pet. iii. 2.

Q. What is meant by that chaſtity in heart, ſpeech and behaviour, which we muſt ſtudy to preſerve ?

A. 1. That we muſt entertain no thoughts nor deſires but what are pure and chaſte, whatever company we be in. 2. That our diſcourſe one with another muſt be grave and uncorrupt, and ſuch as may tend to edification. 3. That our whole converſation, geſtures and actions, muſt be chaſte, modeſt and decent, as becometh Chriſtians.

Q. Why ſhould we be ſo careful as to preſerve our chaſtity ?

A. Becauſe we are rational creatures, and not brutes; Chriſtians, and not heathens; and the bodies of Chriſtians ſhould be members of Chriſt, and temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and conſequently ought to be kept clean and pure. Nay, it is God's expreſs command, that we ſhould abſtain from fornication and all uncleanneſs, and that we ſhould poſſeſs our veſſels in ſanctification and honour, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 18, 19. 1 Theſſ. iv. 3, 4, 5, Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19, Eph. v. 3.

Q. By what means ſhall we preſerve our chaſtity ?

A. By faith and prayer; by watching over our hearts and eyes; by temperance in our diet, diligence in our callings, keeping of chaſte company, and avoiding all temptations to and occaſions of uncleanneſs, Acts xv. 9. Mat. vi. 13, Prov. iv. 23, Job xxxi. 1, Jer. v. 8, Gen. xxxiv. 1, 2, Prov. ii. 16, Gen. xxxiv. 10, 1 Cor. ix. 27, Prov. v. 8.

QUEST. LXXII.

Q. What is forbidden in the ſeventh commandment ?

A. The ſeventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaſte thoughts, words and actions.

Q. Doth this command forbid all luſtful thoughts and deſires ?

A. Yes, Mat. v. 28. "Whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Q. Is not adultry here to be underſtood of any ſort of uncleanneſs ? A. Yes.

Q. Doth this command forbid all obſcene ſpeeches, lacivious jeſts and ſongs ?

A. Yes, Eph. v. 4. " Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient.

Q. What are the unchaſte actions, or acts of uncleanneſs, here forbidden ?

A. Adultery, fornication, polygamy, rape, inceſt, ſodomy, and all unnatural luſt; prohibiting of lawful marriages, and diſpenſing with thoſe that are unlawful, unjuſt divorce or deſertion; keeping or allowing of ſtews, and all other actions which have a tendency to promote or encourage unchaſtity and uncleanneſs, Heb. xiii. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 18. Gal. v. 19. Mal. ii. 14, 15, 16. Mat. xix. 5. Deut. xxii. 25. Lev. xviii. 6, 20, 22, 23. Gen. xxxviii. 9. Rom. i. 24, 26. 1 Tim. iv. 3. Mark vi. 18. 1 Cor. v. 1. 2 Cor. vi. 14. Mat. v. 32. 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13. Lev. xix. 29. Jer. v. 7.

Q. Who are theſe who prohibit lawful marriages ?

A. The Papiſts, who forbid the marriage of eccleſiaſtical perſons, and thoſe who (they pretend) have ſpiritual affinity together, as god-fathers, god-mothers, and the children they preſent to baptiſm.

Q. Have they any ground for ſuch prohibitions from ſcripture ?

A. No: For the ſcripture doth declare marriage to be lawful and honourable in all, as being inſtituted by God before the fall; and doth condemn the forbidding to marry, as falſe doctrine. Beſides, the prophets and prieſts were married under the Old Teſtament, as were

Peter and other apoſtles under the New, Heb. xiii. 4, Gen. ii. 18, 22, 24, Lev. xxi. 7, 13, 1 Cor. vii. 2, 9, and ix. 5, Luke iv. 38, Acts xxi. 8, 9, 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4.

Q. Who doth diſpenſe with unlawful marriages?

A. The Pope, who for money doth diſpenſe with inceſtuous marriages, that is, of perſons near a kin, and within the degrees forbidden by the word of God.

Q. Where are thoſe degrees explained in which inceſt is committed?

A. In Lev. xviii. 7, 8, 9, &c. and xx. 11, 14, Deut. xxvii. 20, 22, 23.

Q. In what caſes can married perſons be divorced, or their marriage diſannulled?

A. Only in the caſes of adultery and wilful deſertion, Mat. xix. 9, 1 Cor. vii. 15.

Q. Who teach otherwiſe?

A. The Papiſts, who hold that they may be divorced when either the man or the woman think fit to retire into a cloiſter.

Q. What other actions or things are there forbidden in this commandment, which have a tendency to promote or encourage uncleanneſs?

A. They are ſuch as drunkenneſs, gluttony, idleneſs, frequenting light company, liſtening to filthy ſpeeches or ſongs, lacivious books and pictures, plays and dancings, immodeſt attire, wanton looks and geſtures, and the like.

Q. What are the evils of this ſin of uncleanneſs?

A. It is moſt hateful and diſhonourable a holy God: It debaſes a man from the excellency of his nature, and levels him with the beaſts: It is an infatuating ſin, that takes away the heart, blinds the mind, and ſtupifies the conſcience: It waſtes the means, deſtroyes the body, rots the good name, and damns the ſoul. Nay, it murders two ſouls at once, 2 Sam. xi. 27, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 18, 19, Hoſ. iv. 11, Prov. vi. 26, 32, 33, Prov. v. 7, 9, 10, 11, Eph. v. 3, 4, 5, Rev. xiii. 4, Rev. xxi. 8, and xxii. 15.

Q. What are the remedies againſt this ſin?

A. We muſt pray to God, for Chriſt's ſake, for a new heart to hate all ſin, and to be kept from temptation to it; ſhun lewd company, and watch over the heart and eyes; keep up the remembrance of God's all-ſeeing eye being ſtill upon us, and think often upon the burning flames prepared for theſe who burn with luſt.

QUEST. LXXIII.

Q. *Which is the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not ſteal.*

QUEST. LXXIV.

Q. *What is required in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward eſtate of ourſelves and others.

Q. Whoſe wealth and eſtate doth this command concern?

A. Both our own and other mens.

Q. What doth it require of us with reſpect to them?

A. To uſe means to procure and preſerve them.

Q. May we uſe any means whatſoever for that end?

A. No; for we muſt uſe only lawful means to profit ourſelves or others.

Q. Doth not this command ſuppoſe, that there is no community of goods, but that every man hath a propriety in his eſtate?

A. Yes: For otherwiſe there would be no place for this command; no man could ſay, This is mine, or, That is thine; nor could he give alms to others. A community of goods cannot take place but by conſent of the proprietors in a time or caſe extraordinary, Acts ii. 44.

Q. Is it lawful to ſeek to increaſe our worldly eſtate more than it is?

A. Yes, Gen. 47. 14, Deut. viii. 18, Prov. 13. 11.

Q. For what ends ſhould we endeavour to increaſe it?

A. 1ſt, We ſhould chiefly aim at the glory of God, that we may be capable to honour him with our ſubſtance, and be kept from ſinning againſt him by ſtealing or falſe-ſwearing, as in Prov. 30. 8, 9. 2dly, That we may help others, Eph. iv. 28. 3dly, That we may keep ourſelves and families from being burdenſome to others. And, laſtly, That we may avoid idleneſs.

Q. What means muſt we uſe to procure and further our wordly eſtate?

A. We muſt be diligent and laborious in honeſt and lawful callings; we muſt live ſoberly and frugally, and manage our affairs with prudence and diſcretion; we muſt look to the Lord for ſucceſs in our endeavours, be juſt in all our dealings, be ready to ſupply the needy, uſe proper means to obtain what belongs to us, but avoid unneceſſary law ſuits and ſuretiſhip, 1 Cor. vii. 20. Gen. iv. 2. Prov. x. 4. Eph. iv. 28. Tit. ii. 12. Pſal. cxii. 5. Prov. x. 22. 1 Pet. v. 7. Prov. x. 6. and xi. 24, 25. 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2, &c. Prov. vi. 1, 2.

Q. Is it unlawful for Chriſtians to go to law, to defend or recover their own?

A. No.

Q. Doth not the apoſtle blame them for going to law one with another, ſaying, *Why do ye not rather take wrong? &c.* 1 Cor. vi. 7.

A. He is there blaming them for going to law about ſmaller matters before heathen magiſtrates, and telling them that they ſhould make up differences among themſelves, or ſuffer wrong, rather than by wrangling to bring a ſcandal upon their holy religion and ſtumble the heathen at chriſtianity.

Q. Doth not Chriſt ſay, Mat. v. 49. If any man will ſue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke alſo?

A. His meaning is, That we ſhould part with ſome ſmaller thing, ſuch as a coat or a cloke, rather than involve ourſelves into a vexatious law ſuit; But not that we ſhould let any man undo us, when God hath bleſſed us with good laws for our protection.

Q. May we ſeek after the world as our treaſure?

A. No, but as a help under God in our journey. We muſt lay up our treaſure in heaven, and ſecure a portion for ourſelves there thro' eternity.

Q. Should we not be ready to aſſiſt poor widows and orphans with our money, and lend to theſe who are in need?

A. Yes, James i. 27. Pſal. cxii. 5.

Q. What muſt we do to promote and further the wealth of others?

A. We muſt be true and juſt in all our tranſactions with others, and render to every one his due. We ſhould preſerve our neighbour's goods, and reſtore them to him if they be in our hands; we ſhould wiſh and ſeek their good as well as our own, and do in all things to them as we would have them to do to us, Pſal. xv. 2, 4. Zech. viii. 16. 17. Rom. xiii. 7. Lev. vi. 2, 3, &c. 1 Cor x. 24. Mat. vii. 12.

QUEST. LXXV.

Q. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatſoever doth or may unjuſtly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth, or outward eſtate.

Q. What is implied in the ſin of ſtealing, here forbidden?

A The injuring of ourſelves or others in wordly eſtates and the uſing unlawful means to gain the world.

Q What way may we injure our own wordly eſtate, and thereby ſteal from ourſelves and our families?

A. By idleneſs, ſloth, negligence in our callings; by raſh engaging in ſuretiſhip and imprudent bargains: by prodigality, and waſteful ſpending, in gluttony, drunkenneſs, lewd company, coſtly apparel, gaming, and the like, 2 Theſſ. iii. 11. Prov. xviii. 9. and xxiii. 21. and xxii. 26, 27. and xxviii. 19. and 21. 17.

Q. Is it a ſin for men to live above their incomes or gains?

A. Yes; for hereby they deſtroy their own eſtate, hinder their own charity, and waſte the ſubſtance of others alſo.

Q. Is not the uſing of unlawful ways and means, to enrich or ſubſiſt ourſelves and families, a ſin againſt the eighth commandment?

A. Yes; for this is no better than ſtealing and diſhoneſty in the ſight of God, however matters be diſguiſed with fair clokes and pretexts before men.

Q. What are theſe unlawful ways of enriching or ſubſiſting ourſelves?

A. They are ſuch as theſe; immoderate cares and labour, covetouſneſs, haſtening to be rich, exceſſive narrowneſs, gaming, uſury, monopolies, running of goods, lying, falſe ſwearing, breaking the ſabbath, bribery, ſimony, ſelling maſſes, pardons and indulgences, uſing unlawful callings and occupations, or taking any ways to defraud or overreach others to gain money.

Q. How is coveteuſneſs againſt the eighth command?

A. Becauſe the covetous man is guilty of ſtealing from ſeverals; 1. From God and his church, in not giving any thing to pious uſes. 2. From his neighbour, in refuſing to help him in ſtraits. 3. From himſelf and his family, in depriving them of the neceſſary comforts of life. All which are againſt Prov. iii. 9, Mal. iii. 8, 10, 1 Cor. ix. 14, Gal. vi. 6, Iſa. lviii. 7. Eccl. iv. 8, and vi. 2. 1 Tim. v. 8.

Q. Do niggards, who have no heart to uſe what they have, ſin greatly?

A. Yes; for they defraud themſelves and their families of the comfort and uſe of theſe good things which God hath beſtowed on them, and ſo cannot be thankful to God the bountiful giver. They are uncharitable to thoſe in need; for he that will not allow it to himſelf, will not love another better than himſelf. They are hurtful to the ſociety and generation they live among; for they hoard up that, which if others had, the poor would be employed, and others would be the better of it, Eccl. iv. 8, and vi. 2, 1 Tim. v. 8, Pſal. xxxvii, 3, 26, 27, Job xxix, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, Pſal, cxii, 3, 5, 9,

Q. Is the gaining of money by uſury unlawful?

A. Yes, Prov. xxviii. 8. Pſal. xv. 5.

Q. What is uſury?

A. The taking of unlawful profit for money that is lent out.

Q. Is it lawful to take any intereſt or gain for money lent?

A. Yes, when it is taken according to the laws of the land, and from theſe who make gain by it, by trading or purchaſing of lands; ſeeing it is equally juſt for the owner of money to aſk a ſhare of the profit which others make by it, as for the owner of land to demand farm from the tenant of it, money being improvable by art and labour as well as land.

Q. What is the unlawful profit for money which may be called uſury?

A. The taking profit for money from the poor who borrow for mere neceſſity, or taking needful things from them in pawn for it; or the taking more profit from any than law allows, as theſe who take ten, fifteen or twenty in the hundred, Exod. xxii. 25, 26. Deut. xxiv. 12, 17 Ezek. xviii. 7, 8.

Q. But the people of Iſrael were diſcharged to take any uſury or profit for lent money from their brethren, Deut. xxiii. 19.

A. This law ſeems to have been peculiar to the Jewiſh ſtate, and that in regard of their eſtates being ſo divided, ſettled and ſecured to their families by the year of jubilee, and their not being employed in trading or making purchaſes like other nations, ſo that they had no occaſion to borrow money but for the preſent ſubſiſtence of their families. But for ſtrangers, who had another way of living, the Iſraelites were allowed to lend to them upon uſury, and to ſhare with them in their profits, Deut. xxiii. 20. Which ſhews that the taking of intereſt is not oppreſſive in itſelf; for they are frequently prohibited to oppreſs a ſtranger, and yet allowed to take uſury from him, Exod. xxii. 21. and xxiii. 9.

Q. What is meant by monopolies, here forbidden?

A. The ingroſſing or buying up of ſome commodities, eſpecially corn and proviſions for the poor, in order to exact great prices from them afterwards, Prov. 11. 26. 'He that withholdeth corn, the people ſhall curſe him: But bleſſing ſhall be upon the head of him that ſelleth it.'

Q. What is the evil of running of goods?

A. It is a denying to render cuſtom to whom it is due; beſides, there are many other ſins which commonly attend this practice, as perjury, bribery, lying, Sabbath-breaking, bloodſhed, *&c.*

Q. What is meant by bribery, which is here forbidden?

A. It is the taking or giving of bribes or gifts to pervert juſtice, Prov. 17. 23. 'A wicked man taketh a gift out of the boſom, to pervert the ways of judgment.'

Q. What is meant by *Simony* here forbidden?

A. It is a buying and ſelling of the offices and places of miniſters and other ſpiritual things, for money, good deeds, or favour. A vile practice! it being a token that the deſign of the purch[illegible]s is to make money by them. It is a ſin marked out as odious by the Spirit of God, for it tends to deſtroy all true religion. It is called Simony, from that wicked perſon, Simon Magus, Acts xviii. 19, "He offered them money, ſaying, Give me alſo this power, that on whomſoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghoſt."

Q. Who are theſe who ſell pardons, indulgences and maſſes ?

A. The Popiſh prieſts do it for money, like the Phariſees, who under a pretence of long prayers devoured widows houſes, Mat. 33. 14. So the prieſts under pretence of long prayers for the dead, and ſaying ſoul-maſſes, inrich themſelves by devouring the houſes of the widows and fatherleſs, Rev. 18. 13.

Q. Who are theſe who uſe unlawful trades and occupations to gain money ?

A. Highway-men, thieves, bawds, ſtage-players, jugglers, fortune-tellers, uſurers, ſmugglers, ingroſſers, gameſters, and theſe who make gain by carding, dicing, and ſuch lottery-games : Alſo theſe who make a trade of harbouring ſuch people in their houſes, or letting out houſes to them ; and particularly theſe change-keepers, who for the love of gain do entertain drunkards, unclean perſons, thieves, profaners of the Lord's day, and ſuch looſe perſons.

Q. How are people guilty of breaking the eighth command, by plain ſtealing from others, or injuring them in their worldly eſtate ?

A. Beſides what hath been already mentioned, people are guilty of it by thieving, robbing, man-ſtealing, reſetting of thieves and ſtolen goods, frauds in merchandizing, unfaithfulneſs in contracts and matters of truſt; falſehood in promiſes, denying juſt debts, or not paying them, vexatious law-ſuits, borrowing what we cannot pay, detaining any thing ſtrayed or loſt, or what we have wrongouſly taken ; all extortion and oppreſſion, unjuſt incloſures and depopulations, removing ancient land-marks, ſacrilege, wronging the coin, denying public taxes, withholding the wages of ſervants and labourers, rigorous exacting of debts, ſtopping the ear at the cry of the poor, Eph. iv. 28, Pſal. lxii. 10, 1 Tim. i. 10, Prov. 29, 24, 1 Theſſ. iv. 6, Pſal. 37, 21, Luke 16, 12, Hoſ. iv. 1, Deut. 22, 1, 2, &c. Prov. iii. 28, 29, 30, 1 Cor. vi. 6, Luke 19, 8, Ezek. 22, 12, 29, Lev. 25, 17, Iſa. 8, Mic. 2, 2, Prov. 23, 10, Rom. 2, 22, Mat. 22, 21, Rom. 13, 6, 7, Lev. 19, 13, Mat. 18, 28, Prov. 13, Deut. 15, 7.

Q. What are theſe frauds in merchandizing here forbidden ?

A. Circumveening or overreaching others in buying or ſelling ; taking advantage of their ignorance or neceſſity ; impoſing on them lyes ; deceitful commending of goods when ſelling, and undervaluing them when buying ; ſelling things bad for good ; uſing falſe balances, weights or meaſures ; taking exorbitant prices ; undermining others in their trade, by withdrawing their cuſtomers, or wronging their credit, Lev. xxv. 14. Prov. xx. 14. Lev. xix. 35, 36, Deut. xxv. 13, &c. Prov. xi. 1. Amos viii. 5, 6. Prov. xxviii. 22. 1 Cor. xiii. 4. Phil. ii. 4.

Q. What is the ſin of ſacrilege here forbidden ?

A. Robbing or taking things away from God or his church, that do properly belong unto them ; or alienating any thing dedicated to ſacred uſes : Which, among other things, doth include the ſins of non-reſidence and negligence of paſtors : and the robbing Chriſtian congregations of their right of calling their own miniſters, Mal. iii. 8, 9. Prov. xx. 25. Joſh. vii. 20. 21, 2 Chron. xxviii. 21. 2 Tim. iv. 2. 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. Acts i. 23. and vi. 3. Jer. xxiii. 1, 2.

Q. Is ſtealing a way to be rich ?

A. No, it brings poverty ; for the curſe of God is againſt the thief, Zech. v. 3, 4.

Q. Is not the thief of kin to an Atheiſt ?

A. Yes ; for he practically denies God's omnipreſence and his all-ſeeing eye over him, and that he is a righteous Judge who will call him to account.

Q. Muſt not all guilty of wronging others in their goods, repent and make reſtitution, as they would have mercy from God ?

A. Yes, Lev. vi. 4. Ezek. xxxiii. 15. Luke xix. 8.

QUEST. LXXVI.

Q. *Which is the ninth commandment ?*

A. The ninth commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.*

QUEST. LXXVII.

Q. *What is required in the ninth commandment ?*

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, eſpecially in witneſs bearing.

Q. How many duties doth this anſwer mention as required of us by the ninth commandment ?

A. They are four ; 1. The maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man. 2. Maintaining and promoting of our own good name. 3. Maintaining and promoting of our neighbour's good name. 4. Being concerned for all theſe, eſpecially in witneſs-bearing.

Q. Why eſpecially in witneſs-bearing ?

A. Becauſe then we are ſolemnly required to tell the truth, as being before a judge, and upon oath, whereby God is appealed to.

Q. How ought we to maintain and promote truth amongſt men ?

A. By loving the truth, ſpeaking the truth ſincerely, ſtanding and appearing for the truth, and judging and deciding for the truth, Zech. 8, 16, 19, Prov. 31, 8, 9, Exod. 18, 21, Pſal. 15, 2.

Q. Why are we required to ſpeak the truth ſincerely or from the heart ?

A. Becauſe the devil and bad men ſometimes ſpeak the truth from an evil deſign, Mark i. 24, 1 Sam. 22, 9, 10.

Q. Wherefore ought we to maintain and promote our own good name ?

A. That we may be capable to glorify God, and do the more good in our day and generation.

Q. Doth an evil report of men hinder their uſefulneſs ?

A. Yes.

Q. Who are more eſpecially concerned to maintain their good name ?

A. Magiſtrates, miniſters, and profeſſors of religion.

Q. Is commending ourſelves, or carrying proudly, the way to maintain or promote our good name ?

A. No, but rather the way to procure contempt.

Q. What are the proper means then to obtain a good name ?

A. We muſt ſtudy to be humble, harmleſs, ſober, meek, chaſte and juſt ; to keep our word exactly ; to be ready to ſerve others ; and in a word, to practiſe *whatever things are true, honeſt, lovely, and of good report*, Col. 3, 12, Phil, 2, 15, and iv. 8.

Q. Ought we not to vindicate ourſelves when we are reproached ?

A. Yes ; but with meekneſs, and readineſs to forgive theſe who reproach us,

Q. What if they do not hearken to us, nor believe us ?

A. We muſt commit the cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly.

Q. What is incumbent upon us to maintain our neighbour's good name ?

A. We ought to have a due eſteem of all the good we ſee in them, and be willing to expreſs this ſeaſonably for their encouragement in the ways of God : we ſhould be ready to hearken to a good report, and unwilling to receive a bad report concerning them ; conceal their infirmities, diſcourage tale bearers, ſpeak well of them behind their backs, and ſtand up in their defence when we know them traduced, Phil. 2, 3, Heb. 6, 9, Rom. 1, 8, 1 Cor. 13, 6, Pſal. 15, 3, Prov. 25, 23, Prov. 17, 9, 1 Sam. 22, 14.

Q. But what ſhould we do when the bad reports we hear of our neighbours are evidently true ?

A. We ſhould be grieved for their miſcarriages, and contribute what we can, by our admonitions, advices, and prayers, for their amendment, and for the recovery of their good names again, 2 Cor. 2, 4, Mat. 18, 15, *&c.*

QUEST. LXXVIII.

Q. *What is forbidden in the ninth commandment ?*

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatſoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.

Q. What evils doth this anſwer ſet forth as forbidden in this command ?

A. Three ; 1. Saying or doing any thing that is prejudicial to truth. 2. Saying or doing any thing injurious to our own good name. 3. Saying or doing any thing injurious to our neighbour's good name.

Q. What are theſe things here forbidden, which are prejudicial to truth ?

A. The wronging of truth, or any wiſe acting againſt it, in courts of judicature ; the ſpeaking of untruth, falſhood, or telling lies upon any account whatſoever ; equivocating, perverting the truth, falſifying our word, and the like.

Q. How do men injure the truth in courts of judicature ?

A. By perſons informing againſt, or accuſing others falſely ; by the accuſed perſon's denying that of which he is guilty ; by ſuborning falſe witneſſes ; by witneſſes concealing or diſguiſing the truth, or witneſſing falſely ; by perſons agenting and pleading againſt the truth, for an evil cauſe by forgery, or making uſe of falſe writings ; by perverting of mens words to a wrong meaning ; by undue ſilence in a juſt cauſe, or not acting faithfully for it ; by paſſing unjuſt ſentences, juſtifying the guilty, or condemning the innocent, Luke xxiii. 2, Acts xxiv. 2, 5, Gen. iv. 9, Acts vi. 13, 1 Kings xxi. 13, Iſa. v. 23, Pſal. cxix. 69, Lev. v. 1, 2 Tim. iv. 16, Iſa. x. 4, Prov. xvii. 15, and xxxi. 8, 9.

Q. Is every man that ſpeaks an untruth guilty of lying ?

A. No, he is not if he really think the thing to be true which he ſpeaks, altho' it may be falſe.

Q. What is it you mean by a lie then ?

A. A man's ſpeaking of any thing which he knows to be falſe, and telling it with a deſign to deceive.

Q. What is the evil of lying ?

A. 1. It is a ſin moſt hateful to God, who is a God of truth. 2. It tends to deſtroy all human ſociety and commerce among men. 3. It makes a man a child of the devil ; for he is a liar, and the father of lies, Prov. vi. 17. John viii. 44, Deut. xxxii. 4.

Q. Doth not God teſtify his high diſpleaſure againſt the ſin of lying ?

A. Yes, and that even in this world ; for God ſtruck Ananias and Sapphira dead with a lie in their mouths.

Q. What is the portion of liars hereafter ?

A. All liars have their part with the father of lies in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone ; for God hath ſaid it, Rev. xxi. 8.

Q. Is it not then one of the worſt of names, to call a man a liar ?

A. Yes ; and therefore we ſhould guard againſt doing it.

Q. But what if the perſons ſo called do deſerve the name ?

A. Then we ſhould be grieved for it, and reprove him, not in paſſion to expoſe him, but in the ſpirit of meekneſs in order to amend him.

Q. May not a man tell a lie to preſerve his own or his neighbour's life ?

A. No ; for we muſt not do evil that good may come. Nay, we may not lie, tho' it were to advance the glory of God, Job xiii. 7, Rom. iii. 7, 8. And, tho' ſome of the ſcripture ſaints may have failed in this reſpect, we muſt not follow their example, but live by precept.

Q. What think you of the popiſh doctrine and practice of equivocations and of keeping no faith with Hereticks ?

A. They are abominable.

Q. What do you think of theſe who lie in jeſt, to make ſport to others ?

A. God calls them fools that make a mock of ſin, Prov. xiv. 9.

Q. What are theſe things injurious to our own good name, which the ninth command forbids ?

A. They are ſuch as thinking or ſpeaking too highly, or too meanly of ourſelves ; flattering, vaunting and vain glorious boaſting ; accuſing ourſelves of what we are not guilty ; aggravating ſmaller faults too much ; excuſing or extenuating ſins, when called to a free confeſſion ; denying the gifts or graces which God hath given us ; raſh expoſing our infirmities before the wicked ; ſpeaking or doing any thing which may be a blot upon our name, Rom. xii. 16. Luke xviii. 11. Exod. iv. 10, 2 Tim. iii. 2. Pſal. xii. 3, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, Mat. vii. 3, Prov. xxviii. 13, Gen. iii. 12, 13, Job xxvii. 5, Col. ii. 18, Prov. 14. 34.

Q. What are the things injurious to our neighbour's good name, here forbidden ?

A. All ſlandering, backbiting, reproaching, ſcolding, taking up and ſpreading evil reports, evil ſpeaking, raſh judging or cenſuring, whiſpering, tale bearing, miſconſtructing the actions, words, or intentions of others ; not covering their infirmities, ſtopping our ears againſt their vindication ; not clearing their innocence when we know it ; ſpeaking truth with an ill deſign againſt them ; being glad at their miſcarriage or diſgrace ; ſcornful contempt, ſcoffing ; fond admiration of ſome, to the

diſparagement of others, Pſal. l. 20. Job xix. 3. Pſal. xv. 3. James iv. 11. Rom. i. 29, 30. Lev. xix. 6. Neh. vi. 6. &c. Rom. iii. 8. Pſal. lxix. 10. 1 Sam. i. 13, 14. Acts vii. 57. 1 Sam. xxii. 9. Jer. xlviii. 27. Pſal. xxxv. 15, 16. Gen. xxi. 9. Jude 16.

Q. Tho' we may not raiſe a falſe report, yet may we not repeat it after hearing it?

A. No; for that is to ſpread it: Wherefore, tho' a falſe report be laid at our foot, we ſhould be unwilling to take it up, Pſal. xv. 3.

Q. Ought we not to diſcourage all backbiters and tale-bearers?

A. Yes; for ſuch do 'ſow diſcord among brethren, and ſeparate chief friends:' And we may ſuſpect, that theſe who bring ſuch tales to us, will be ready alſo to take ſome away, Prov. vi. 19, & xvii. 9. & xxv. 23.

QUEST. LXXIX.

Q. *Which is the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe, Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man ſervant nor his maid ſervant, nor his ox, nor his aſs, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

QUEST. LXXX.

Q. *What is required in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of ſpirit toward our neighbour and all that is his.

Q. In what verſe of the New Teſtament have we this command ſumm'd up and explained?

A. In Heb. xiii. 5. Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch things as ye have.

Q. When the anſwer bears that the command requires full contentment with our condition, doth it mean that we ſhould be content to live in a ſinful condition?

A. No; for God quarrels with ſinners for ſuch a contentment, Rev. iii. 17.

Q. Doth it mean that we ſhould be inſenſible or unconcerned under an afflicted condition?

A. No; for God is diſpleaſed with this too, Jer. v. 3. Hoſ. vii. 9.

Q. What is the meaning of it then?

A. That we ſhould be well ſatisfied with that portion of the neceſſaries and comforts of this life, which God in his wiſdom ſees fit to beſtow upon us, without grudging or repining at his will, but freely acquieſcing in God's determination, as that which is beſt and moſt fit for us.

Q. Who are theſe that attain to this contentment?

A. Theſe who have their ſpirits ſuited to their condition.

Q. Are not theſe the happieſt perſons in this world?

A. Yes; for they have a mercy that is better than the greateſt fulneſs of earthly things.

Q. May a man as ſoon attain to this happineſs of contentment with a little of the world, as with much of it?

A. Yes: for the apoſtle Paul, who had *little* of it, was well contented with his *little*; and upon the occaſion of a ſmall ſupply ſent him from Philippi, he ſaith, *I have all, and abound; I am full,* Phil. iv. 11, 18. Whereas Ahab, who had a kingdom, was full of vexation and diſcontent for want of Naboth's vineyard: and ſo was Haman, tho' laden with riches and honours, for want of a bow from Mordecai, 1 Kings xxi. 4, 5, 6, Eſther v. 11, 12, 13.

Q. How do believers arrive at ſuch contentment with a little of the world?

A. They learn it of God, who teacheth them to believe and think upon their own unworthineſs; to conſider that their Lord had no where to lay his head, that God will give them what is beſt for them, and that their portion in Chriſt and eternal life is large enough for all their wants.

Q. How is it that riches do not afford contentment to the men of this world?

A. Beſides that the world is but vanity, there is a ſecret curſe attending their enjoyments, which blaſts the comfort of them; hence the earthly heart is, like the grave, never ſatisfied, but ſtill would have more, Eccl. v. 10. Prov. xxx. 15, 16.

Q. Is it covetouſneſs for a man to deſire more of this world than what he hath?

A. No, if he deſire it for good ends, with ſubmiſſion to God's will, and uſe honeſt means to get it.

Q. What then is the covetouſneſs here forbidden?

A. It is to deſire the good things which another enjoys, and to grugde at their having of them.

Q. May not a man wiſh for the eſtate of another, if he deſign to do more good with it than he doth?

A. No; for the heart is moſt deceitful, and its purpoſes variable: Hence he is called a *fool that truſteth in his own heart,* Prov. xxviii. 26, Jer. xvii. 9.

Q. Are they not ſtrangers then to their own hearts, who think they would be contented if they had a little more of the world than what they have?

A. Yes; for the deſires of the heart enlarge with the eſtate.

Q. Are not theſe far wiſer, who are deſirous to obtain the true riches of ſaving grace, and the promiſes of the covenant?

A. Yes; for theſe will abide with them, when other riches will make themſelves wings, and fly away from them, and even then when they ſtand moſt in need of help.

Q. How may thoſe who are poor attain to contentment with their lot, and be kept from covetouſneſs?

A. By placing their chief happineſs in the enjoyment of God; and by conſidering that their worldly condition is of God's carving, and that they have more than they deſerve; that many better have been in worſe circumſtances; that many are the worſe for riches, but few or none the better; and that as they brought nothing into this world, ſo they ſhall carry nothing out, Pſal. xvi. 5, 6, Hab. iii. 17, 18, Gen. xxxii. 10, Job. i. 21, Heb. xi. 38, Eccl. v. 13, 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8.

Q. Is not to be truly godly, the ſhort way to contentment?

A. Yes; for godlineſs is that, unto which only true contentment is annexed, 1 Tim. vi. 6. Chriſt hath purchaſed this grace unto all who believe in him.

Q. Have not the godly poor ſome ſpecial arguments to make them eaſy under their ſtraits?

A. Yes, by conſidering that God deſigns theſe very ſtraits for their good, to keep them humble and depending; that he ſees riches would be a ſnare to draw their hearts away from God; that it is rare to ſee a rich man eminent in grace; that God hath been far kinder to them in giving them a portion in his well-ordered covenant, a goodly heritage, which is infinitely more excellent and durable than any other.

Q. How ſhall the rich attain contentment in their full condition?

A. By ſeeking this grace from God, and not expecting happineſs from the things of time; by ſtudying to employ their riches for the glory of God, and the good of others; by keeping ſtill in mind that God in Chriſt is the ſoul's portion, that the world cannot give them true comfort, that it cannot lengthen out their lives, nor profit them at the hour of death, Luke xii. 15, Pſal. lxii. 10, Prov. xi. 4. 2 Cor. xi. 7, 8.

Q. How ſhall theſe be content and eaſy who are reduced from a proſperous ſtate to low circumſtances?

A. By conſidering that God hath abſolute dominion over us, hath right to do with his own what he will; that he taketh nothing from us, but what he gave, or rather lent to us for a time; that he is holy, juſt, and wiſe, and knows what ſtate is fitteſt for us.

Q. What are the advantages of this grace of contentment?

A. It produceth much inward peace, compoſeth the ſoul for duty, calms the ſpirit in adverſity, and preſerves from many temptations, ſnares, and ſins which thoſe that are diſcontented fall into, ſuch as fretting, murmuring, paſſion, bitterneſs, envy, lying, ſtealing, injuſtice, ſwearing raſhly or falſly, and many others.

Q. What is meant by the right and charitable frame of ſpirit toward our neighbour and all that is his, which this command requireth?

A. It is to be kindly affectioned to others, to wiſh their good, to rejoice in their proſperity, and to be ſorry for their afflictions, Rom. xii. 10, 15, 3 John ii. 3, Heb xiii. 3.

QUEST. LXXXI.

Q. *What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all diſcontentment with our own eſtate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.

Q. After God had forbidden the ſins of ſtealing and adultery in the preceeding commands, why doth he add, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe, nor his wife?*

A. To aſſure us of the ſpiritual extent and meaning of the law, and that it forbids the very firſt motions or riſings of ſin in the heart; the conſideration whereof opened Paul's eyes to ſee his vileneſs thro' indwelling ſin, tho' he was free of groſs vices; Rom. vii. 7. 'I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, thou ſhalt not covet.'

Q. What is the firſt ſin which the anſwer mentions as here forbidden?

A. Diſcontentment with our eſtate, which is the ſin of both rich and poor.

Q. Whence doth mens diſcontent with their condition ariſe?

A. From pride, love to the world, and diſtruſt of God's providence.

Q. How doth it ariſe from pride?

A. Becauſe it appears that they who are diſcontented with God's carving, have too high thoughts of themſelves; They either think they deſerve better at God's hand, or that they could have ordered matters better for themſelves than God hath done.

Q. What are the evils of diſcontentment?

A. Beſides theſe mentioned a little before, it makes men unthankful for mercies, unfit for duties, uneaſy to their relations and neighbours; it breeds ſtrifes, debates, law-ſuits, rebellions and murders; it robs men of the comfort of their lives, makes their croſſes heavier, and provokes God to prolong and add to them.

Q. What is the ſecond ſin here forbidden?

A. Envy, which is a ſecret diſcontentedneſs at the proſperous ſtate of others, or a grudging or grieving at their wealth, qualifications or honours.

Q. What are the evils of this ſin of envy?

A. It is heart-murder, and a ſin againſt all reaſon; yea, 'tis deviliſh to be a man's enemy for no other reaſon but becauſe God is kind to him; 'Tis a quarreling with God's wiſdom and goodneſs; it is a rottenneſs to the bones; it produceth confuſion and every evil work, Mat. xx. 15. Prov. xiv. 30. James iii. 16.

Q. What are theſe inordinate motions and affections to the things of our neighbour, which are here forbidden?

A. All deſires after theſe things which we cannot have by lawful means, or without wronging our neighbour; and all inclinations to coveting, Col. iii. 5.

QUEST. LXXXII.

Q. *Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

A. No mere man, ſince the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

Q. Why is it ſaid in the anſwer, *No mere man?*

A. To except the Man Chriſt Jeſus, who did perfectly keep God's commands.

Q. Was not Chriſt a mere man?

A. No; he was both God and Man.

Q. Why is it ſaid, *ſince the fall?*

A. To except our firſt parents when in the eſtate of innocence, who then were able to keep God's commands perfectly.

Q. Why is it ſaid *is able in this life?*

A. To except the ſaints in heaven, who are perfectly able to do it there.

Q. Can no ſaint on earth attain to perfection in keeping God's law?

A. No; for *there is not a juſt man upon earth that doth good and ſinneth not*, Eccl. vii. 20. 1 John i. 8, 10.

Q. How comes it to be ſo?

A. Becauſe the beſt ſaints here are but renewed in part, and they have remains of corruption in them, which fight againſt the ſpiritual and renewed part, Gal. v. 17. And we find the beſt of ſcripture ſaints acknowledging this, and complaining of their imperfections, Job ix. 2, 3. Pſal. ix. 13. and cxxx. 3. and cxliii. 2. Iſa. lxiv. 6. Dan. ix. 5. Rom. vii. 18, &c.

Q. Are not Noah, Job and Hezekiah called perfect men? Gen vi. 9. Job. i. 8. 2 Kings xx. 3.

A. That is not meant of an abſolute perfection, or a perfection of degrees; but only of the perfection of ſincerity, or a perfection of parts; as the body of an infant is reckoned perfect, tho' it be not come to the higheſt perfection. And that the ſcripture doth not mean abſolute perfection, is evident from its recording the ſins and imperfections of theſe very perſons which are called perfect, Gen. ix. 21. Job iii. 1, 3. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

Q. What is meant by ſincerity or a perfection of parts?

A. A ſincere or upright aiming at conformity to the will of God in all things, and a conſtant preſſing on for farther degrees of holineſs.

Q. Doth not David ſay, Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteouſneſs? Pſal. vii. 8

A. He ſpeaks there, not of the righteouſneſs of his perſon, but of the righteouſneſs of his cauſe, which he defended againſt his adverſaries, and to which he appealed.

Q. Doth not the apoſtle ſay, whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin? 1 John iii. 9.

A. The ſenſe is, That the regenerate do not commit ſin as they once did, with delight, or full conſent of the will; they do not allow ſin to reign in them. But that they are not without ſin, is evident from 1 John i. 8.

Q. Why doth Chriſt require us to be perfect, Mat. v. 48. if we cannot attain to it?

A. 1. To let us know what he hath right to demand of us. 2. To humble us, and drive us to Chriſt for perfect righteouſneſs. 3. To teach us to deſire, aim at, and preſs toward perfection in holineſs.

Q. In what reſpect are we guilty of breaking the commands of God?

A. We are guilty of it daily, in thought, word, and deed.

Q. Doth God look upon thoughts of ſin as breaches of his law?

A. Yes, Gen. viii. 21. Mat. v. 28. & xv. 19, Jer. iv. 14.

QUEST. LXXXIII.

Q. Are all tranſgreſſions of the law equally hainous?

A. Some ſins in themſelves, and by reaſon of ſeveral aggravations, are more hainous in the ſight of God than others.

Q. Are all ſins equal?

A. No, ſome are more hainous than others.

Q. What is that for ſins to be hainous?

A. It is to be more hateful and offenſive to a holy God, than others are.

Q. How doth it appear that ſome ſins are more offenſive to God than others?

A. From theſe things; 1. The ſin-offering under the law was to be greater than the treſpaſs-offering. 2. Some ſins are more ſeverely threatened and puniſhed than others. 3. Some ſins are declared not capable of pardon Lev. ix. 3. Mat. xxiii. 14, and xii. 31.

Q. Why is it ſaid in the anſwer that ſome ſins are more heinous in the ſight of God than others?

A. To teach us by what rule we ſhould judge of the greatneſs of ſins, ſeeing many are apt to make light of that which is heinous before God, who certainly is the proper judge in this matter.

Q. What is it that makes ſome ſins more heinous than others?

A. Some ſins are more heinous in themſelves, or in their own nature; and ſome by reaſon of certain aggravations attending them.

Q. What are theſe ſins which are more heinous in their own nature than others?

A. Sins againſt the firſt table of the law, or theſe which are committed more immediately againſt God, are more heinous than ſins againſt the ſecond table, or theſe which are immediately againſt man; as for inſtance, ſacrilege is more heinous than theft, idolatry than adultery, blaſphemy againſt God than defaming of our nighbour, 1 Sam. ii. 25.

Q. Are not ſome of the ſins againſt the firſt table more heinous than others?

A. Yes; and we find atheiſm and idolatry marked out as ſins of the greateſt magnitude, Exod. v. 2, Jer. xliv. 4

Q. Are not ſome of the ſins againſt the ſecond table more heinous than others, in their own nature?

A. Yes, and murder is noted for a moſt heinous and crying ſin; and ſo is oppreſſion, eſpecially of the widow and fatherleſs, Gen. iv. 10, Exod. xxii. 23.

Q. Are heinous and crying ſins capable of forgiveneſs?

A. Yes, upon true faith and repentance, Iſa. i. 18, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Q. What are the only fountains of pardon which ſinners muſt look to?

A. The free grace of God, and the meritorious blood of Jeſus Chriſt, Luke vii. 42, Eph. i. 7, 1 John i, 7.

Q. What are the moſt heinous of all ſins in the world?

A. The ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, being a ſin unto death, which is not forgiven, Mat. xii, 31, 1 John v, 16.

Q. What is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt?

A. It may be deſcribed, an apoſtaſy, or turning from God and his truths and ways, after clear illumination and a fair profeſſion; and ſinning wilfully with hatred, malice and deſpite, againſt Chriſt and his people, and continuing impenitent therein to the end, Mat. xii. 31, 32, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, and x, 26, 29.

Q. What are the aggravations which make ſome ſins more heinous than others?

A. They are the particular circumſtances which do attend them, that make them greater than otherwiſe they would be. And from ſcripture we find ſins do receive their aggravations, 1. From the perſons offending. 2. From the parties offended. 3. From the means againſt which ſins are committed. 4. From the manner of committing ſin. 5. From the time of ſinning. 6. From the place where ſins are committed.

Q. How is ſin aggravated from the perſon offending?

A. Sin is aggravated, if the perſon guilty be of age and experience, or be eminent for his gifts, profeſſion, ſtation or office in the world; ſo that his example may encourage or draw others into ſin, 2 Sam. xii. 14, 1 Kings xiv. 16, Mic. iii. 5, Rom. ii. 24, Gal. ii. 13.

Q. Are not the ſins of Chriſtians more heinous than the ſins of Heathens? A. Yes.

Q. Are not the ſins of theſe children who have had religious education and examples, more heinous than the ſins of others? *A.* Yes.

Q. How is ſin aggravated from the parties offended?

A Sin is aggravated, when it is committed immediately againſt God and his perfections, againſt Chriſt and his grace, againſt the Holy Spirit and his operations; againſt men in eminent ſtations, our ſuperiours and friends to whom we are much obliged; againſt the ſouls of men, and theſe who are dear to Chriſt, Pſal. li. 4, Rom, ii, 4, Mat. xxi, 38, Heb. 12, 25, Eph. 4, 30, Acts 7, 51, Numb. 12, 8, Iſa. 3, 5, Prov. 30, 17, Pſal, 41, 9, Ezek. 13, 19, Mat. 18, 6, 1 Cor. 8, 12.

Q. How is ſin aggravated from the means againſt which it is committed?

A. Sin is much aggravated, when it is committed againſt a clear and lively diſpenſation of goſpel light and love, againſt the moſt gracious calls and offers, againſt the light of nature, and the convictions of conſcience; againſt mercies, threatenings and judgments; againſt counſel and admonitions; againſt long patience and good examples; againſt church cenſures and civil puniſhments; againſt prayers and purpoſes, vows and covenants, Mat. xi, 21, 23, John xv, 22, Rom. i, 27, Dan. v, 22, Deut. 32, 6, Amos 4, 9, Jer. 5, 3, Prov. 29, 1, Tit. 3, 10, Prov. 23, 35, Pſal, 78, 36, 37, Eccl. 5, 4 Lev, 26, 25.

Q. How is ſin aggravated from the manner of committing it?

A. When a man ſins wilfully and without temptation, preſumptuouſly and without fear, deliberately and with contrivance, obſtinately and with reſolution, impudently and with boaſting, willingly and with delight, maliciouſly and with deſpite, cuſtomarily and with continuance, openly and with contempt. Likewiſe ſin is much aggravated, when a man is guilty of doing that which he condemns in others, of relapſing into ſin after repentance, of doing evil under a cloke of religion, or of teaching and encouraging others to ſin, Jer. vi. 16. Numb xv. 30. Pſal. xxxvi. 4. Pſal. lii. 1, Prov. ii. 14, Iſa. lvii. 17, Zech. vii. 11, 2 Pet. ii. 20, Rom. i, 32, and ii. 21, Rev. ii. 14.

Q. How is ſin aggravated from the time of ſinning?

A. Sin becomes more heinous, when it is committed upon the Sabbath-day, or when the perſon ought to have been at divine worſhip, or after ſolemn ordinances and engagements to be the Lord's, or in time of affliction, when the Lord is calling to humiliation, Ezek. xxiii. 38, Iſa. xxii. 12, 13, and lviii. 3, Numb. xxv, 6, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, Iſa. i. 1.

Q. How may ſin be aggravated from the place of ſinning?

A. When it is committed in a land of light, in a place dedicate to the worſhip of God, in a place of gracious deliverances, or in a public place before others, who may thereby be tempted and enſnared, Iſa. xxvi. 10, 1 Sam. ii. 22, Pſal. cvi. 7, 2 Sam. xvi. 22.

QUEST. LXXXIV.

Q. *What doth every ſin deſerve?*

A. Every ſin deſerveth God's wrath and curſe, both in this life and that which is to come.

Q. What is meant by God's wrath and curſe due to ſin?

A. Theſe dreadful puniſhments, which are the effects of the ſin revenging juſtice of God, and the condemning ſentence of his broken law, both here and hereafter.

Q. Doth the leaſt ſin deſerve eternal puniſhment?

A. Yes.

Q. How is that evident?

A. Becauſe every ſin is an offence done againſt an infinitely holy and righteous God, and his juſt law, wherefore God's juſtice doth demand infinite ſatisfaction for it, Gal. iii. 10, Rom. vi. 23, Ezek. xviii. 4.

Q. How doth it appear that there is ſo much evil in every ſin?

A. Becauſe every ſin in its own nature is a walking contrary to God, and a contemning of him who is infinitely good: It ſtrikes againſt his ſovereignty, his infinite power, his wiſdom, his goodneſs, and holineſs, Lev. xxvi. 40. Pſal. x. 13. James ii. 10, 11. 1 Cor. x. 22. Jer. ii. 5. Hab. i. 13.

Q. Is there no ground for the Popiſh diſtinction of ſins venial and mortal?

A. No; for every ſin in its own nature is mortal and deadly; and though every ſin be venial or pardonable through Chriſt, yet in itſelf it deſerves eternal puniſhment, Rom, vi. 23. Deut. xxvii. 26. Rom. i. 18.

Q. Is there not more evil in the leaſt ſin, than the ſufferings of a finite creature can make atonement for?

A. Yes; and therefore the ſufferings of the damned, being never ſatisfactory, muſt be eternal.

Q. Cannot the leaſt ſin be expiated by any thing but the blood of Chriſt?

A. No, Heb. ix. 22.

QUEST. LXXXV.

Q. *What doth God require of us, that we may eſcape his wrath and curſe due to us for ſin?*

A. To eſcape the wrath and curſe of God due to us for ſin, God requireth of us faith in Jeſus Chriſt, repentance unto life, with the diligent uſe of all the outward means, whereby Chriſt communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Q. How know you that the wrath of God is due to us for every ſin?

A. Becauſe the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all unrighteouſneſs of men, and every ſin is a contempt of an infinite God, Rom. i. 18. Pſal. x. 13.

Q. Hath God revealed any way for eſcaping that wrath which is due to us for ſin?

A. Yes, namely, the way of faith and repentance, with a diligent uſe of all the means of grace.

Q. Doth God require faith, repentance, and the uſe of means in order to ſatisfy for ſin, and purchaſe ſalvation to us?

A. No; for that would be to make a Saviour of our duties, and to render Chriſt's death in vain, Gal. ii 21.

Q. Why then doth God require theſe things of us?

A. He requires them only as means for applying the purchaſe of Chriſt's death, and communicating the grace he hath merited unto us, Luke xxiv. 47. Rom. i. 16, 17, Luke xxi. 36.

Q. Are faith, repentance, and other duties the conditions of our ſalvation?

A. Yes, they may be called ſo, if by conditions we underſtand no more but that they are neceſſary means of our ſalvation, as being appointed by God for applying the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is the only meritorious and pleadable condition of our ſalvation.

Q. Could not God ſave us by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, without faith, repentance, or any other means?

A. Whatever God might do in his abſolute ſovereignty, it ought to ſatisfy us, that God hath expreſly revealed his will in this matter, and hath declared that it is through the uſe of theſe means only that he will communicate to us the benefits of redemption; and this makes them abſolutely neceſſary to all who expect ſalvation by Chriſt: And indeed it would not be for the honour of God to pardon or ſave any that go on in ſin, and neglect Chriſt and his worſhip.

QUEST. LXXXVI.

Q. *What is faith in Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. Faith in Jeſus Chriſt is a ſaving grace, whereby we receive and reſt upon him alone for ſalvation, as he is offered to us in the goſpel.

Q. Is not faith taken in different ſenſes in ſcripture?

A. Yes; ſometimes it is taken for the doctrine of faith and ſometimes for the grace of faith.

Q. How is it otherwiſe diſtinguiſhed?

A. Into hiſtorical faith, the faith of miracles, and ſaving faith.

Q. Is it ſaving faith for a man to believe that there is a God, or that Jeſus Chriſt is the Saviour of ſinners, or that the Bible is true?

A. No; for that is only hiſtorical faith, and the devils come this length, James ii. 19.

Q. What is hiſtorical faith?

A. It is the aſſent of the underſtanding unto the truths revealed in the word, whereby a man believes and gives credit to them as he doth to the truth of a hiſtory. So did theſe, Mat. xiii. 20, John ii. 23, Acts viii. 13, and Acts xxvi. 27.

Q. What more is there in ſaving faith than for a man to aſſent or give credit to the divine teſtimony?

A. If the aſſent be ſtrong and full, it will indeed bring along with it the other act of faith; that is, if a man not only aſſent to the things revealed in the goſpel as true, but alſo firmly believe that they are as valuable and excellent as they are held forth to be, then he cannot but cloſe with them. But if our aſſent doth only regard the truth of the things propoſed, and not their goodneſs and ſuitableneſs to us, it is not true and ſaving: for, where faith is true, there is not only an aſſent of the mind to the verity of goſpel-truths, but alſo a conſent of the heart unto them, as worthy of all acceptation, 1 Tim. i. 15, Rom. x. 10.

Q. What is the faith of miracles?

A. It is a peculiar confidence in the power of God, for producing of miraculous effects, which many had in the firſt times of the goſpel both actively and paſſively. Some had faith to heal, and others to be healed; and both theſe were ſometimes found in perſons void of ſaving faith, as in Judas and the unthankful lepers.

Q. Why is faith in the anſwer called a grace?

A. Becauſe it is God's free gift without any deſerving in us, Eph. ii. 8.

Q. Why is it called a ſaving grace.?

A. Becauſe there is no ſalvation without it, and all theſe who have it ſhall be ſaved, Mark xvi. 16.

Q. How is it that faith doth ſave us?

A. Not by virtue of any worth in faith, or of its being a deed or work of ours; but becauſe faith is the grace that takes hold of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by which only we are juſtified and ſaved.

Q. Why then are we ſaid to be juſtified and ſaved by faith?

A. Becauſe faith is the inſtrument and means of our juſtification and ſalvation.

Q. Is not faith the fruit of Chriſt's purchaſe?

A. Yes: For it is given in the behalf of Chriſt to believers; he ſends his Spirit to work faith, and hence he is called both the *Author and Finiſher of faith*, Phil. i, 29.

Q. What mean you by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is the matter and ground of our juſtification before God?

A. Chriſt doing and dying, or all that he did and ſuffered for us as our Surety and Cautioner. See before, 33. queſt. Page 320.

Q. Is it the ſame righteouſneſs then, which we find ſometimes called the righteouſneſs of God, and ſometimes the righteouſneſs of faith? Rom. x. 3, 6.

A. Yes, it is the very ſame; and it is called the righteouſneſs of God, becauſe it is of God's deviſing and of God's performing, he being God that wrought it out for us. It is called the righteouſneſs of faith, becauſe it is by or thro' faith that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt becomes ours; and hence we find it ſometimes called the *righteouſneſs of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9.

Q. What is the proper object of faith?

A. The general object of faith is the whole word of God; faith doth aſſent and conſent to all its truths, offers, commands, promiſes, and threatenings: But the ſpecial object of faith is Chriſt and his Surety-righteouſneſs; for it is to this the penitent ſoul doth look as the only ground of his juſtification before God, 2 Cor. ii. 2.

Q. What are the principal acts of juſtifying or ſaving faith?

A. There are two mentioned in the anſwer, namely, receiving and reſting upon Chriſt.

Q. What are we to underſtand by theſe two acts of faith?

A. 1. To receive Chriſt is to make choice of Chriſt, and embrace the offer of him as our Surety, and to conſent with a hearty approbation to the goſpel-way of juſtification and ſalvation thro' Chriſt. 2. To reſt upon Chriſt, is to adventure our all upon a crucified Jeſus, by truſting in him alone, and laying the full weight and ſtreſs of our ſouls and our whole ſalvation upon him, as the only foundation and ground ſtone laid in Zion for periſhing ſinners to reſt on, Pſal. ii. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 6.

Q. Why is faith ſaid to reſt upon Chriſt alone in the anſwer?

A. To ſhew that ſinners muſt not reſt partly upon Chriſt and partly upon their own doings for ſalvation, but upon Jeſus Chriſt alone.

Q. Doth not the ſoul's reſting on Chriſt import that it is laden and burdened when it comes to Chriſt?

A. Yes; for the ſoul is burdened, not only with the fears of wrath, but alſo with the guilt and pollution of ſin, and with the power of indwelling corruption which it longs to get rid of.

Q. What is there in Chriſt to give reſt to the burdened ſoul?

A. There is in him a fulneſs of merit to expiate guilt, ſatisfy juſtice, and obtain cleanſing and purity to the ſoul; yea, there is a fulneſs of the Spirit in him, to renew and ſanctify the natures of all who come to him.

Q. Muſt not we by faith receive and reſt on Chriſt in all his three offices, of Prophet, Prieſt and King?

A. Yes, we muſt receive and reſt on Chriſt, 1. As our Prieſt by renouncing all confidence in our own doings, and being content to be juſtified by Chriſt's ſacrifice and righteouſneſs only. 2. We muſt receive and reſt upon Chriſt as our Prophet, by renouncing all our carnal reaſonings, and ſubmitting to be taught by Chriſt, and to learn and believe according to the revelation of his word. 3. We muſt receive and reſt upon Chriſt as our King, by renouncing our own wills and inclinations, and ſubjecting our whole man, hearts and wills, to Chriſt to be inclined and ruled by his Spirit according to the directions of his word.

Q. Hath ſaving faith any other act beſides theſe of receiving and reſting upon Jeſus Chriſt?

A. Yes; for ſaving faith doth alſo receive and believe the whole word of God, and that becauſe of the divine teſtimony; and acteth differently upon the ſeveral parts thereof, giving credit to its hiſtories and prophecies, yielding obedience to its commands, trembling at its threatenings, and embracing its promiſes as infallibly true and certain: Tho' ſtill the receiving and reſting upon Chriſt, as tendered in the goſpel-promiſes for ſalvation, be the chief and main acts of ſaving faith, John iv. 42. 1 John v. 10. Acts. xxiv. 14. Rom. xvi. 26. Iſa. lxvi. 2. Heb. 11. 13. John i. 12. Iſa. xxvi. 3.

Q. For what ends are we by faith to receive and reſt upon Chriſt?

A. For ſalvation, *that is*, for our complete ſalvation, not only from wrath, but from the filth, power and being of ſin, and all the effects of it; ſo that it includes juſtification, ſanctification, and eternal glory.

Q. What is the ground upon which we are warranted to receive and reſt upon Chriſt for ſalvation?

A. Upon this, that he is offered to us in the goſpel.

Q. Unto whom is Chriſt offered in the goſpel?

A. Not to believers only, but to all who hear the goſpel, even the greateſt ſinners, Mark xvi. 15. Rom. x. 18. Iſa. xlv. 22. and xlvi. 12.

Q. Upon what terms is Chriſt offered to us?

A. He is offered, 1ſt, Freely without money or price, or without regard to any good thing in us, but merely to our need, Iſa. lv. 1. and lxv. 1. 2dly, Chriſt is offered to us wholly and undividedly, in all his offices, of Prophet, Prieſt and King; in all which we muſt receive him as before mentioned.

Q. Do any refuſe Chriſt who have him offered to them?

A. Yes, the moſt part do refuſe him, John i. 11. Iſa liii. 1.

Q. Who are they that will be reckoned refuſers of Chriſt?

A. All who do not believe the report of the goſpel, and embrace the offer made unto them.

Q. Is ſaving faith a ſure proof of our being elected to eternal life?

A. Yes, and therefore it is called the faith of God's elect; and it is ſaid, *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*, Tit. i. 1. Acts xiii. 48.

Q. Why is faith called precious in ſcripture? 1 Pet. i. 7 2 Pet. i. 1.

A. Becauſe it is honoured of God to be the inſtrument of our juſtification, to be the eye that diſcerns Chriſt, the hand that takes hold of him, and the bond of our union with him, it is the ſpring of the other graces, and doth ſet them a-work; it is the means of our ſpiritual life and ſupplies, and of our peace and joy, Rom. v. 1, 2, 3, &c. Eph. iii. 17. Gal. ii. 20. Rom. xv. 13.

Q. Why doth God put ſuch reſpect upon faith above the other graces?

A. Becauſe faith puts the higheſt honour upon his beloved Son, and approves of God's device of ſaving us thro' him, it ſtrips the creature of all ground of boaſting and doth highly exalt free grace; it gives God all the glory of our ſalvation, which is moſt acceptable to him, Mat. xvii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Rom. iii. 27, and iv. 16. Eph. ii. 7, 8.

Q. By what marks may we know if we have ſaving faith?

A True faith produceth a high eſteem of Chriſt, and worketh by love; it ſoftens and purifies the heart; it vents itſelf much in prayer and good works, and looſes the heart from earthly things, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Gal. v. 6. Mark ix. 24. Acts xv. 9. Heb. iv. 14, 16. Jam. ii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Q. Have all believers ſaving faith in the ſame degree?

A No; for ſome are weak, while others are ſtrong.

Q. How doth the weakneſs of faith diſcover itſelf?

A. In much doubting and ſtaggering at the promiſes, in depending upon the means more than Chriſt, in living much by ſenſe, in diſtruſting of God, and fainting in the day of adverſity.

Q. How may we know if there be faith in reality, amidſt ſuch weakneſſes and ſigns of unbelief?

A. It is a hopeful evidence, if the ſoul in the mean time be mourning for its unbelief, crying for more faith, and looking ſincerely to Chriſt for righteouſneſs and ſtrength.

Q. What are the evidences of a ſtrong faith?

A. Where faith is ſtrong, the ſoul will be aiming at the Redeemer's honour in all its actions. The love of Chriſt will conſtrain more powerfully to hate ſin, and live godly, than the fear of hell or hope of reward can do: The ſoul will rejoice in tribulation, and be much in the exerciſe of praiſe; it will truſt God in time of danger, and look thro' all diſcouragements to the faithfulneſs of God, and rely upon it.

QUEST. LXXXVII.

Q. *What is repentance unto life?*

A. Repentance unto life is a ſaving grace, whereby a ſinner out of the true ſenſe of his ſin, and apprehenſion of the mercy of God in Chriſt, doth with grief and and hatred of his ſin, turn from it unto God, with full purpoſe of and endeavour after new obedience.

Q. Why is repentance called a grace and a ſaving grace?

A. See the anſwers before, concerning faith.

Q. Why is it here called repentance unto life?

A. So true repentance is called, Acts xi. 18. becauſe it is a neceſſary means to attain eternal life, and to diſtinguiſh it from the ſorrow of the world that worketh death, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Q. What is that ſorrow of the world?

A. It is that which we call a legal repentance, that hath no good effect; being a ſorrow only for ſome groſs ſin, for fear of wrath, but not a ſorrow for all ſin as it diſhonours God, ſuch as goſpel penitents have.

Q. Can a man by his own natural powers attain to goſpel repentance?

A. No; for the heart by nature is like a ſtone, and none but the Spirit of God can take it away and give a heart of fleſh, according to Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

Q. What are the parts of true repentance, held forth in the awſwer?

A. There are ſix; 1. A true ſenſe of ſin, 2. An apprehenſion of the mercy of God in Chriſt. 3. A grief for ſin. 4, A hatred of ſin. 5. A turning from ſin. 6. A turning to God and the ways of new obedience.

Q. What is the true ſenſe of ſin, which is neceſſary to repentance unto life?

A. It is a heart-affecting diſcovery of the guilt, malignity, and aggravations of ſin, our undone ſtate by it, and our inability, to deliver ourſelves from it, which wounds and diſtreſſes the conſcience, and fills the mind with perplexity and reſtleſsneſs until it can ſee ſome ground of hope, Pſal. xxxviii, 3, 4. Acts ii. 37.

Q, Wherefore is ſuch a ſenſe of ſin neceſſary in penitents?

A, To make ſin hateful, and Chriſt deſirable in their eyes; for it is only ſuch ſick ſouls who will value the phyſician, Mat ix. 12,

Q, Are there not many who may be affected with a ſenſe of ſin, who never become true penitents?

A, Yes; there is frequently conviction and trouble for ſin, without converſion.

Q. What is the differnce between the convictions and trouble of unconverted perſons and theſe of true penitents?

A. The convictions and trouble of the one are only for ſome groſs ſins, ariſing from a natural conſcience and fears of hell; they are of ſhort continuance, and are cured by natural means: But the convictions and trouble of the other are for all ſins whatſoever, inward and outward, ſecret and open; they ariſe from the Holy Spirit, a view of the evil of ſin, and the injury done to God thereby; they are abiding, and are only cured by the blood of Chriſt,

Q. What mean you by the apprehenſion of the mercy of God, which is needful to true repentance?

A. That it is needful to bring a loſt ſinner to true repentance, that he diſcover that God is merciful, ready to forgive, and willing to be reconciled to repenting and returning prodigals.

Q. Why is this needful?

A. Becauſe, without it, a deep ſenſe of his ſin is ready to overwhelm the ſoul with deſpair, as it did Judas.

Q. After what way and manner is the mercy of God diſcoverable to ſinners?

A. Only in and thro' Chriſt the Mediator, who hath given ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God for ſin.

Q. Can then the general goodneſs of God, or his abſolute mercy, be any relief to convinced ſinners?

A. No; becauſe God is alſo infinite in juſtice, and holineſs, and therefore muſt be a conſuming fire to ſinners out of Chriſt.

Q. What is that true grief for ſin which is neceſſary to true repentance?

A. It is a hearty ſorrow and mourning of the ſoul for committing ſuch an abominable thing as ſin is, and that mainly becauſe ſin hath contemned and diſhonoured God, it hath crucified Jeſus Chriſt, it hath grieved the Holy Spirit, it hath deformed and defiled our ſouls, it hath diſabled us from glorifying God and debarred us from communion with him.

Q. What is that hatred of ſin which is neceſſary in true repentance?

A. It is an inward abhorrence of ſin, as the moſt abominable thing, and a lothing of ourſelves becauſe of it, Jer. xxxi. 19.

Q. Can any who hate ſin make a ſport of it?

A. No.

Q. Whence is it that a true penitent doth hate ſin?

A. Becauſe ſin is moſt hateful to God, it is the murderer of Chriſt, and an enemy to his own ſoul.

Q. What kind of hatred doth the true penitent bear to ſin?

A. 1. It is a deep and implacable hatred, which makes him aim at the utter ruin and extirpation of ſin in his ſoul. 2 It is an univerſal hatred; for ſeeing the true penitent doth hate ſin as ſin, he muſt hate every ſin, whether ſecret and open, pleaſant or profitable, in himſelf or in others, Rom. vii. 24. Pſalm cxix. 128.

Q. Is not the ſoul's turning from ſin an eſſential part of true repentance?

A. Yes.

Q. What kind of turning muſt it be?

A. 1. It muſt be a turning from ſin in heart, with a real grief for it, and hatred of it, Pſalm xxxviii. 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 31 2. It muſt be an univerſal turning from ſin both in the heart and in the life, without reſerving of one known ſin, Ezek. xviii. 31. 3, It muſt be attended with turning to God, and the ways of new obedience, Iſa. i. 16, 17. Iſa. lv. 7.

Q. Is turning from ſin always a ſure ſign of true repentance?

A. Not always: For we read of ſome who turn, but not to the Moſt High; they may ceaſe to do evil, and not learn to do well; They may turn from one ſin to another, from profaneneſs to ſuperſtition, or from preſumption to deſpair, Hoſ vii. 16. Jer. iv. 1.

Q. Is not turning from ſin, when it is followed with turning to the Lord, a certain evidence of true repentance?

A. Yes; for theſe two are the very eſſential parts of it.

Q. What is this *turning to the Lord* which is eſſential to true repentance?

A. It imports, 1 Our applying to God in Chriſt for pardon of ſin, and cleanſing from it 2. Our having the outgoings of our hearts and affections to him, as our portion and happineſs. 4 Our giving up ourſelves to his ſervice and obedience, Iſa. lv. 7. Jer. iii. 22. Iſa. xxvi, 8. Pſalm cxix. 57, 58, 59.

Q. How may we know if our *turning from ſin to God* be true and real?

A. When it is accompanied with a full purpoſe of, and ſincere endeavours after new obedience; for purpoſes to continue in ſin, or negligence in God's ſervice, are inconſiſtent with true repentance.

Q. Why is the penitent believer's obedience called *new obedience*.

A. 1. Becauſe it ſprings from new principles, faith and love. 2. It is done for new ends, not for worldly intereſt, but to pleaſe God, and to advance his glory. 3. It is performed in a new manner, to wit, with the heart, and by faith looking to Chriſt for ſtrength to do it, and for righteouſneſs to make it acceptable to God.

Q. What may we think of their repentance, who live in the neglect of duty, or in the practice of ſin, afterwards?

A. We may think that their profeſſion of repentance hath not been ſincere.

Q. Can any man look for pardon or ſalvation without repentance?

A. No; for Chriſt hath expreſly told us, "Except ye repent ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh," Luke xiii. 3.

Q. May a man delay his repentance until he come to a death-bed?

A. By no means; for many die very ſuddenly, neither have we power of ourſelves to repent when we will, and men turn hardened in ſin by continuing in it.

Q. Is there room for repentance for old ſinners, and theſe who have been notoriouſly wicked?

A. Yes; for, if they repent, God hath ſaid, he will abundantly pardon, Iſa lv. 7. And we have inſtances of his doing ſo, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14, 15.

Q. But how ſhall we attain to true repentance?

A. We muſt cry earneſtly to God for it, and plead his promiſes of giving it to theſe who aſk it of him, James i. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 37. And we muſt look frequently to Chriſt crucified, whom we have pierced with our ſins, Zech. xii. 10.

Q. Is it not ſaid of Eſau that he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears? Heb. xii. 17.

A. It is not ſaid there, that Eſau ſought the grace of repentance from God to his own ſoul, but only that he ſought of his father Iſaac that he might repent of giving the bleſſing to his brother Jacob; which indeed he could not obtain: But it had been well for him, had he been as careful to ſeek God's bleſſing as his father's.

Q. Hath not repentance ſeveral counterfeits, which we ought to beware of?

A. Yes: For Saul confeſſed his ſin, Ahab had outward expreſſions of mourning, Judas and Felix had great convictions and terrors; but none of theſe did turn from their ſins to God in Chriſt for mercy.

Q. Do we need repentance only at our firſt turning to God?

A. Believers through their whole lives have need to be daily repenting and making application to Chriſt's blood, becauſe they are daily ſinning by infirmity, and falling ſhort of their duty.

QUEST. LXXXVIII.

Q. *What are the outward means, whereby Chriſt communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?*

A. The outward and ordinary means, whereby Chriſt communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, eſpecially the word, ſacraments and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for ſalvation.

Q. What do you mean by Chriſt's ordinances here?

A. All theſe means of grace and ſalvation which he hath appointed in his word.

Q. May not ordinances of man's appointment be made uſe of for our ſpiritual benefit?

A. No; for theſe the Spirit of God doth call *will-worſhip* and *vain things*, upon which we cannot expect his bleſſing, Col. ii. 23. Matth. xv. 9.

Q. What are theſe benefits of redemption which are communicated to us in the uſe of Chriſt's ordinances?

A. They are many, ſuch as knowledge, conviction, converſion, faith, repentance, pardon, peace, ſpiritual life, ſtrength, &c.

Q. What are the ordinances of Chriſt, by which he communicates theſe benefits to us?

A. They are, the word, the ſacraments, prayer, praiſe, a goſpel-miniſtry, church government and diſcipline, religious faſting, vowing, conference, meditation, ſelf examination, &c.

Q. Why are theſe ordinances called means of grace or of ſalvation?

A. Becauſe by them or through them, the Holy Spirit conveys grace into his peoples ſouls, and thereby promotes their ſalvation.

Q. Which of theſe ordinances doth he chiefly make uſe of for that end?

A. Eſpecially the word, ſacraments and prayer; but not excluding the reſt from being alſo uſeful that way.

Q. Why are theſe three called the *outward* means of ſalvation?

A. To diſtinguiſh them from meditation, faith, repentance, and ſuch inward means.

Q. Why are they called the *ordinary* means?

A. Becauſe they are God's common and uſual way of conveying grace.

Q. Doth not God ſometimes make uſe of extraordinary means for converting ſinners?

A. Yes, as in the primitive times, he frequently made uſe of the miraculous gifts of tongues, healing, caſting out devils, inflicting of judgments, and ſometimes voices from heaven and earthquakes, as means to convert ſouls; as in the caſe of Paul and the jaylor.

Q. Are the ordinances means of ſalvation to all who enjoy them?

A. No; inſtead of that, they are the ſavour of death unto death, to many who have them and abuſe them, 2 Cor. ii. 16. Iſa. lv. 11.

Q. To whom are they made effectual to ſalvation?

A. To the elect only.

Q. Whence have the ordinances that efficacy?

A. Not from themſelves, but from the bleſſing and Spirit of God, 1 Cor. iii. 7.

QUEST. LXXXIX.

Q. *How is the word made effectual to ſalvation?*

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but eſpecially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting ſinners, and of building them up in holineſs and comfort, thro' faith unto ſalvation.

Q. Who is it that makes the word effectual to ſalvation?

A. The Spirit of God.

Q. How are we to uſe the word, if we would have it made effectual to ſalvation?

A. We muſt both read it, and hear it preached.

Q. What need we go to hear ſermons, when we can read the bible, or as good ſermons at home?

A. Becauſe it hath pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe: and he calls us to hear, that our ſouls may live; for (ſaith he) *Faith comes by hearing*, 1 Cor i, 21, Iſa. lv, 3, Rom. x, 17.

Q. Do they not ſlight God's ordinances for ſaving ſouls, who ſlight the preaching of the word?

A. Yes.

Q. Is not the reading of the word God's ordinance for the converſion and ſalvation of ſouls, as well as the preaching of it?

A. Yes, as is evident from Deut. xvii, 19, Acts viii, 28, 29, Col. iv, 16.

Q. Why is it ſaid in the anſwer, eſpecially the preaching of the word?

A. Becauſe it pleaſeth the Lord to honour the preaching of the word more frequently and uſually to convince and convert ſouls; as is manifeſt both from ſcripture and experience, 1 Cor. i, 21, Mat. xxviii, 19, Rom. i. 16, and x, 14, 15, 16, 17, Acts ii, 37, and iv, 2, 4, and vi, 7, and viii, 5, 6, and x, 44, and xi, 19, 20, and xiii, 48, and xvii, 3, 4, and xviii, 8, 9, 10, and xxvi, 18.

Q. Whence is it that the preaching of the word is ſo honoured?

A. Becauſe it is an ordinance inſtituted for explaining and applying the word, which God makes uſe of to awaken, convince, rebuke, exhort, and comfort ſouls; and to ſpeak directly and particularly to the conſciences of men. And, ſeeing God hath thought fit to inſtitute a ſtanding miniſtry in his church, for theſe very purpoſes, we may expect he will own and bleſs it, 2 Tim. iv, 2, Acts xxvi. 18, 2 Cor. v. 20, Eph. iv. 12. As, under the law, God had thoſe who gave the ſenſe of the word and cauſed the people to underſtand it; ſo, under the goſpel, he hath a convincing miniſtry, by which the ſecrets of mens hearts are made manifeſt, Neh. viii. 8, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

Q. Would it not be a better way to convince and convert ſouls, to ſend an angel or one from the dead unto them?

A. No: for we have greater evidence of the truth, certainty, and divinity of the word of God, than we could have of any apparition; ſo that, if men do not hear the prophets and apoſtles, neither would they be perſuaded tho' one roſe from the dead, Luke xvi. 31.

Q. What uſe doth the Spirit of God make of the word, in order to the ſalvation of men?

A. He makes uſe of it to convince and convert ſinners, and to build up the ſaints, as ſet forth in the anſwer.

Q. How is the word made the means of convincing ſinners?

A. By ſearching out hidden ſins, and diſcovering the thoughts and intents of the heart; and by laying before us the evil and malignity of ſin in contemning God, the pollution of ſin in making us odious in his ſight, and the guilt of ſin in drawing eternal wrath and damnation upon us, Heb. iv. 12, Acts ii. 37.

Q. How is the word made the means of converſion?

A. The Spirit of God writes the threatenings, precepts and promiſes of it upon the heart: ſo that the ſoul is brought under the affecting impreſſions of the reality of the things of the other world, the evil of ſin, and excellency of Chriſt and holineſs; whereby the man is gradually changed into a new creature.

Q. Is there not a difference between the words convincing and converting of a ſinner?

A. Yes; for a ſinner may be convinced without being converted, but he cannot be converted without being convinced.

Q. Is not the efficacy of the word very wonderful in converſion?

A. Yes; and upon that account the ſcripture reſembles it to rain, to light, to fire, to a hammer, and to a ſword, Iſa. lv. 10, 11, Pſal. cxix. 105, Jer. xxiii. 29, Heb. iv. 12.

Q. Wherein doth the wonderful efficacy of the word appear?

A. In this, that one plain word or ſentence of it will prevail more with the ſoul, than the moſt rhetorical diſcourſes, or cogent arguments of men; it doth ſometimes of a ſudden turn the tide of the heart and ſtream of the affections to another courſe; it diſpoſſeſſes ſatan and throws down his ſtrong-holds; it perſuades men to mortify darling luſts, and reſiſt the ſtrongeſt temptations to ſin; it cauſes men to ſee things in another light, to abhor what they loved, and love what before they abhorred: yea, ſo great is the change that the word makes upon men in converſion, that the ſcripture calls it a creation, a regeneration, and a reſurrection.

Q. What is converſion?

A. It is the implanting of new habits and principles in the ſoul, whereby there is an univerſal change wrought in the mind, heart and life; the whole man is turned from the creature to God, from ſelf to Chriſt, and from ſin to duty: the ſoul is conformed to the image of God, and the will is ſubdued to his will; and the man ſtudies to pleaſe God in a holy life. In a word, converſion is the ſame thing with regeneration or effectual calling. See more of it before, on 31ſt queſtion, page 318.

Q. Of what uſe is the word to thoſe who are converted?

A. It doth build them up in holineſs and comfort, thro' faith unto ſalvation, Acts xx. 32, 2 Tim. iii. 15, Rom. xv. 4.

Q. What is imported in building up of the converted?

A. 1. It ſuppoſes that there is a good foundation laid by their believing and reſting upon Chriſt crucified, and receiving grace from him. 2. It imports their growing in grace, and that there is added to them more knowledge, more faith, more love, more ſtrength, more holineſs, and more comfort.

Q. What mean you by holineſs?

A. It is a principle of new life, which inclines the ſoul to hate all ſin, and to love what is pure and pleaſing to God, and to ſtudy conformity in the whole man to the nature and will of God.

Q. How doth the word build up converted perſons in holineſs?

A. 1. By diſcovering to them the defects of their graces and duties. 2. By finding and reproving every luſt and hidden ſin. 3. By ſhewing them more and more of the evil and deformity of all ſin. 4. By fortifying them againſt the ſuggeſtions of ſatan, wicked men, and the corrupt heart. 5. By pointing forth their duty, and diſcovering to them more and more of the beauty and neceſſity of holineſs 6. By ſetting before them the attractive examples of Chriſt and the ſcripture ſaints. 7. By directing them where to go for ſtrength for every duty.

Q. How doth the word build them up in comfort?

A. 1. By furniſhing them with marks and evidences of the work of grace in their ſouls. 2. By bringing to them the refreſhing promiſes of pardon thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. 3. By diſcovering to them the promiſes of perſevering grace, and of new ſupplies of ſtrength both for work and warfare, duty and difficulty. 4. By aſſuring them of the unalterable nature of Chriſt's love, and of the well-ordered covenant. 5.

By holding forth to them the great and glorious things laid up for them hereafter.

Q. How doth the Spirit by the word, build up the ſaints in holineſs and comfort ?

A. He doth it through faith, or by their exerciſing faith upon the truths and promiſes of the word ; whereby they firmly embrace them, and feed upon them, Acts xv. 9. Rom. xv. 13. 1 Pet. i. 5, 6.

Q. Wherefore hath the word ſo little efficacy in converting and building up us in our duty ?

A. Becauſe we have provoked the Spirit of God to withdraw from the preaching of the word, and we come not to it with preparation and prayer, faith and attention ; or elſe the good ſeed falls upon rocks, upon the high-way-ſide, or among thorns.

QUEST. XC.

How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to ſalvation ?

A. That the word may become effectual to ſalvation we muſt attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practiſe it in our lives.

Q. Is the word of God effectual to the ſalvation of all who read and hear it ?

A. No ; for many do read and hear it, yea, underſtand and remember it too, who do not truly believe it.

Q. Is it warrantable for common people to read the ſcriptures ?

A. Yes ; for Chriſt commands it, and the Bereans are commended for it, John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11.

Q. Have they warrant to preach the word alſo ?

A. None have warrant to preach the word but theſe who have gifts for it, and are duly called to it, Rom. x. 14, 15.

Q. Ought not all true Chriſtians to bear a great love to God's word ?

A. Yes ; for it is the directory of our lives, our counſeller in ſtraits, our ſupport in the day of affliction, and the book in which we find our evidences for heaven.

Q. Should not the conſideration of the Author, deſign, and uſefulneſs of this book, engage us to read it carefully ?

A. Yes ; for we ſhould look upon it as a *golden epiſtle* indited by the Spirit of God ; we ſhould receive it as a *love-letter* from heaven, opening up God's deſigns of love to our ſouls ; we ſhould go to it as for our daily food and ſubſiſtance, and duly enquire in it for the will of God, and hereby conſult with God about our duty in all caſes.

Q. At what times ought we to read the Bible ?

A. Not only upon the Lord's day, but alſo upon week-days, both morning and evening, ſeeing we have ſuch conſtant occaſion for it to quicken us in duty, encourage us in trials, reſolve us in doubts, and ſtrengthen us againſt temptations.

Q. In what manner ought we to read the word of God ?

A. We ſhould firſt look up to God for his bleſſing upon it, and then we ſhould read with faith, reverence, and application to ourſelves, as if we were particularly named in the precepts, promiſes, reproofs, threatenings, and conſolations of it ; and carefully obſerve theſe which are moſt applicable to us. And, in reading every part, we ſhould ſtill keep Chriſt in our eye, as the end, ſcope, and ſubſtance of the whole ſcriptures.

Q. In what manner ought we to hear the word read and preached to us ?

A. Something is to be done before, ſomething in time of it, and ſomething after it.

Q. What things are needful before hearing the word, that it may be effectual to our ſalvation ?

A. Two things, namely, preparation and prayer.

Q. What is that preparation which is needful before hearing of the word ?

A. We muſt ſtudy to lay aſide all worldly thoughts and cares, and get awful impreſſions of the majeſty of God whoſe word we are to hear ; and be willing humbly to be taught of him. We ſhould enquire into our ſtate, our wants and ſins, and be content to put away every ſin that the word condemns, acd comply with every duty that the word calls for.

Q. What is the need of ſuch preparation before ſolemn duties ?

A. The greatneſs and jealouſy of that God whom we approach do call for it ; and it is a good token of the ſucceſs of duty, when the heart is prepared for it Pſal. x. 17. *Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear.*

Q. Hath the word no ſucceſs at any time upon unprepared ſouls ?

A. Tho' they have no right to expect it, yet God in his ſovereign mercy is ſometimes found of them that ſought him not, Iſa. lxvi 1.

Q. May any man go to the word depending upon his own preparation ?

A. No, but only in dependance on Chriſt's merits, and the Spirit's aſſiſtance.

Q. What kind of prayer is requiſite before hearing the word ?

A. Humble and fervent prayer both in ſecret and in our families.

Q. What ſhould we pray for, if we would have the word effectual ?

A. We ſhould pray that God may direct the miniſter rightly to divide the word of truth, and to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to all ; that God may pour out his Spirit upon us, and upon the whole congregation ; and that he may give a bleſſing to his word, for convincing, converting and edifying of our ſouls.

Q. What is required in time of hearing the word, to make it effectual to ſalvation ?

A. We muſt hear it with attention, faith, love, meekneſs, and tenderneſs, Luke xix. 48, Heb. iv. 2, Luke xxiv. 32, James i. 21, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27.

Q. What is that attention which is needful in hearing the word ?

A. It is a diligent hearkening to the word with our minds fixed upon it, and guarding againſt all earthly and impertinent thoughts in time of it.

Q. Whence do wandering thoughts proceed in time of hearing ?

A. From an earthly heart, from a careleſs mind, from a wandering eye, or from an evil cuſtom.

Q. What is the evil of wandering thoughts in time of hearing ?

A. They are provoking to God, a contempt of his omniſcience ; they keep us from remembering the word, and hinder the impreſſions and ſucceſs of it.

Q. How ſhall we be delivered from wandering thoughts?

A. We ought to pray and watch againſt them; overawe our hearts with God's preſence, and all-ſeeing eye; and ſtudy to bring more love to the word: For what we love we fix our minds upon.

Q. How ſhall we prevent dulneſs, drouſineſs or ſleeping in time of hearing?

A. By conſidering that the great God is ſpeaking to us, that life and death are ſet before us, and we are called to hear for our life, 2 Cor. v. 20. Deut. xxx. 19. and xxxii. 46, 47.

Q. What is that faith which is required in reading and hearing the word, that it may be effectual to our ſalvation?

A. It is the ſoul's believing and giving credit to the truth of the word, becauſe of the divine teſtimony ſupporting it. If our faith in hearing be of the right ſtamp, we muſt believe that the word is God's, and that what he ſaith in it is infallibly certain, and we muſt receive it as ſuch; and particularly the record which God hath given us of his Son. Again, we muſt believe that God ſpeaks to us in particular, in the promiſes, threatenings and reproofs of his word; and therefore we muſt apply them to ourſelves, and not put them by us.

Q. Why did not the word preached profit the Iſraelites?

A. Becauſe it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it, Heb. iv. 2.

Q. Do they who hear the word in faith, receive it alſo with great love and eſteem?

A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By their diligent attendance on it, and by their prizing it above the moſt valuable things here below, ſuch as gold, ſilver, or even their neceſſary food, Pſal. xix. 10. and cxix. 72. 127, Job xxiii. 12.

Q. What is required of us after hearing, ſo as the word may be effectual to ſalvation?

A. We muſt lay up the word in our hearts, and practiſe it in our lives.

Q. What do you mean by laying up the word in our hearts?

A. It is to give the word ſuch a place in our underſtandings, memories and affections, that the things of the world ſhall not be able to thruſt it out, but we ſhall continue to remember, ponder and meditate upon it long afterwards.

Q. What is the advantage of laying up the word in this manner?

A. It would ſerve for a bridle to keep us back from ſin, Pſal. cxix. 11. "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not ſin againſt thee."

Q. What ſhall I do with a bad memory, that doth not retain the word after I hear it?

A. Labour to feel the power of the word, and get a high eſteem of it; for what we highly value, we will not forget; as a bride will not forget her jewels, Pſal. cxix. 16, 93, Jer. ii. 32.

Q. What is it to practiſe the word we hear, in our lives?

A. It is to be ready to obey and put in practice whatever thing the word of God informs us to be our duty, James i. 22, 25.

Q. What ſhall we think of theſe who hear the word, but walk contrary to it, and ſtill go on in ſin?

A. They are to be looked upon as unbelievers, and enemies of Chriſt and his goſpel.

QUEST. XCI.

Q. How do the ſacraments become effectual means of ſalvation?

A. The ſacraments become effectual means of ſalvation not from any virtue in them or in him that doth adminiſter them, but only by the bleſſing of Chriſt, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

Q. What hath God appointed ſacraments for?

A. To be means of ſalvation, and particularly to promote grace and comfort in his people while in their ſojourning ſtate.

Q. Is not the word ſufficient for that end without the ſacrament?

A. It ſhould ſatiſfy us that a wiſe God had thought fit to appoint us to make uſe of both the one and the other, as means of ſalvation.

Q. How do the word and ſacraments differ as means of ſalvation?

A. The one is for begetting faith, the other for confirming it; the one is directed to the ear, the other to the eye.

Q. Why hath Chriſt added ſacraments to his word?

A. To be viſible ſigns of his love to mankind, to cure our unbelief, to help our faith, and to quicken all our graces and affections. He knows our frame, that we are more affected by things which our eyes ſee, than by theſe which we only hear of by the ear.

Q. Do the ſacraments prove effectual means of grace and ſalvation to all who partake of them?

A. No, but to the elect only.

Q. What is the reaſon they prove not effectual to all?

A. Becauſe their efficacy and virtue is not from themſelves, but from God the Author, who being a free Agent communicates virtue to them according to his pleaſure.

Q. Have the ſacraments then no virtue in themſelves, or by the external action, to confer grace upon the partakers? *A.* No.

Q. Have the ſacraments their virtue from the intention, the preparation, the learning, the holineſs or zeal of the adminiſtrator? *A.* No.

Q. From whence then have the ſacraments their efficacy and virtue?

A. Only from the bleſſing of Chriſt, and the working of his Spirit.

Q. Should any man reſt upon his bare attendance upon ordinances? A. No.

Q. What ought we always to ſeek and look after under ordinances?

A. Chriſt's bleſſing, and his Spirit's working.

Q. What doth the Spirit, by his working, in order to make the ſacraments effectual?

A. He puts life and virtue in the ordinances, and by them doth convey and apply Chriſt and his benefits to the ſouls of men.

Q. Doth not the Spirit by his working put life in all the powers and faculties of the ſoul? A. Yes.

Q. What may we think of theſe who deny or ſcoff at the workings of the Spirit upon ſouls under ordinances?

A. They are ſenſual, not having the Spirit; and they are ſtrangers to the grace of God.

Q. Is not the caſe of ſuch very deplorable?

A. Yes; for, "if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9.

Q. In whom doth the Spirit make the ſacraments effectual?

A. Not in all who receive them, but only in theſe who by faith receive them.

Q. Is not this faith, by which other bleſſings are conveyed, alſo wrought in the ſoul by the Holy Spirit?

A. Yes.

QUEST. XCII.

Q. What is a ſacrament?

A. A ſacrament is an holy ordinance inſtituted by Chriſt, wherein by ſenſible ſigns, Chriſt and the benefits of the new covenant are repreſented, ſealed and applied to believers.

Q. Is the word ſacrament to be found in ſcripture?

A. No, but the thing ſignified is there, and the word is very ſignificant, and ancient.

Q. What words have we in ſcripture inſtead thereof?

A. We have ſigns and ſeals, Rom. iv. 11. Gen. xvii. 11. Exod xii. 13.

Q. From whom is the word ſacrament borrowed?

A. From the Romans, who underſtood by it a military oath, whereby ſoldiers bound themſelves to be true and faithful to their general: But gradually it came to be applied to baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, becauſe in them we engage to be faithful ſoldiers to Jeſus Chriſt the Captain of our ſalvation.

Q. Why is it called, in the anſwer, a *holy ordinance*?

A. It is called an ordinance, as being a thing ordained of God; it is called holy, becauſe it is ordained by a holy God, for holy perſons and for holy purpoſes.

Q. Why is it ſaid to be inſtituted by Chriſt?

A. To let us know that Chriſt, who is the head of the church, hath only power to appoint ſacraments to her; and that they are not true ſacraments which are not inſtituted by him.

Q. What is the uſe of ſacraments?

A. The uſe of them is to be viſible ſigns and ſeals to the church, of the benefits of Chriſt's mediation and purchaſe.

Q. What are the two parts of a ſacrament?

A, There are, 1. The outward viſible or ſenſible ſigns. 2. The inviſible things ſignified and repreſented by them.

Q. What mean you by ſenſible ſigns?

A. The elements and actions uſed in the ſacraments, called ſenſible becauſe they are perceived by our outward ſenſes.

Q. What are theſe ſenſible ſigns uſed in the ſacraments?

A. In baptiſm, there is water ſprinkled on the body. In the Lord's ſupper, there is bread broken and eaten, and wine poured and drunk.

Q. Are not theſe elements and actions ſeals as well ſigns?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the difference between their being ſigns and ſeals?

A. As they are ſigns, they ſignify or repreſent bleſſings or benefits to us; as they are ſeals, they ratify and confirm our right to them.

Q. What are the bleſſings or benefits which are repreſented, ſealed and applied to us by theſe ſigns and ſeals

A. They are Chriſt and the benefits of the new covenant; that is, the bleſſings of Chriſt's purchaſe, which are exhibited and tendered to us in the covenant of grace.

Q. Do the ſacraments ſeal and confirm theſe benefits to all who partake of them?

A. No, but to believers only, who are within the covenant; for theſe who are not within it, do apply God's ſeal to a blank.

Q. Why is the covenant of grace called the new covenant?

A. It is called new, 1. In oppoſition to the old covenant of works made with our firſt parents, which they brake. 2. It is ſometimes called the new covenant or teſtament, in oppoſition to the old manner of diſpenſing of the covenant of grace by types and ſacrifices before Chriſt's incarnation.

Q. Had the old covenant of works any ſacraments annexed to it?

A. Yes, it had two, to wit, the tree of knowledge, and the tree of life.

QUEST. XCIII.

Q. Which are the ſacraments of the New Teſtament?

A. The ſacraments of the New Teſtament are baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper.

Q. What were the ſacraments of the covenant of grace under the Old Teſtament?

A. They were two, namely, circumciſion and the paſſover; in place of which, we have now baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper.

Q. Are the ſacraments of the Old and New Teſtament the ſame for ſubſtance?

A. Yes; for they are ſeals of the ſame covenant, and they both repreſent Chriſt and his benefits.

Q. Wherein then do they differ?

A. The Old Teſtament ſacraments repreſented Chriſt as to come, and that in a darker way; but the New repreſent Chriſt as already come, and in a more clear and plain manner.

Q. What is the difference between baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper?

A. Baptiſm is for initiation, and to be received but once by us, as circumciſion was: The Lord's ſupper is for nutrition, and to be received often, as the paſſover was.

Q. What was the paſſover?

A. It was a lamb ſlain, roaſted with fire and eaten wholly, with bitter herbs, and unleavened bread; whereby was repreſented Chriſt and his ſufferings; and the receiving of him by faith, with ſincere repentance.

Q. How doth it appear that there are no more ſacraments under the New Teſtament than two?

A. Becauſe Chriſt the Head of the church hath inſtituted no more for ſacraments, than baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper; neither are any more needful, ſeeing the one is a ſign and ſeal of our ſpiritual birth, and the other of our ſpiritual nouriſhment.

Q. Do not the Papiſts add more ſacraments to theſe two?

A. Yes, they add other five, *to wit*, confirmation, penance, ordination, marriage, and extreme unction.

Q. Why may not theſe be received as ſacraments?

A. Becauſe none of them are inſtituted by Chriſt for ſacraments; and though ordination and marriage be of divine appointment, yet neither they nor any of the reſt have the parts of true ſacraments, nor are they ſeals of the covenant of grace.

QUEST. XCIV.

Q. *What is baptiſm?*

A. Baptiſm is a ſacrament, wherein the waſhing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, doth ſignify and ſeal our ingrafting into Chriſt, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Q. What doth the word *baptiſm* ſignify?

A. It is a Greek word, and ſignifieth a *waſhing*; ſo it is rendered in Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 38.

Q. What are the two parts in this ſacrament?

A. 1. There is the outward viſible or ſenſible ſign made uſe of. 2. There is the inviſible or ſpiritual thing ſignified by it.

Q. What is the ſenſible ſign here?

A. It is the ſprinkling or waſhing of the body with water, and uſing of the words of inſtitution.

Q. What is the ſpiritual thing ſignified by the waſhing with water?

A. There is, 1. The waſhing away of the guilt of ſin by the blood of Chriſt in our juſtification. 2. The waſhing away of the filth of ſin by the Spirit of Chriſt in our regeneration and ſanctification, Rev. i. 5. John iii. 5.

Q. Wherein lies the reſemblance between water, and Chriſt's blood, or the bleſſings purchaſed thereby?

A. In theſe things; 1. Water waſhes away the filth of the body, ſo the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth the ſoul from ſin. 2. Water doth extinguiſh fire, ſo Chriſt's blood quencheth the fire of God's wrath. 3. Water doth mollify the earth, ſo Chriſt's blood ſoftens our hard hearts. 4. Our bodies cannot live without water, neither can our ſouls without the blood of Chriſt. 5. Water is cheap and free to all, ſo is the blood of Chriſt with its benefits. 6. Water hath no effect upon us unleſs it be applied, ſo neither hath the blood of Chriſt without the application of faith.

Q. Is it lawful to add any thing to the water made uſe of in baptiſm?

A. No: For though the Papiſts mix oil, ſalt, cream and ſpittle with the water, and likewiſe uſe the ſign of the croſs at baptiſm; yet all theſe are but vain and ſinful additions, without any warrant from God's word.

Q. Why may not the ſign of the croſs be retained in baptiſm ſeeing it is deſigned to teach all thoſe who are baptized not to be aſhamed to own a crucified Chriſt?

A. The Papiſts give plauſible reaſons for the other additions, as well as for this: But ſeeing the ſign of the croſs was brought into the church by the Papiſts, as well as the cream and ſpittle; it ought to be laid aſide with them, as unſcriptural and antichriſtian inventions.

Q. Is it neceſſary to dip or plunge the whole body into the water in baptiſm, as, ſome ſay, was the practice in the primitive times?

A. Whatever might be done with ſome in hotter countries, it would be highly dangerous, eſpecially for infants, in our colder climates to plunge them in water; and therefore we muſt reſt with ſprinkling of them: And for this practice we find ſufficient warrant in the ſcriptures.

Q. What warrant is there in ſcripture for baptizing by ſprinkling?

A. 1. We find the waſhing of tables is termed baptizing, Mark vii. 4. which we know is done, not by dipping, but by ſprinkling. 2. The Iſraelites are ſaid to have been *baptized unto Moſes in the cloud*, 1 Cor. x. 2. which was by ſprinkling them with its rain. 3. When it is ſaid that all things under the law were purged by blood, we are told at the ſame time that this was done by ſprinkling them with the blood of the ſacrifice, and not by dipping them in it, Heb. ix. 21, 22. and hence Chriſt's blood is called the blood of ſprinkling. 4. The circumſtances of many of the perſons baptized, recorded in ſcripture, make it highly probable that it was done by ſprinkling or pouring water on them.

Q. What inſtances are theſe you refer to?

A. *1ſt*, We read of three thouſand baptized by the apoſtles in a part of one day, Acts ii. 41. which could not have been done in ſo ſhort a time, had they taken them all to a river, and plunged them one by one into it. *2dly*, When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 38, it was not likely he would ſtrip him and plunge him in the river when he was in a journey and nowiſe provided for it; but rather that they went into the water to the ancles, being bare-footed according to the cuſtom, where he ſprinkled water upon him, according to the prophecy in which the Eunuch had been reading, Iſa. lii. 15. *So ſhall he ſprinkle many nations*. *3dly*, When Ananias went to baptize Paul we find he was in the houſe, Acts ix. 17, 18, 19. Neither is it likely he would go out of it, to be plunged in a river, in the weak and faint caſe his body was in at that time. *4thly*, When Cornelius and his friends were baptized, they were in the houſe, and water was called for there to do it, Acts x. 47, 48. *5thly*, Likewiſe the Jaylor in Philippi, and his family, were in the houſe when they were baptized by Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. 32, 33. For it cannot be imagined that the Jaylor would leave his poſt and go out of the city with all his family in the middle of the night, and let Paul and Silas who were priſoners go too, to ſeek a river to plunge them in. *Laſtly*, It was the cuſtom of the primitive church to baptize the ſick upon their beds, who hence were called Cliniei; and ſurely theſe could not be plunged, but ſprinkled only.

Q. Do we not read of John's baptizing at Jordan and Enon, becauſe of the plenty of water there; and of perſons baptized going down into the water, and coming up out of the water? Acts viii. 38. 39.

A. John chuſed theſe places, becauſe the waters there were common, which was not the caſe in other parts of that dry country. And for going down into the water, and coming up out of it, this is ſaid of the baptizer, as well as of the baptized, and ſo cannot infer dipping. Beſides, the words may be rendered, they went unto the water, and they came up from the water.

Q. What doth the ſprinkling with water in baptiſm declare unto us?

A. It declareth to us, that we are all filthy and polluted by nature, by reaſon of original ſin and corruption; and that we ſtand greatly in need of being waſhed from it.

Q. Can the water in baptiſm waſh us from it?

A. No; it is only the blood of Chriſt, repreſented by the water that can do it.

Q. How is it that the blood of Chriſt doth waſh us from ſin?

A. It is by the Holy Spirit's applying the merits and virtue of Chriſt's blood unto our ſouls.

Q. In whoſe name are perſons to be baptized?

A. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. What is ſignified and meant by uſing theſe words in baptiſm?

A. Several things: as that the ordinance is diſpenſed by divine warrant; and that the perſon baptized vows ſubjection to God's authority; and that he is thereby conſecrated and bound to the faith, profeſſion, worſhip, and obedience of the holy Trinity; and that he will always depend upon the favour, grace, and protection of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

Q. Is not baptiſm the ſealing of a covenant between God and us? *A.* Yes.

Q. What is here ſealed and engaged on his part?

A. That he will be our God, ingraft us into Chriſt, and entitle us to all the benefits of the new covenant which Chriſt hath purchaſed by his blood.

Q. What is here ſealed and engaged on our part?

A. That we will be the Lord's, in ſoul and body, in practice as well as profeſſion, to ſerve him, and fight for him all the days of our lives.

Q. What is meant by that privilege of our being ingrafted into Chriſt?

A. It is for us to be cut off from the old ſtock of nature, and to be united to Chriſt as our bleſſed root, from whom we may draw ſap for our growth and fruitfulneſs, John xv. 5. Rom. xi. 17.

Q. Is this privilege ſealed to us by baptiſm?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the benefits of the covenant of grace, which are ſealed to us in baptiſm?

A. They are all theſe bleſſings which Chriſt hath purchaſed by his blood, ſuch as admiſſion into the viſible church, and a right to all church-ordinances and privileges, ſpiritual illumination, remiſſion of ſin, deliverance from wrath, friendſhip with God, regeneration and ſanctification, the conduct of the Spirit, fatherly protection and proviſion, increaſe of grace and perſeverance in it, meetneſs for heaven, victory over death, and reſurrection to eternal life.

Q. Doth baptiſm ſeal and apply theſe bleſſings and benefits equally to all who are baptized?

A. No: for, to thoſe who are truly elect or believers, it doth ſeal them abſolutely; but, to theſe who are only ſuch in profeſſion, it ſeals them but conditionally, that is upon condition they are what they profeſs to be.

Q. Do believers partake immediately of the benefits ſealed to them in baptiſm?

A. Tho' their right be then ſealed, yet God is a free agent, and not tied to that moment of time; but doth confer his grace, and make his ordinance effectual, when and how he pleaſeth.

Q. Have unbelievers any benefit by their baptiſm?

A. Yes; for by it they are outwardly ſeparated from the reſt of the world, and from the devil and the fleſh, and are ſolemnly conſecrated to Chriſt and his ſervice; they are become members of the viſible church, and have a ſealed right and claim to plead the ordinances, offers, and promiſes of the goſpel, if they do not forfeit theſe by their after carriage, Rom. ix. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Q. Doth not baptiſm take away original ſin, and regenerate all theſe who partake of it; as Papiſts and others do teach?

A. No; for Simon Magus remained ſtill in his unregenerate ſtate after he was baptized, and the beſt of God's people are troubled with the inherence of original ſin all their lives.

Q. Is baptiſm abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation?

A. No; for the converted thief was ſaved without it. It is not the want, but the contempt of baptiſm, which expoſeth to damnation.

Q. What is the neceſſity then of baptiſm?

A. It is neceſſary by virtue of Chriſt's command, who hath thought fit to appoint it, 1. As a badge of Chriſtianity. 2. As a channel of grace. 3. As a ſign for teaching us our pollution by ſin, and our remedy by Chriſt. 4. As a ſeal for confirming believers right to the bleſſings of his covenant. 5. As a bond for engaging us to his ſervice.

QUEST. XCV.

Q. To whom is baptiſm to be adminiſtred?

A. Baptiſm is not to be adminiſtred to any that are out of the viſible church, till they profeſs their faith in Chriſt, and obedience to him; but the infants of ſuch as are members of the viſible church are to be baptized.

Q. Is baptiſm to be adminiſtred to all perſons whatſoever?

A. No.

Q. To whom is baptiſm to be adminiſtred?

A. Not to Heathens or infidels, nor to thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians, if they be ignorant, or if their lives be vitious and ſcandalous.

Q. Why may not theſe be baptized?

A. Becauſe they are not to be looked upon as members of the viſible church, nor within the covenant, and ſo have no right to the ſeals of it, Eph. ii. 12.

Q. Upon what terms may ſuch perſons be admitted to baptiſm?

A. Only upon ſubmitting to the goſpel, and their profeſſing of repentance, and of their faith in Chriſt, and reſolutions of obedience to him, Acts ii. 38. Mat. iii. 6. Acts viii. 13.

Q. Who are they that properly have a right to baptiſm?

A. Theſe who are members of the viſible church, and their infant-offspring, Acts ii. 39.

Q. What is it you call the viſible church?

A. It is a ſociety made up of all the profeſſors of Chriſt throughout the world, who openly embrace the true religion, together with their children, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Acts ii. 39. Rom. 11. 16. Gen. xvii. 7.

Q. What are the privileges of the viſible church above the reſt of the world?

A. The viſible church is entitled to God's preſerving care in the midſt of dangers and enemies, to the enjoyments of a goſpel-miniſtry and ordinances, and to the communion of ſaints, 1 Tim. iv. 10. Iſa. xxxi. 5. Eph. iv. 11, 12. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Acts ii. 39, 42.

What is it you call the inviſible church?

A. The whole body of true believers, that is, theſe who not only profeſs Chriſt outwardly, but have a real and vital union with Chriſt as their head, whereby their ſouls are inwardly renewed, which God only ſees, and therefore called inviſible.

Q. What are their privileges above others?

A. They have communion with Chriſt both in grace and glory.

Q. Have infants a right to baptiſm?

A. Yes, the infants of theſe who are believers or members of the viſible church have a right to baptiſm, but not others.

Q. How do you inſtruct their right to baptiſm?

A. Becauſe the infants of believing parents are within the covenant, as well as the parents themſelves; ſo God told Abraham in the covenant he made with him, and did thereupon eſtabliſh and declare the right of his infant-ſeed to the initiatory ſeal of the covenant, Gen. xvii. 7, 10. 'I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee in their generations, for an everlaſting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee. And, every man-child among you ſhall be circumciſed.' Now, Abraham's covenant being the covenant of grace, of which Chriſt is the Mediator; and believers now being Abraham's children by faith, and heirs of the ſame covenant with him, which is everlaſting, and its promiſes and privileges the ſame now as of old, tho' its ſeals be changed: Wherefore the infant-ſeed of believers now have the ſame right to baptiſm that Abraham's ſeed of old had to circumciſion, which was the ſame in ſubſtance with it. And this right of ſucceſſion we find expreſly declared by the apoſtle Peter, Acts ii. 38, 39. *Repent and be baptized every one of you. For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children.* And hence the apoſtle Paul calls the children of believers now holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. that is, federally holy, as the Jews were called a holy nation, being by circumciſion inſtated within the covenant, ſolemnly dedicated to the Lord, and made viſible church-members, as our infants are by baptiſm.

Q. How doth it appear that baptiſm is come in the place of circumciſion?

A. It is evident from Col. ii. 11, 12. Beſides, it is plain that both of them repreſent the pollution of our nature and the way of our purification by the ſhedding of Chriſt's blood.

Q. What further warrant have you from ſcripture for infant-baptiſm?

A. 1ſt, Chriſt commanded his apoſtles, Mat. xxviii. 19. to go diſciple and baptize all nations, of which infants are a conſiderable part. There was no need to mention them there expreſly, ſeeing their privilege was ſettled for many ages before by circumciſion: Tho' ſoon after we are told that their right continued as formerly, Acts ii. 38, 39. And indeed it were moſt unreaſonable to think that their condition ſhould be worſe by Chriſt's incarnation than it was before. 2dly, We are aſſured that the privilege of the Gentiles now is as large as that of the Jews was, they being all one in Chriſt, Rom. iii. 29. and x. 12. Gal. iii. 14. 28. 3*dly*, We are told, Rom. xi. that the Jews ſhall be grafted again into their own olive tree, as they were broken off. From which it is eaſy to infer, that their ſeed, which were broken off with them, ſhall be grafted in with them as before. 4*thly*, The ſcripture declares infants to be capable of the divine bleſſings of pardon, of the Spirit, of faith, of grace and of glory; upon which account Chriſt doth kindly invite and take them into his arms. See Iſa. xliv. 3. and lxv. 23. Jer. i. 5 Mat. xviii. 6. Mark x. 14. 16. Luke i. 15. And therefore the ſign and ſeal of theſe bleſſings muſt alſo pertain to them. 5*thly*, We read of the apoſtles baptizing whole houſholds together, and including the infants therein, Acts xvi. 15. 33. 1 Cor. i. 16. And in this they followed the example of the Jews, who circumciſed all the proſelytes that came over to them, and their children alſo. And, after the example of the apoſtles, it is notour the ancient church did baptize the infants of the Chriſtian parents.

Q. Do not we read of the apoſtles teaching, and of preſons profeſſing their faith, before they were baptized?

A. Yes; but theſe were only the adult or aged without the viſible church, who were firſt to be won to the Chriſtian faith before they or their children might be baptized. But infants, who are not capable of being taught, or of profeſſing their faith, are to be deemed as parts of their parents, and to be judged of by them till they come to the uſe of reaſon; ſo that if parents be holy, and among the bleſſed of the Lord, their infant offſpring are to be deemed ſo with them according to Rom. xi. 16. and Iſa. lxv. 23. In the covenant made with Abraham and his ſeed, of which circumciſion was the ſeal, and they all partook, God ſaid not to the infants, but to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1. 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect.'

Q. If children be admitted to baptiſm, why not alſo to the Lord's ſupper?

A. Becauſe it is required of all who partake of the Lord's ſupper to examine themſelves, and to diſcern the Lord's body; which children cannot do, not having the exerciſe of reaſon. And, upon the ſame account, the children of the Jews, who did partake of circumciſion, were not admitted to the paſſover; they not being capable to aſk, or to be inſtructed concerning the meaning of it, according to Exod. xii. 26. The initiatory ſeal is for conveying a right, but the other is for commemorating a benefit, which neceſſarily ſuppoſeth underſtanding.

Q. To whom doth it pertain to preſent the infants of the viſible church to baptiſm, and to act as ſponſors for them?

A. Infants being conſidered as parts of their parents, and having a right to baptiſm as ſuch, it belongs properly to parents to preſent them to God in baptiſm, and in their name to conſent to the covenant of grace; and not to theſe who are called Godfathers or Godmothers. It is only the parents who have the power of their education, and who are accountable to God for them; and, till they be capable to chuſe their own way, the will of the parents only is to be taken for theirs.

Q. Are not Chriſtian parents bound by the ſtrongeſt ties to bring their children to God in baptiſm?

A. Yes; 1*ſt*, Becauſe they have dedicated themſelves and all they have unto the Lord. And, 2*dly*, They being the inſtruments of conveying original ſin to them they are bound in juſtice to repair the injury (ſo far as they can) by bringing them to the fountain of Chriſt's blood for their cleanſing, and to the congregation of God's people for the help of their prayers.

Q. Are all theſe in covenant with God, and entitled to heaven, who get this ſeal of it; particularly theſe children who are born of truly godly parents, that gave them up ſincerely to God in baptiſm ?

A. *1ſt*, If ſuch children die young before they do any thing to diſinherit themſelves, we have ground to believe they are ſaved. *2dly*, Theſe children by their birth and baptiſm are entitled to many external privileges and mercies more than others ; hence baptiſm is reſembled to Noah's ark, by which all Noah's family were ſaved from the temporal deluge as well as himſelf, 1 Pet. iii. 21. *3dly*, Children of godly parents have a ſtronger claim to the bleſſings of the covenant than others, ſeeing they cannot only plead *They are the Lord's* by baptiſmal dedication, but that God is truly *their fathers God*, and they are the ſeed of his people with whom the covenant was eſtabliſhed, and to whom the promiſes were made. But, *4thly*, They ſhould remember, if they do not put in their claim when they come to age, take hold of the covenant for themſelves, and ratify their parents deed, they forfeit their right and claim to the ſaving bleſſings of the covenant.

Q. How ſhould parents be affected and exerciſed when they preſent their infants to God in baptiſm ?

A. They ſhould look back to their own baptiſmal dedication, tranſact with God in ſercet both for themſelves and their infants, and endeavour to make it ſure that they are really in covenant with God, ſince this is of the utmoſt concern both to them and their poſterity; for the promiſe runs, *I'll be your God, and the God of your ſeed.* They ſhould earneſtly pray for grace to enable them to give them good inſtructions and a good example, that they may like Abraham the father of the faithful *command their children and their houſhold after them to keep the ways of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19.

Q. How ſhould children improve their baptiſm when come to age ?

A. 1. Children of godly parents ſhould bleſs God that they are born of ſuch parents, and that their claim to the covenant-bleſſings is ſo much ſtrengthened thereby. 2. They ſhould timeouſly ratify their baptiſmal covenant and their parents deed, by a perſonal tranſaction with God, and giving away themſelves unto the Lord : and this they ſhould do ſolemnly at the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, that ſo they may become Chriſtians by their own conſent, as well as by their parents dedication. 3. They ſhould plead their baptiſm, as God's ſeal and pledge to them of the remiſſion of ſins, thro' the blood of Chriſt, which was then ſacramentally applied to them. 4. They ſhould improve their baptiſm as a ſpur to holy living, a ſhield againſt temptation, and an incitement to couragious owning of Chriſt and his truths, without being aſhamed of him before men.

QUEST. XCVI.

Q. *What is the Lord's ſupper ?*

A. The Lord's ſupper is a ſacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Chriſt's appointment, his death is ſhewed forth ; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their ſpiritual nouriſhment, and growth in grace.

Q. What are the uſual names given to this ordinance ?

A. It is called the Lord's ſupper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. It is called the Lord's table, 1 Cor. x. 21. The communion, 1 Cor. x. 16. Breaking of bread, Acts ii. 42. The cup of bleſſing, 1 Cor. x. 16. Chriſt's Teſtament, Luke xxii. 20. The feaſt, 1 Cor. v. 8. The ancients uſually called it the Euchariſt : and we commonly call it the Sacrament.

Q. Why is it called the LORD's ſupper ?

A. From the time when the LORD JESUS its Author did inſtitute it, which was in the ſame night wherein he was betrayed.

Q. Why did he appoint it at night ?

A. Becauſe the paſſover was to be eaten at night, and ſupper then was the principal meal of the family : And it may teach us that this feaſt is only for the members of Chriſt's family, who dwell with him both day and night.

Q. Are we then neceſſarily bound to celebrate the ſacrament at night, as was done at its firſt inſtitution ?

A. No ; for the reaſon of doing it at night, and in a private family, doth not now ſubſiſt : This was done at firſt only upon the account of the paſſover ſupper that was to be ſo eaten, and in the room of which the Lord's ſupper was to ſucceed : But, in numerous aſſemblies for worſhip, the night would be highly inconvenient for it.

Q. Why did Chriſt appoint the ſupper immediately after the paſſover ?

A. To ſhew that the one was to come in the room of the other, and that they are both the ſame in ſubſtance.

Q. How doth it appear that they are the ſame in ſubſtance ?

A. In regard the Iſraelites kept the lamb four days tied to their bed-poſts before it was ſlain ; that by its conſtant bleatings they might be kept in mind of their ſore bondage in Egypt from which God wonderfully delivered them, and alſo put in mind of the ſorrows and agonies which the Meſſiah was to ſuffer to deliver them from ſin and hell: So, in like manner, the Lord's ſupper is a ſtanding memorial of our ſalvation by the ſufferings and death of Jeſus Chriſt, our glorious deliverer from ſin and wrath.

Q. Why did Chriſt appoint this ordinance the ſame night in which he was betrayed ?

A. 1. That he might give a ſtrong proof of his love to his diſciples, in providing more for their comfort than for his own ſafety, and that at a time when he ſaw heaven, earth and hell coming all in battle aray againſt him. 2. That we might obſerve the charge he gave us about this ordinance, as the words of a dying Jeſus, who was going to do more for us than all the world could do.

Q. Is the Lord's ſupper a ſacrifice, as well as a ſacrament ?

A. No : For tho' the Papiſts have horridly corrupted this ordinance, and turned it to the ſacrifice of the maſs, whereby they diſown the ſufficiency of Chriſt's ſacrifice on the croſs to take away ſin, and are guilty of the vileſt ſurperſtition and idolatry ; yet the Lord's ſupper is no more but a ſacrament, which is of a quite different nature from a ſacrifice : A ſacrament being the commemoration of a benefit received from God ; but a ſacrifice the offering of ſomething propitiatory to God for ſin, which was done at once by Chriſt upon the croſs, and can never be repeated.

Q. In what poſture ought we to receive the ſacrament?

A. In a table poſture, ſuch as is common at meals; which we find Chriſt and his apoſtles uſed, Mat. xxvi. 20, 26. Luke xxii. 14. where it is ſaid, *they ſat down* at the table.

Q. Is it not more decent and reverend to uſe kneeling at this time?

A. We are not to be wiſer than Chriſt, nor to accuſe the apoſtles and primitive church, who uſed ſitting, of indecency or irreverence.

Q. Who then appointed kneeling, and when came it in?

A. It was Pope Honorius the ſecond, in the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Q. Upon what pretence did he appoint kneeling?

A. It was in conſequence of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, which had been decreed not long before by Pope Innocent the third. Then it was judged proper to kneel for worſhipping the ſacramental bread, which they believed to be turned into Chriſt's real body.

Q. Should any Proteſtant ſymbolize with Papiſts and idolaters in their errors and ſuperſtitions?

A. No.

Q. What are the elements or viſible ſigns appointed in the Lord's ſupper?

A. Bread and wine.

Q How are theſe to be diſpoſed of?

A. After conſecration, the bread is to be broken, given, and eaten; and the wine, being poured forth, is to be given, and drunk.

Q. Why are both theſe ſigns appointed?

A. The more to confirm our faith, and to give us the more diſtinct repreſentation of Chriſt's death and ſufferings, and to ſhew us the plentiful redemption and rich ſupplies we have in a crucified Chriſt for our periſhing ſouls.

Q. May we make uſe of wafers inſtead of bread, as the Papiſts do?

A. No; for then we ſhould not have a fit ſign of ſpiritual nouriſhment, nor any breaking of bread according to Chriſt's inſtitution.

Q. What is ſignified by the bread here?

A. Jeſus Chriſt the bread of life, who is given for the life and nouriſhment of our ſouls.

Q. What is ſignified by the wine?

A. Chriſt's precious blood, with all the rich bleſſings and refreſhing comforts proceeding from it to us; ſuch as deliverance from wrath, pardon of ſin, peace with God and conſcience, acceſs to God in duty, ſtrength and increaſe of grace, intimations of God's love, and ſweet views of Immanuel's land.

Q. What is ſignified by the breaking of the bread, and the pouring forth of the wine?

A. All the ſorrows and ſufferings of Chriſt for us, and particularly the breaking and wounding of his body on the croſs, and the ſhedding of his blood for our ſins.

Q. What is ſignified by giving the bread and wine to the communicants?

A. It ſignifies God's giving a whole crucified Chriſt, with all his offices and benefits, to believing partakers.

Q. What is ſignified by communicants receiving the bread and wine?

A. It ſignifies their ſtretching forth faith's hand to receive a whole Chriſt, according to the goſpel offer, and that with cloſe and particular application to their ſouls neceſſities.

Q. Have the people a right to the cup, as well as to the bread?

A. Yes; and none may deprive them of it, ſeeing Chriſt appointed a full feaſt and complete nouriſhment to his people, and ſaid to the firſt communicants, *Drink ye all of it*, Mat. xxvi. 27.

Q. How ſhould we be affected and employed when beholding and receiving the bread broken and wine poured forth?

A. We ſhould contemplate a broken and bleeding Saviour, with broken and contrite hearts, for our ſins, that pierced him: Our hearts ſhould be warmed with love and gratitude to him, that loved us in ſuch a manner, as to give himſelf to be a propitiation for our ſins; We ſhould lodge our ſouls in his wounds as our only refuge from the avenger of blood, and plead Chriſt's blood and merits for all that we want from God.

Q. What is the chief end of this inſtitution, firſt mentioned in the anſwer?

A. It is to ſhew forth Chriſt's death; according to 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, 26.

Q. How are we to ſhew forth Chriſt's death in this ordinance?

A. By recalling it into our minds with admiration, giving thanks to God for ſuch a ſacrifice, and pleading it with him as the only ground of our hope: And alſo by proclaiming before the world the wonderful love of Chriſt in dying for us, and our hope and confidence in the merits thereof; publicly owning ourſelves to be his diſciples, and declaring by this action that we are not aſhamed of the croſs, but do glory in it.

Q. Why will Chriſt have us to ſhew forth his death in this manner?

A. To teſtify our thankfulneſs for it, and that we do believe it to be the only foundation of our ſalvation; and alſo becauſe this commemoration is an excellent means to ſubdue ſin, quicken grace, melt our hearts, and adminiſter comfort to us under all diſcouragements.

Q. Who are theſe meant by the *worthy receivers* mentioned in the anſwer?

A. They are believers, who are fit to receive, and do exerciſe faith and love in the act of receiving: Not that they are worthy in a legal ſenſe of any mercy, but called worthy, becauſe they receive in a ſuitable and becoming manner, both with reſpect to their ſtate and frame; which is worthineſs in a goſpel ſenſe.

Q. May theſe who have weak faith, and many fears, be admitted to join with the worthy receivers?

A. Yes; for weak believers are among Chriſt's friends whom he invites, and are theſe who have a right to the childrens bread: beſides, this ordinance is appointed as a means of our ſpiritual ſtrength and growth in grace.

Q. But, may theſe weak and doubting ſouls keep back till they arrive at comfort and ſtrength?

A. No: for ſtrength and comfort are attained in the way of believing, and uſing the means which God hath appointed for that end; and we have no ground to expect them while we neglect this ordinance, which is one of theſe means.

Q. What advantage do worthy receivers reap by this ordinance?

A. They are made partakers of Chriſt's body and blood with all his benefits.

Q. How are worthy receivers made partakers of Chriſt's body and blood?

A. Not corporally, but ſpiritually.

Q. How do they partake of theſe ſpiritually in the ſacrament?

A. When they get their title ſecured to the benefits or fruits of Chriſt's broken body and ſhed blood, as by ſaſine or infeftment; or when their ſouls do actually ſhare of theſe benefits here in part.

Q. What are theſe benefits or fruits of Chrſt's body and blood which worthy receivers partake of?

A. They are pardon of ſin, deliverance from wrath, the ſubduing of ſin, the ſtrengthening of grace, curing of heart plagues, reſolving of doubts, looſing of bands, ſweet views of God's love, and of eternal glory, and the like.

Q. Are we not made partakers of Chriſt's body and blood in a corrupt and carnal manner in the ſacrament?

A. No.

Q. What is meant by theſe words in the anſwer?

A. That there is no tranſubſtantiation or turning of the bread and wine in the ſacrament, into the very body and blood of Chriſt, as the Papiſts do maintain.

Q. Is not Chriſt really preſent in the ſacrament?

A. Yes, he is ſpiritually preſent by his Spirit and grace, but not preſent in a bodily manner.

Q. Do the elements remain ſtill bread and wine after the conſecration?

A. Yes; for our reaſon and ſenſes do plainly teſtify them to be ſo, and Chriſt and his apoſtles do expreſly call them ſo. The apoſtle Paul, ſpeaking of the bread, doth three times over call it bread after conſecration; and Chriſt calls the cup when diſtributing it, the *fruit of the vine*. See 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. and Mat. xxvi. 29.

Q. What is the meaning then of theſe words of Chriſt, *Take, eat; this is my body broken for you?*

A. The plain and obvious meaning is, That the broken bread doth ſignify and repreſent Chriſt's body as it was to be broken and wounded for us. In like manner, Chriſt ſaid, *This cup is the New Teſtament*; not that he meant the very cup was turned into the New Teſtament, but only that it was a ſign and ſeal of the New Teſtament and its bleſſings.

Q. Muſt not Chriſt's body continue in heaven until the reſurrection of all things at his ſecond coming?

A. Yes; the apoſtle Peter ſaith ſo, Acts iii. 21. Nay, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſaid, *Now I am no more in the world*, John xvii. 11.

Q. Can a true human body be in heaven, and on earth and in many thouſand places of the earth at the ſame time? *A.* No.

Q. Is it conſiſtent with the glorified ſtate of Chriſt's body, to have it ſtill liable to ſufferings and contempt?

A. No.

Q. Would it not be liable to theſe, if tranſubſtantiation was true?

A. Yes; for ſo it might ſtill be pierced, nay, torn in pieces, or burnt: It might be eaten by wicked men, nay, by beaſts, and thrown out to the dunghill; which is abſurd to imagine concerning the glorified body of the Son God.

Q. Seeing ſuch abſurdities would follow, ought not we to underſtand Chriſt's words, *This is my body*, in a figurative ſenſe?

A. Yes, eſpecially ſeeing our Lord frequently uſed this way of ſpeaking to his diſciples, calling himſelf *bread*, a *door*, a *way*, a *vine*, &c. and particularly concerning the ſacraments, ſaying of circumciſion, *This is my covenant*; and of the lamb, It is the *Lord's paſſover*, Gen. xvii. 10. Exod. xii. 11. And we ſee how expreſly the Holy Ghoſt ſaith of believers, 1 Cor. xii. 27. *Ye are the body of Chriſt*. Yet all agree to take theſe words figuratively; and why not alſo Chriſt's words, *This is my body*.

Q. Seeing believers are not partakers of Chriſt's body and blood in the ſacrament in a corporal manner, how is it they do partake of him?

A. They are partakers of Chriſt by faith in the ſacrament, when the fruits and benefits of Chriſt's death are applied by faith unto their ſouls, by which they get ſpiritual nouriſhment and growth in grace, Heb. iii. 14. 1 Cor. x. 16. John vi. 35, 47, 58, 63.

Q. How is faith to be exerciſed in communicating?

A. Many ways; 1. In diſcerning a crucified Chriſt and his benefits under the elements, and looking to him for healing and ſalvation. 2. In fleeing in to the clift of his wounds for protection from wrath. 3. In embracing Chriſt in all his offices, and with all his benefits, as he is offered to us in the giving of the bread and wine. 4. In being firmly perſwaded of the truth of the goſpel revelation, and of the promiſes of ſalvation by the blood and merits of Jeſus Chriſt. 5. In applying the virtue and efficacy of the blood and merits of Chriſt to ourſelves, for ſilencing conſcience, renewing the ſoul, ſubduing of ſin, and for quickening and ſtrengthening of grace. 6. In pleading this blood with God for pardon and acceptance, for ſanctification and glorification. 7. In yielding up ourſelves both ſoul and body to Jeſus Chriſt, to be taught by his Spirit, governed by his laws, and ſaved by his blood.

Q. Do believers get ſpiritual nouriſhment and growth in grace by exerciſing faith in partaking in the foreſaid manner? A. Yes.

Q. How may we know if we receive ſpiritual nouriſhment and growth in grace in and by the ſacrament?

A. We may know it by theſe marks; 1. If we have a better taſte and reliſh of ſpiritual things than we had before. 2. If we draw virtue from Chriſt's death for crucifying of ſin, which hinders our ſtrength and growth. 3. If we be more rooted and eſtabliſhed in grace, confirmed in our faith, and increaſed in humility and ſpiritual-mindedneſs. 4. If we abound more in prayer, and in the fruits of holineſs, and in the duties which we owe both to God and man.

QUEST. XCVII.

Q *What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's ſupper?*

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's ſupper, that they examine themſelves of their knowledge to diſcern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love and new obedience; leſt, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themſelves.

Q. Can unbelievers, while remaining ſo, be worthy partakers?

A. No: for they, not being in covenant with God thro' Chriſt, have no right to this confirming ſeal of the covenant.

Q. Is this an ordinance appointed for converſion?

A. No?

Q. Is it not dangerous to come to it unworthily?

A. Yes.

Q. How ſhall we prevent that danger?

A. By ſeeking after both habitual and actual prepa ration for it, that is, by labouring both to be in a ſtate of grace, and to have grace drawn forth into exerciſe.

Q. How ſhall we attain to this preparation ?

A. By examining ourſelves, 1 Cor. xi. 28.

Q. What is it for a man to examine himſelf in this caſe ?

A. It is for a man to retire from the world, and to poſe his own heart with certain queſtions concerning his qualifications for the Lord's table, and to urge his heart to make plain anſwers.

Q. What are the things we ſhould examine ourſelves about in order to our partaking of the Lord's ſupper ?

A. The anſwer mentions five ſpecial things which we are to examine ourſelves about, namely our knowledge, faith, repentance, love, and new obedience.

Q. For what end muſt we have knowledge ?

A. That we may be able to diſcern the Lord's body in the ſacrament.

Q. What is it to diſcern the Lord's body in the ſacrament ?

A. It is to diſtinguiſh rightly between the outward ſigns and the ſpiritual things ſignified ; and to have a due uptaking of the value and excellency of the body and blood of Chriſt, and the bleſſings thereby purchaſed ; and alſo to diſcern the greatneſs of our Lord's ſufferings, ſo as to be duly affected with his love manifeſted therein, and grieved for our ſins that were the procuring cauſe of them.

Q. What are we to examine about our knowledge ?

A. Two things ; 1. If it be competent in its meaſure. 2. If it be ſaving in its quality.

Q. What is that competent meaſure of knowledge needful for worthy partaking ?

A. We muſt have the knowledge, 1. Of God in the unity of his eſſence and trinity of perſons. 2. Of man in his eſtate both before and ſince his fall. 3. Of Chriſt the Mediator in his two natures and three offices. 4. Of the covenant of grace, and of the way of our juſtification by faith in the Surety's righteouſneſs. 5. Of the ſeals of this covenant, and particularly of the holy ſupper, and the deſign of it.

Q. How may we diſcern if our knowledge be ſaving in its quality ?

A. We may reckon it is ſo, 1. If it be humbling, and cauſe us to mourn for ſin, Zech. xii. 10. 2. If it take us off from ſelf, and lead to Chriſt and his righteouſneſs as the only ground of our hope, Phil. iii. 8, 9. 3. If it influence both heart and life, and make us breathe after conformity to Chriſt our Head, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Q. What is the uſe of faith in the Lord's ſupper ?

A. To feed upon a crucified Chriſt, or to apply the fruits and benefits of his death unto our ſouls. See more of its uſefulneſs before, page 368.

Q. What is implied in faith's feeding on Chriſt in the ſacrament ?

A. It imports the ſoul's hungering and thirſting after Chriſt, and embracing of him by faith : Alſo it imports the ſoul's union with Chriſt, and partaking of the benefits of his death ; its having great ſatisfaction in him, and deriving life, ſtrength and growth from him.

Q. How may we know if our faith be true and ſaving ?

A. We may judge it ſo, if it ſoften and purify the heart, if it make Chriſt precious to us, if it work by love, if it carry us above the world, and make us fruitful in good works.

Q. What is the uſe of repentance in partaking of the Lord's ſupper ?

A. That in renewing covenant with God, we may be ſorry for former breaches and backſlidings : That, in looking upon a bleeding Saviour, we may mourn for our ſins, which brought all theſe ſufferings upon him : That we may receive a broken Chriſt into broken hearts, and firmly reſolve in his ſtrength, that we will not pierce him any more.

Q. How may we know if our repentance be true ?

A. It is ſo, if our ſenſe of ſin drive us to Chriſt the only remedy ; if our grief for ſin be univerſal, for the corruption of nature, as well as the outbreakings of our life ; if we ſincerly deſire deliverance from all ſin and corruption, ſtudy univerſal holineſs, endeavour to avoid all known ſins, and to perform all known duties both to God and our neighbour.

Q. Why is love ſo needful at the Lord's table ?

A. Becauſe it is a love feaſt, wherein we have the greateſt diſcovery of God's love to ſinners ever was given, which requires ſuitable returns of love from us, namely, love to God and Chriſt, and to his people, and to our very enemies.

Q. How may we know if our love to God and Jeſus Chriſt be true ?

A. We may judge it ſo, if we love God above all things ; if we keep his commands, if we be afraid to offend him, if we be tender of his honour, if we rejoice in the ſucceſs of his goſpel, if we mourn under his abſence, long for his preſence, and deſire to be like him.

Q. Is not every worthy communicant reſolved in Chriſt's ſtrength to perform new obedience, by forſaking all ſin, and following the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth ? A. Yes.

Q. Is not ſelf-examination with reſpect to all theſe things very uſeful before partaking ?

A. Yes ; for it ſerves to diſcover how it is with us, to humble us for defects, and to excite us to go to the fulneſs that is in Chriſt for the ſupply of all our wants.

Q. Is it not moſt dangerous to neglect ſelf-examination before communicating ?

A. Yes ; for the anſwer ſaith, all muſt examine themſelves, leſt coming unworthily they eat and drink judgment to themſelves.

Q. Is not ſelf-examination to be joined with earneſt prayer ? *A.* Yes.

Q. What ſhould we pray for before we come to the Lord's table ?

A. That God would prepare our ſouls for ſo near an approach to God ; that he would quicken all the ſacramental graces, and bring them to a lively exerciſe in us ; and that he would ſave us from coming unworthily to his holy table.

Q. Who are theſe that come unworthily to the Lord's table ?

A. Theſe who are ignorant or graceleſs, and they who live in any known ſin, or come without reconciliation to God and their neighbour : Alſo they who neglect to prepare themſelves by ſelf-examination, and prayer for exciting of grace before they come.

Q. What is the ſin of theſe who come unworthily ?

A. They are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, being acceſſory to the Jews ſin who crucified him, by their harbouring the murderer ſin, 1 Cor. xi. 27.

Q. What is the danger of theſe who come unworthily?

A. They eat and drink judgment to themſelves, 1 Cor. ix. 29, 30.

Q. What judgments were inflicted on the unworthy communicants at Corinth?

A. Sickneſs and death, 1 Cor. xi. 30.

Q. Is this ſin pardonable upon repentance?

A. Yes; the blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſin.

Q. May theſe who want aſſurance come to the Lord's table?

A. Yes, if they have a ſenſe of their need of Chriſt, and earneſt deſires to be found in him; for this ſacrament is a means for ſtrengthening weak grace, and obtaining the evidences of God's love to doubting ſouls.

Q. What ſhall theſe do, who after all their endeavours cannot get their hearts brought to any ſuitable frame for approaching to God in this ordinance?

A. They ought to bewail their caſe before the Lord, and yet in obedience to his command they ſhould come to put honour upon their dying Saviour, who has appointed this ordinance as a means for bringing ſuch exerciſed ſouls into a right frame. It is our beſt courſe, even in our worſt caſes, to lay ourſelves in God's road, who has promiſed to meet ſuch as remember him in his ways, and doth many times ſurprize his people with ſupplies of life, when he ſees them ſtruggling with their deadneſs in the uſe of appointed means.

QUEST. XCVIII.

Q. *What is Prayer?*

A. Prayer is an offering up of our deſires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Chriſt, with confeſſion of our ſins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies.

Q. What are the parts of prayer mentioned in this anſwer?

A. They are three; petition, confeſſion, and thankſgiving.

Q. What are our petitions to God called in the anſwer?

A. They are called an offering up of our deſires to God.

Q. Doth God account the offering up of the words of the mouth, as petitions or prayers to him?

A. No, without the deſires of the heart: Tho' he will accept of the deſires of the heart, if ſincere, without the words of the mouth, as in the caſe of Moſes and Hannah, Exod. xiv. 15. 1 Sam. i. 13.

Q. Are we not to make uſe of our voice and words in uttering our deſires to God?

A. Yes, when the circumſtances of the time and place allow it; for theſe are proper and needful to prevent wandering, to increaſe fervency, and to glorify God with the outward man, Pſal. v. 3. & lv. 17. & lxix. 3.

Q. If ſome, as they alledge, cannot pray in ſuch proper words as others, may they omit prayer?

A. No: For God looks chiefly to the heart, and its deſires; and he accepts them when ſincere, tho' the words be not ſo proper or exact. Hence the Pſalmiſt encouraged himſelf in his diſtreſs, Pſal. xxxviii. 9. 'Lord, all my deſire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.'

Q. To whom are we to offer up our deſires in prayer?

A. To God only, Pſal. l. 15. & lxii. 8. Mat. iv. 10. & vi. 9.

Q. May we pray to any of the Three Perſons of the Godhead?

A. Yes; for in ſcripture we find prayer directed, ſometimes to the Father, John xvi. 23. Eph. iii. 14. ſometimes to the Son, Mat. viii. 2. Acts vii. 59. 1 Cor. i. 2. ſometimes to the Holy Ghoſt, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Yet ſo as, when any one of the three is named, the other two are underſtood as included, they being all three but one and the ſame God.

Q. Why muſt we pray to God only?

A. Becauſe ſo we are commanded, and it is God only that ſearches our hearts, that knows our caſes, and can help us in ſtraits, Mat. iv. 30. Pſal. xxxiv, 15, 17. 2 Kings vi. 26, 27. And hence he ſtiles himſelf, The God hearing prayers, Pſal. lxv. 2.

Q. May we not pray to ſaints or angels, or to the virgin Mary?

A. No: For in all the ſcripture there is neither command, promiſe nor example for it; nay, we are forbidden to do it, for it is idolatry. The ſaints know not our caſes, and they are curſed who truſt in man. See Mat. iv. 10. Iſa. xlii. 8. Exod. xx. 3. Gal. ii. 18. Rev. xix. 10. Iſa. lxiii. 16. Jer. xvii. 5.

Q. May we not pray to the ſaints in heaven, as well as apply to the ſaints on earth to pray to us?

A. We do not pray to ſaints here with religious honour, but only aſk their charitable aſſiſtance while we have acceſs to converſe with them here below, which we are warranted to do, 2 Theſſ. iii. 1. James v. 14, 16. But the ſaints in heaven are *ignorant of us*, Iſa. lxiii. 16.

Q. Can we in prayer make known to God that which he knew not before?

A. No; for he underſtands our thoughts affar off, Pſal. cxxxix. 2, 4. But yet he thinks fit to enjoin us thus to make known our requeſts to him, as the means by which we are to receive the good things promiſed, Phil. iv. 6 Pſal. l. 15. Joel ii. 32. Rom. x. 12.

Q. Can prayer merit any thing from God?

A. No; for in prayer we come, as needy beggars, to aſk mercy only by mere favour.

Q. If God hath decreed to give us what we need, what need we pray for it?

A Becauſe God hath commanded us, and he hath decreed to beſtow bleſſings in the way of prayer.

Q. Is not prayer our privilege as well as our duty?

A. Yes; and a great privilege it is, for ſuch poor beggars to be admitted in a familiar manner to open our caſes to ſo great a King, in whoſe preſence the angels cover their faces.

Q. For what things may we offer up our deſires to God?

A. Not for things unlawful, but for things which are agreeable to God's will, 1 John v. 14.

Q. What do you mean by the will of God, which is to be the rule of our prayers?

A. Not his ſecret will which is unknown to us, but his revealed will which is contained in his word.

Q. What are theſe things agreeable to God's revealed will, which we are to pray for?

A. They are good things both ſpiritual and temporal that we ſtand in need of, and which he hath promiſed to us in his covenant.

Q. What are theſe ſpiritual things which we ſhould pray for ?

A. They are ſuch as an intereſt in Chriſt, pardon of ſin, ſupplies of grace, deliverance from ſin and wrath, and eternal life.

Q. May we pray for the good things of this life ?

A. Yes, but not principally or in the firſt place.

Q. What things are we to ſeek in the firſt place ?

A. Spiritual things, particularly Jeſus Chriſt and his grace.

Q. Ought not ſpiritual things and temporal things be aſked in a different way ?

A. Yes; for the one we are to pray abſolutely, and for the other conditionally and with ſubmiſſion to God's will.

Q. What is the condition upon which we are to pray for temporal good things ?

A. It is upon condition that God ſee it fit for his own glory and our good to grant them to us, 2 Sam. x. 12. and xv. 15, 26, Mat. viii. 2.

Q. Ought we to ſeek for temporal mercies with the ſame fervency as for ſpiritual ? A. No.

Q. Should we pray for all ſorts of ſpiritual mercies in the ſame way ?

A. No; for we ſhould pray abſolutely for theſe that are abſolutely neceſſary for us, ſuch as Chriſt, faith, remiſſion of ſin, perſeverance, &c. But for things which are not abſolutely needful to ſalvation, ſuch as the higheſt degrees of grace, ſpiritual gifts and comforts, deliverance from temptations, &c. theſe we ſhould pray for conditionally, and with ſubmiſſion to the will of God.

Q. Why may we pray abſolutely for God and his grace ?

A. Becauſe they are abſolutely promiſed, and we are ſure they are for God's glory and our real good, ſeeing without them we cannot ſerve God here, nor enjoy him hereafter.

Q. Ought we to pray for all ſorts of perſons ?

A. Yes; as for kings, for magiſtrates and miniſters, for all ſaints, for the afflicted, for the unconverted, for our relations and friends, and even for our enemies, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. Eph. iv. 18, 19. Mat. v. 44. Pſal. lxxii. 19. and lxvi. 2, 3, 4.

Q. Are not there ſome perſons excepted, for whom we muſt not pray ?

A. Yes; we may not pray for them that have committed the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, nor for the dead, nor for the damned in hell, 1 John v. 16.

Q. What if we ſhould aſk any thing diſagreeable to the will of God ?

A. In that caſe, we muſt not expect to receive it, James iv. 3.

Q. Is it enough that the matter of our prayer be right, to wit, that they be for things agreeable to God's will ?

A. No; for the manner of our prayers muſt be ſo too.

Q. May we go to God without a Mediator ?

A. No; for we are guilty and obnoxious to his juſtice, and ſo can no more approach to God, than ſtubble to a conſuming fire.

Q. Who is the Mediator between God and man ?

A. The man Chriſt Jeſus, and beſide him there is none elſe, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Q. In whoſe name muſt we offer up our deſires to God ?

A. Only in the name of Chriſt this one Mediator, John xiv. 13, 14, and xvi. 23.

Q. What do you mean by praying in the name of Chriſt ? Is it only to uſe his name in our prayers ?

A. There is more in it; for it imports our pleading the merits of Chriſt the purchaſer for every thing we want, and depending thereupon as the only ground of our acceptance and audience with God, Eph. iii. 12.

Q. Is Chriſt that angel mentioned, Rev. vii. 3, 4, with the golden cenſer, that offers up our prayers before the throne of God ? A. Yes.

Q. What is that incenſe he is ſaid to mix with the prayers of the ſaints ?

A. It is the merits of his obedience and ſufferings, or his perfect righteouſneſs.

Q. What need is there for mixing this incenſe with our prayers ?

A. To perfume them, and take away the ill ſavour of the imperfections and defilements which cleave to our beſt duties.

Q. May we not in prayer make uſe of the names of ſaints or angels as our interceſſors with God ?

A. No; for this would be highly injurious to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the alone interceſſor and advocate with the Father for us, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1.

Q. Beſides praying in Chriſt's name, is there any thing more required in the manner of our prayers that they be acceptable to God ?

A. Yes; they muſt be offered up with humility, ſincerity, faith, fervency and perſeverance, Pſal. x. 17. Jer. xxix. 13. Heb. x. 22. James i. 6. James v. 16. Luke xviii. 1.

Q. When we are bid *pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. muſt we do no other work but pray ?

A. The meaning is, that we ſhould continue in prayer without wearying, keep up ſtated times, and embrace all other proper occaſions for prayer, and ſtudy to keep the heart always in a praying frame.

Q. Muſt we omit prayer when we do not find our hearts in a good frame for it ?

A. No; we muſt go and make our complaint to God who can help us, and not ceaſe praying till we find ourſelves in a better frame.

Q. If the deſired mercy do not ſoon come, may we then give over ?

A. No; we muſt continue inſtant in prayer, and not faint, Rom. xii. 12. Luke xviii. 1.

Q. Can we of ourſelves pray in this acceptable manner to God ?

A. No; and therefore we muſt have the Spirit of God to help our infirmities, Rom. viii. 26, 27. and hence he is called the *Spirit of ſupplication*, Zech. xii. 10.

Q. How doth the Spirit of God help us in prayer ?

A. He both raiſes ſuitable affections in us for prayer, and directs us to ſuitable matter and arguments in prayer, becauſe we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, Rom. viii. 26.

Q. Is it not thus that the Spirit makes interceſſion in us ?

A. Yes.

Q. Are all prayers, offered up to God, accepted and anſwered ?

A. No; for the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8.

Q. How cometh it that the prayers of many are not regarded?

A. Becauſe they regard iniquity in their hearts, ſuch as unbelief, pride, covetouſneſs, malice, or unmercifulneſs to the poor; for each of which God threatens to ſhut out our prayers, Pſal. lxvi. 18. James i. 7. Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. Iſa. lvii. 17. Mat. v. 24. and vi. 15. Prov. xxi. 13.

Q. Doth not God ſometimes delay long to hear the prayers of his own people?

A. Yes; he doth ſo, to chaſten and humble them for their ſins, to try their faith and patience, to quicken them to more fervency in prayer, and make mercies more ſweet to them when obtained, Iſa. lix. 2. Mat. xv. 26, 28. Iſa. lxiv. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

Q. How may we know that our prayers are accepted of God, when yet we receive no anſwer to them?

A. It is a good ſign of acceptance, when we are helped ſtill to wait upon God in the way of duty, or get our hearts enlarged in prayer; or when we are inclined to juſtify God and blame ourſelves for the cauſe of his ſilence, Iſa. viii. 17. Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. Lam. iii. 39, 40, 41.

Q. Doth not God ſometimes anſwer his peoples prayers, though the very things aſked be not given?

A. Yes, when he grants them the equivalent, or things more neceſſary for them; as when he gives ſpiritual bleſſings inſtead of temporal, ſtronger adherence to Chriſt inſtead of aſſurance, or greater humility and meltings of heart for ſin, inſtead of conſolation and joy.

Q. What is the ſecond part of prayer mentioned in the anſwer? A. Confeſſion of our ſins.

Q. Ought not our petitions for pardon and mercy to be attended with humble confeſſion of ſin?

A. Yes, if we would have them acceptable and ſucceſsful, Luke xviii. 13. 14.

Q. What ſins ſhould we confeſs unto the Lord?

A. All our ſins, both original and actual, of omiſſion and commiſſion, in heart and life, in words and actions; with the ſeveral aggravations of them, and their deſervings at God's hand.

Q. In what manner ought we to confeſs our ſins to the Lord?

A. We ſhould confeſs our ſins humbly, freely, fully, and in a moſt penitent manner, with grief for them, hatred of them, and ſtrong reſolutions againſt them in the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. Muſt we not forſake our ſins, as well as confeſs them?

A. Yes; for it is only theſe who do ſo, that ſhall find mercy, according to Prov. xxviii. 13.

Q. What is the third part of prayer mentioned in the anſwer?

A. Thankful acknowledgment of God's mercies to us.

Q. Is thankſgiving to be always joined with our petitions and ſupplications to God?

A. Yes; for God requires and expects it, and it is moſt pleaſing unto him, Phil. iv. 6. Luke xvii. 17. Pſal. lxix. 31.

Q. What are the mercies we ought to acknowledge and give thanks for?

A. All the ſpiritual and temporal mercies which we preſently enjoy; and the eternal mercies which we hope for, and have promiſed unto us.

Q. Which is the greateſt mercy that we have to acknowledge?

A. Jeſus Chriſt is the mercy of mercies, and the unſpeakable gift of God to a periſhing world, for which we ſhould offer thanks to God, both now, and thro' all eternity, Luke i. 72. 2 Cor. ix. 15.

Q. Is not this thankfulneſs for mercies, a ſpecial way of glorifying God?

A. Yes; for God hath ſaid, 'Whoſo offereth praiſe, glorifieth me,' Pſal. l. 23.

Q. How ſhould we acknowledge our mercies, ſo as to glorify God?

A. We ſhould acknowledge them thankfully and with admiration, affectionately and with delight in the Author, humbly and with ſelf abhorrence, obediently and with fruitful lives, fiducially and with encouragement to aſk for more, Pſal. ciii. 1. 2. &c. Pſal. cxvi. 1. 2. 9. 12. Gen. xxxii. 10. 11. Pſal. iv. 1. 3. 2 Cor. i. 10. Pſal. lxvii. 5. 6.

Q. Ought we not to bewail it, that we are ſo negligent and backward in this duty of thankfulneſs for mercies received? A. Yes.

QUEST. XCIX.

Q. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole word of God is of uſe to direct us in prayer, but the ſpecial rule of direction is that form of prayer which Chriſt taught his diſciples commonly called, *The Lord's prayer.*

Q. Why do men need rules and directions in prayer?

A. Becauſe of ourſelves we know not what to pray for as we ought, nor how to pray for it aright when we know it; but are ready to miſtake either as to the matter or manner of our prayers.

Q. When do men miſtake in the matter of prayer?

A. When they aſk things not good in themſelves, or not proper for them; ſo the diſciples did miſtake, when they would have called for fire againſt the Samaritans, Luke ix. 54.

Q. When do men miſtake in the manner of prayer?

A. When they pray for mercies in a formed way, or for carnal ends, as to make proviſion for their luſts, Iſa. lxiv. 7. James iv. 3.

Q. What helps hath God furniſhed us with for prayer?

A. He hath given us both a general and ſpecial directory for it.

Q. What is the general directory which God hath given us for prayer?

A. The whole word of God, which is of great uſe to direct us both as the matter and manner of prayer.

Q. How is the word of God uſeful to direct us in the matter of prayer?

A. The word doth furniſh us with matter for preface, for confeſſion, for petition, and for thankſgiving in prayer.

Q. What matter doth the word furniſh us with for the preface of prayer?

A. It affords us the moſt noble and lofty deſcriptions of God, with his title and attributes, which are proper in our addreſſes to him; ſuch as theſe in Exod. xv. 11. and xxxiv. 6. 7. Neh. ix. 6. Job ix. 4. and xi. 7. and 40. 9. Pſal. lxxxiii. 18. and lxxxvi. 8. 10. and xix. 6. 8. and xc. 2. and cii. 25. 26. 27. and civ. 1. 2. 24. and cxxxix. 7. 8. 9. 10, and cxlv. 3. 8. 9. 14. 17. Iſa. xxviii. 29. and xl. 12. 15. 17. 22. 28. and lv. 9. Jer. 17. 10. and xxxi. 35. Mal. iii. 6. Dan. ii. 34. 35. 1 Tim. i. 17. Rev. iv. 6. 11.

Q. What matter doth God's word furniſh us with for the confeſſion of ſin ?

A. It doth ſet before us many examples of religious perſons, humbling themſelves before God for their ſins, and confeſſing their original ſin and corruption, the blindneſs of their minds, the ſtubborneſs of their wills, the carnality of their affections, their ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion, and the manifold aggravations of their ſins; as in Ezra ix. 6, 13. 15. Neh. ix. 32. 33. 34. *&c.* Job vii. 20. and ix. 3. 20. and xv. 14. 15 *&c.* and xl. 4. and xlii. 5, 6, Pſal. xiv. 3. and xix. 12, and xxxviii. 4, 18. and xl. 12, and li. 3, 4. 5, *&c.* and lxxiii. 22. Pſal. cxix. *ult.* and cxxx. 3, 4, *&c.* Iſa. i. 6, and vi. 5, Jer. v. 3, and ix. 1. and xvii. 9, and xxxi. 18, Lam. iii. 39, 40, *&c.* Dan. iv. 5, 6, *&c.* Luke xv. 18, 19, 21. Rom. vii. 14, 15, *&c.* and viii. 7, Eph. xxi. 2, 3, *&c.* and iv. 18.

Q. What matter doth the word afford us for thankſgiving ?

A. It doth ſet before us the examples of God's people, who bleſſed and praiſed him for his goodneſs to them in creation and providence, in allowing them the comforts of life, peace, and tranquillity, ſucceſs in their callings, ſanctified afflictions, recovery from ſickneſs, the accompliſhment of promiſes, and eſpecially for Jeſus Chriſt, and all manner of ſpiritual bleſſings in him, Pſal. viii. 3. 4. and lxv. 9 10. and cxxxix. 14. and civ. 27. 28. *&c.* and iii. 5. and lxviii. 19. Deut. viii. 10. Gen. xxxii. 10. Iſa. xxxviii. 10. 17. Pſal. 119. 67. 1 Kings viii. 58. Luke i. 68, 69. *&c.* Eph. i. 3, 2 Cor. ix. 15, Iſa. lxiii. 7, Pſal. ciii, 1, 2, 3, *&c.* Rev. i, 5, 6, 1 John iv, 10.

Q. What matter doth the word afford for petitions and requeſts ?

A. The ſcriptures abound with many excellent precepts and precious promiſes, every one of which we may turn into prayers of requeſts, begging of God that he would give us grace to obey the precepts, and grace to enable us to plead and wait for the accompliſhment of the promiſes. Beſides, we have recorded many examples of ſaints petitioning for pardon of ſin, reconcilation with God, the divine bleſſing, the evidences of God's love, and peace of conſcience; for renovation of heart, ſaving illumination, holy fear, faith, and increaſe of all grace ; for preſervation from ſin and error, wiſdom to improve time, and prepare for death ; as in Pſal. li, 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, and cxliii. 2, Hoſ. xiv, 2, Luke xviii. 13, Jer xvii, 14, Pſal. lxvii, 1, 6, and cvi, 4, 5, and xxxv, 3, Pſal. li, 8, 10, 11, 12, Rom. xv, 13, Pſal. cxix, 10, 29, 33, 37, 80, 132, 133, Job 34, 32, 1 Theſſ. v, 23, 24, Pſal. xxvii, 11, and lxxxvi, 11, Luke xvii, 5, Pſal, xix, 12, 13, and xxxix, 4, 5, and xc, 12. All which may be uſeful to direct us in prayer.

Q. Do not we find the ſcripture ſaints making uſe of arguments with God in prayer for obtaining their requeſts ?

A. Yes, very many, taken from the mercy of God's nature, the glory of his name, his promiſes, faithfulneſs, power, and from the merit and righteouſneſs of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, Pſal. lxxxvi, 5, 15, and lxxix, 8, 9, Joſhua vii, 9, Numb. xiv, 17, 18, 19, Pſal. cxix, 49, and lxxiv, 20, Neh. i, 5, Mat. viii, 2, Iſa. lxiv. 6, Jer. xxiii, 6, Dan. ix, 17, 18, 19.

Q. If the word doth ſhew us the matter of prayer ſo fully, then what need have we of the Spirit of grace and ſupplication, which God promiſeth to pour out upon his people ?

A. It is the Spirit's office to take of the things of Chriſt and ſhew them unto us, John xvi, 15. He teaches us all things, and brings all things to our remembrance, John xiv, 16.

Q. Doth the ſcripture give us direction alſo as to the manner of prayer ?

A. Yes; it directs us to draw near to God with ſincerity, humility, fervency, conſtancy, and faith in the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, Heb. x, 22, Pſal. x, 17, James 5, 16, and i, 6, John xvi, 23, Luke xviii, 1.

Q. What is the ſpecial rule of direction in prayer, mentioned in the anſwer ?

A. That form of prayer which Chriſt taught his diſciples, commonly called the Lord's prayer. This we have recorded in Mat. vi. 9. to 14. *After this manner therefore pray ye; Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name*, &c.

Q. Why is that prayer called the Lord's prayer ? Is it becauſe he uſed it himſelf ?

A. No, the Lord Jeſus could not uſe it, for he had no ſin to ſeek forgiveneſs of, as in the fifth petition; but it is called his prayer, becauſe he taught it to his diſciples, that they might make uſe of it.

Q. What was Chriſt's deſign in teaching them this prayer ?

A. He deſigned to teach his diſciples (who were then but private perſons) ſuitably to their weak infant ſtate, when they had little of the Spirit, and little knowledge of the goſpel myſtery; for he but gradually revealed himſelf to them: and therefore, in the mean time, he gives them a ſhort, plain and eaſy form of the words that might comprehend the heads or chief things they had to aſk of God, and from which they might draw materials for prayer. Likewiſe, taught them by it to aſk for things relating to God's glory before things relating to themſelves, and to prefer ſpiritual mercies before temporal.

Q. Why do you think this prayer was ſo much calculated for the diſciples preſent ſtate ?

A. Becauſe our Lord did not then think fit to direct them to pray in his name, or to make any mention of Chriſt in their prayers: but afterwards, when he was pleaſed plainly to reveal himſelf as the great Prieſt and ſacrifice for loſt ſinners, he did teach them expreſly to pray in his name, John xv, 23. 24.

Q. Was it our Lord's deſign to tye his diſciples to the preciſe words he gave them, and to uſe them always when they prayed ?

A. No; for he gave them this prayer chiefly as a pattern or directory for their aſſiſtance in prayer, ſo that they were left at freedom either to uſe theſe very words, which indeed are ſweet and excellent, or to enlarge upon them in other words ſuitably to their own caſe, or the caſe of others joining with them in prayer.

Q. How do you make it appear that they were left at that freedom ?

A. Becauſe, 1. Chriſt ſaith to his diſciples, Mat. vi, 9. *Pray after this manner.* 2. Matthew and Luke do very much differ, and alter the words in recording this prayer. 4. We have ſeveral prayers of the apoſtles recorded, as in Acts i. 24. and iv. 24. Eph. i. 24, 1 Theſſ. iii, 11, 2 Theſſ. ii, 16, Heb. xiii, 20. and yet in none of them do they uſe the expreſs words of this prayer. 4. The Lord gives directions for prayer in other texts, and preſcribes words as expreſsly as Chriſt doth in Mat. 6. ſuch as we have recorded in Hoſ. xiv. 2, Joel ii, 17. and yet none plead that we are ſtinted to theſe preciſe words, tho' there is the ſame reaſon for doing it in the one place, as in the other.

Q. Is not the Lord's prayer ſtill of excellent uſe unto us?

A. Yes, and we ought to value it highly, and have a ſpecial regard to it, as a pattern of divine contrivance, and a moſt comprehenſive ſummary of the chief things we have to aſk of God, which we ſhould diligently ſtudy both as to matter and method, and from which we ſhould take the materials of our prayers.

Q. Doth Chriſt's giving us this prayer warrant men to compoſe forms of prayer for others, ſo as to reſtrict them to the uſe of them, and cauſe them to read them when they pray?

A. By no means: For tho' forms of prayer may be uſeful to Chriſtians and weak perſons, who cannot pray without ſuch helps; yet to impoſe them upon ſuch as need them not, and to oblige men to read them as terms of communion, is unwarrantable.

Q. Wherefore is this practice unwarrantable?

A. 1ſt, Becauſe we have no ſcripture command nor example for it; we are enjoined to read and ſtudy the ſcriptures, but not to read any Prayer book. If the ſcripture ſaints had any ſuch book, they could not have ſaid, as in Rom. viii. 26. *We know not what to pray for as we ought* without the Spirit's help; for theſe who read ſuch books for prayer, ſeem to be at no loſs what to pray for. 2dly, We have many prayers of the ſcripture and primitive ſaints recorded, which they conceived ſuitable to their preſent circumſtances and neceſſities, without any book or ſet form; nay, theſe antient ſaints were ſo far from reading their prayers from a book, that we are aſſured the uſual poſture was to pray with their eyes either ſhut or elſe lift to heaven. 3dly, The caſes, frames, trials and circumſtances of Chriſtians are ſo various, and alter ſo frequently, that it is impoſſible that ſuch compoſed form can reach them. 4thly, To reſtrict men to ſuch forms, would hinder them from the ſearch of the ſcriptures, and of their own hearts; and ſeeing they muſt uſe the petitions prepared for them, whether they be ſuitable to their conditions or not. 5thly, This practice is injurious to the office of the Holy Spirit, and the deſign of Chriſt's aſcenſion.

Q. Is not the uſing and reading of forms of prayer, of very ancient ſtanding in the church?

A. For as ancient as it is, we are well aſſured there was no ſuch practice in the church for four hundred years after Chriſt: Neither came it in, till the ſpirit of grace had in a great meaſure left the church; and whenever he is poured out again upon the church, theſe forms will be laid aſide.

Q. How is this practice injurious to the Spirit's office and Chriſt's aſcenſion?

A. In regard it is the office of the Holy Spirit to help his peoples infirmities, when they know not what to pray for as they ought; and Chriſt aſcended up on high, that he might ſend the Spirit, and give gifts unto men, of prayer as well as of preaching: But, if reading of prayers take place, theſe gifts are uſeleſs, ſeeing one that can read well may pray as well as theſe who have the greateſt gifts: And hereby a grave is digged for burying the moſt uſeful gifts of God to men: which is an injury to Chriſt and his Spirit, and expreſly contrary to the injunction which he gives unto miniſters, to ſtir up the gift of God that is in them, 2 Tim. i. 6.

Q. What parts doth the Lord's Prayer conſiſt of?

A. Of three parts, namely, a preface, ſix petitions, and the concluſion.

QUEST. C.

Q. *What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?*

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer (which is, *Our Father which art in heaven)* teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a Father able and ready to help us; and that we ſhould pray with and for others.

Q. Why doth Chriſt teach us to begin prayer with a ſolemn preface?

A. To let us know that we muſt not ruſh into God's preſence without conſideration, but muſt ſtudy to have an awful ſenſe of the majeſty of that God whom we are to addreſs.

Q. What is the preface given to the Lord's prayer?

A. It is in theſe words, *Our Father which art in heaven.*

Q. What views doth Chriſt give us of the object of worſhip in this preface?

A. We have a twofold view of God in it; 1. In the near relation he ſtands to his people in theſe words, *Our Father.* 2. In his glorified majeſty, and dwelling place, in theſe words, *which art in heaven.*

Q. How is the word *Father* to be underſtood here?

A. Sometimes *Father* is underſtood *perſonally* for the firſt perſon of the bleſſed Trinity, and to whom prayer is directed; as in Eph. iii, 14. Sometimes *Father* is underſtood *eſſentially* for the Godhead, including all the three perſons as in 1 Chron. xxix, 10. 2 Cor. vi. 18. And in this laſt ſenſe we take it in the Lord's prayer.

Q. In what reſpect is God called our Father?

A. 1ſt, God is called our Father in reſpect of creation, as in Iſa. lxiv. 8. Mal. ii. 10. 2dly, In reſpect of our adoption into the family of God through Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. viii. 14, 15, Gal. iv. 5, 6.

Q. When Chriſt directs us in prayer to call God *our Father*, what doth he teach us thereby?

A. He teacheth us hereby to draw near to God, 1. With holy reverence and fear of God our Creator, 2. With a filial and kindly reſpect to God as our Benefactor and Provider. 3. With humble confidence and expectation of getting what we want from a loving Father. 4. With willingneſs and deſire, as children who delight to ſpeak to their kind father.

Q. Is it not unſpeakable love and goodneſs in God to allow ſuch ſinful worms to call him *our Father*?

A. Yes: and the apoſtle John is aſtoniſhed at it, 1 John iii. 1.

Q. May unregenerate men call God their father?

A. Not in a peculiar manner, or in a goſpel ſenſe; hence Chriſt would not allow the Phariſees to call God their Father, John viii. 42, 44.

Q. Who are theſe then that may warrantably do it?

A. Theſe who receive the ſpirit of adoption into their hearts may cry, *Abba, Father*, Rom. viii. 15.

Q. What is the ſpirit of adoption?

A. It is the Spirit of God that produces the nature and diſpoſitions of children in the ſouls of God's people; which appears in their filial love to God, their fear of offending him, their dependence upon him, their obedience and deſire of conformity to him.

Q. How ſhall theſe cry, *Abba, Father*, who ſee not the evidences of the ſpirit of adoption in them?

A. If they receive the Lord Jeſus by faith, they may call God their Father; for it is by faith in him that ſinners become the children of God, John i. 12. Gal. iii. 26.

Q. What ſhall theſe ſay, who doubt if they have got true faith?

A. If they be weary of their ſins and earneſtly deſirous of reconciliation with God thro' Chriſt, they may go to God with the prodigal, and ſay to him, *Father, I have ſinned*, &c. Luke xv. 18.

Q. Wherein doth God reſemble a father or earthly parent to his people?

A. In regard he pities them, provides bread for them, clothes them, loves to hear them ſpeak, is ready to hear their cries, gives them good inſtructions, and a good example, chaſtiſes them with yearning bowels, provides portions and inheritances for them, Prov. iii. 13, 1 Pet. ii, 2. Iſa. lxi, 10, Prov. xv, 8, Pſal. xxxiv. 15, Mat. v. 48, Jer. xxx, 11, Pſal. xxxi, 19, Luke xii, 32, 1 Pet. i. 4.

Q. Wherein doth God excel all earthly fathers?

A. In regard he is a Father infinitely rich, wiſe and loving, immortal and everlaſting: He gives his children whatever is good for them, and in beſt time; he never gives them what is hurtful to them: He makes all his children heirs, yea, heirs of a kingdom, even the youngeſt of them.

Q. Why is God in this preface ſaid to be in heaven? Is he no where elſe?

A. The meaning is not that God's preſence is included in the heavens; for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, who fills heaven and earth, and is every where preſent, 1 Kings viii. 27. Jer. xxiii. 24. But he is ſaid to be in heaven, becauſe there is his throne and court, where he manifeſts himſelf moſt glorioufly, Pſal. xi. 4. and ciii. 19. Iſa. lxvi. 1.

Q. What doth Chriſt teach us by addreſſing God as our Father in heaven?

A. 1. That though we be allowed to ſpeak freely to God, yet we ſhould know our diſtance, and have exalted thoughts and awful apprehenſions of the divine Majeſty and glory. 2. That God beholds all things, and is able and ready to help us in every caſe. 3. That we ſhould be heavenly-minded and abſtracted from the world in duty; That we ſhould have our eyes on heaven as our country and home, and eſpecially on Jeſus Chriſt our interceſſor there for acceptance and audience in every duty?

Q. What doth the word OUR in this preface teach us?

A. That we ought not only to pray alone for ourſelves, but that we ſhould alſo pray in ſociety with others, and for others; and particularly, that family-prayers is a duty incumbent on theſe who have families, Jer. x. 25.

QUEST. CI.

Q. *What do we pray for in the firſt petition?*

A. In the firſt petition (which is, *Hallowed be thy name*) we pray, That God would enable us and others to glory him in all that whereby he maketh himſelf known, and that he would diſpoſe all things to his own glory.

Q. What is a petition?

A. It is a requeſt or aſking of a thing.

Q. How many petitions are in the Lord's prayer?

A. Six.

Q. How are theſe ſix petitions divided?

A. The three firſt relate chiefly to God's glory, and the three laſt to our good and benefit.

Q. What is the firſt of theſe petitions?

A. Hallowed be thy nane.

Q. Why is this petition put firſt?

A. To ſhew that we are to prefer the hallowing of God's name to all other things whatſoever. This is the firſt and great petition, and will laſt when the other petitions ſhall be out of date in heaven; for to all eternity the ſaints will inſiſt upon the hallowing of God's name.

Q. What is meant here by the Name of God?

A. God himſelf the perſon named; and particularly every thing whereby God makes himſelf known, ſuch as, his titles, attributes, words, &c.

Q. What is it to hallow the name of God?

A. It is to ſanctify, honour or glorify God himſelf, and to do it in theſe things by which he makes himſelf known, Iſa. viii, 13, and xxix, 23, 1 Pet. iii, 15

Q. Why is the word *hallowed* or *ſanctified* made uſe of, rather than glorified?

A. Becauſe God's glory doth ſhine moſt in his holineſs, and God's holineſs doth beautify all his other attributes, Iſa. vi. 3. and xii. 6. Exod. xv. 11.

Q. Is there not a vaſt difference between God's ſanctifying of us, and our ſanctifying of God?

A. Yes; for God's ſanctifying of us, is by infuſing holineſs into us, which we had not before; but our ſanctifying God, is only to manifeſt and acknowledge that holineſs of God, which he eternally had, and will have.

Q. Why is the petition ſet down in the third perſon, *hallowed be thy name*?

A. To include all perſons and things that are capable of doing it; as, 1. Let us who pray be fit, or make us fit, to hallow thy name. 2. Let all our fellow-creatures be fitted and employed to hallow thy name. 3. Becauſe creatures are inſufficient to do it, Lord, let thy name be hallowed by thyſelf, who only canſt do it to purpoſe.

Q. Are we not taught by this petition to acknowledge that we are incapable of ourſelves to do any thing for God's glory?

A. Yes; and therefore Chriſt will have us to aſk grace from God to fit us, and put us in the moſt uſeful circumſtances for the glorifying of his name.

Q. How is it that we by grace may hallow and glorify God's name?

A. By adoring his excellencies; owning our dependence on him; truſting and believing in him; reverencing his name, his word and ordinances; praiſing him, and calling upon him; confeſſing and forſaking our ſins; magnifying God in his works; juſtifying him in his judgments, fruitfulneſs in good works; aſcribing the honour of all we do to him; ſtanding up for his glory; eſpouſing the cauſe of truth and holineſs; ſuffering for them; witneſſing againſt error, ſin and every thing that diſhonours him; and commending the way and ſervice of God to others, both by our lips and lives.

Q. Doth Chriſt alſo teach us in this petition, that it ſhould be our joy and endeavour to have the name of God hallowed and glorified by others, as well as by ourſelves?

A. Yes.

Q. What muſt we pray for, that others in the world may alſo glorify his name?

A. That the nations, and theſe who know not God, may be converted to him; that they may glorify his name, in the ſame manner that we are endeavouring to do it; and that they may come and declare his righteouſneſs to a people that ſhall be born, Pſal. lxvii. 2, 3. and xxii. 27, 31.

Q. Should we not join our endeavours with our prayers in order to engage others to glorify God?

A. Yes, according to our ſtations.

Q. What direction hath Chriſt given to perſons of all ſtations for that end?

A. That in Mat. v. 16. *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Q. Seeing we come ſo far ſhort of our duty in this reſpect, ought we not to pray that God may glorify his own name?

A. Yes, we have Chriſt teaching us this by his own example, John xii. 28. *Father, glorify thy name.* And we have God's promiſe that he will do it, Ezek. xxxviii. 23. and xxxvi. 23.

Q. How is it that God doth glorify his own name?

A. By pouring out his Spirit on the church, and diſpoſing all things in the world to his own glory.

Q. How doth God diſpoſe of the affairs of the world to his own glory?

A. By overruling the occurrences in it, to ſuch events and iſſues as may beſt promote and advance the glory of his name: As when he reſtrains or puniſhes his enemies, and vindicates his name from the reproaches of the wicked; when he relieves his church from oppreſſion, removes her grievances, eſtabliſhes pure worſhip and ordinances, opens a door for reformation, reſtores her judges as at the firſt, and her counſellors as at the beginning, Ezek. xxviii. 24, 25, 26, and xxxvi. 23, 24, 37, 38, and xx. 40, 41, Iſa. i. 26. Pſal. lxxvi. 9, 10.

Q. Doth not Chriſt teach us in this petition to pray againſt every thing whereby God's name is diſhonoured?

A. Yes.

Q. What are theſe evils whereby God's name is diſhonoured?

A. They are many, ſuch as atheiſm, idolatry, unbelief, contempt of God and his worſhip, ſwearing, Sabbath-breaking, uncleanneſs, *&c.*

Q. If any ſuch profane perſons ſay the Lord's prayer, doth not their practice contradict their prayers?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it not a cutting affliction to a gracious ſoul to ſee or hear God's name diſhonoured?

A. Yes, Pſal. xlii. 10.

Q. Will not God pour contempt upon thoſe who diſhonour his name?

A. Yes, their name and memory ſhall rot here, and they ſhall riſe to ſhame and everlaſting contempt hereafter, Prov. x. 7, Dan. xii. 5.

Q. What ſhall be done to theſe who honour and glorify God's name?

A. They ſhall loſe nothing by it, 1 Sam. ii. 3. *Them that honour me, I will honour.*

Q. How will God honour thoſe who honour him?

A. He will put honour upon their perſons, upon their names, their ſouls, and their bodies: He will honour them at death by ſending angels for them, and after death by putting robes of immortality and crowns of righteouſneſs upon them.

QUEST. CII.

Q. What do we pray for in the ſecond petition?

A. In the ſecond petition, (which is, *Thy kingdom come*) we pray, That ſatan's kingdom may be deſtroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourſelves and others brought into it and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be haſtened.

Q. Why doth this petition follow the former?

A. Becauſe we cannot hallow or glorify God's name aright, till his kingdom come into our ſouls.

Q. What is ſignified by the kingdom of God here?

A. Three things; 1ſt, The preaching of the goſpel is called his kingdom, Mat. xiii. 47. 2dly, A work of ſaving grace in mens ſouls is ſo called, Luke xvii. 21. 3dly, The ſtate of glory in heaven is alſo called the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. xv. 50. The two firſt are called the kingdom of grace in the anſwer, and the third is called the kingdom of glory.

Q. Why are theſe called the kingdom of grace?

A. Becauſe it is by the diſpenſation of the goſpel that a work of grace is begun and carried on in the ſouls of the elect.

Q. Who is King in this kingdom?

A. God; but he governs it by Jeſus Chriſt his viceroy, whom he hath ſet to reign in it, and hence called King of Zion, Pſal. ii. 6.

Q. Why is Chriſt's gracious work in his peoples ſoul called a kingdom?

A. Becauſe, wherever grace comes, it ſubdues mutinous luſts rules in the will and affections, and brings the whole man in ſubjection to Chriſt and his righteous ſceptre, 2 Cor. x. 5.

Q. Whether is it the coming of the kingdom of grace or of glory that we pray for in the ſecond petition?

A. We pray for the coming of them both, and that becauſe the laſt is nothing but the perfection of the firſt, and the glory of God is more fully diſplayed in it.

Q. What is meant by the coming or advancement of the kingdom of grace, which we are here taught to pray for?

A. It includes the ſpreading and ſucceſs of the goſpel through the world, and removing of the impediments thereof. Alſo we pray therein, that the churches of Chriſt every-where may have faithful miniſters, pure doctrine, ordinances, and diſcipline, with much of the preſence and power of God's Spirit concurring with the ſame. That the kingdom of God may be ſet up in our ſouls, and in the ſouls of others, and a work of grace may be carried on therein to perfection?

Q. What are theſe impediments of the coming of this kingdom, that we muſt pray God to take out of the way ?

A. There is in general the kingdom of ſatan, which includes the dominion and tyranny of ſin, of Antichriſt, and all the enemies of the church ; the overſpreading of falſe religions ; the prevailing of error, idolatry, ſuperſtition, ſcandals, diviſions, or a corrupt miniſtry in the church : All theſe we muſt pray againſt.

Q. How doth it appear that ſatan hath a kingdom in the world ?

A. In regard ſatan is ſtiled the *God* and *Prince of this world;* and the wicked are his children and ſubjects, in and over whom he rules, 2 Cor. iv. 4. John xiv. 30, and viii. 44, Eph. ii. 2, 2 Tim. ii. 26.

Q. Is ſatan's kingdom very large ?

A. Yes, it is much further ſpread than the kingdom of Chriſt.

Q. How comes ſatan to have ſuch a large kingdom ?

A. By our firſt parents revolting from their rightful ſovereign.

Q Why doth God permit ſatan to rule over the world in ſuch a manner ?

A. God permits it as a righteous act of vengeance againſt man for revolting from the ſweet government of his Lord and Maker ; and alſo to glorify his name, by recovering the elect from ſatan's dominion.

Q. Has ſatan any right to govern the wicked ?

A. No ; he is an uſurper, tho' they are become his willing ſlaves.

Q. Ought we not to pray that ſatan's kingdom may be deſtroyed ?

A. Yes ; For while it ſtands it hinders the coming of Chriſt's kingdom ; and the precious ſouls he rules over, are under a cruel government.

Q. What is the meaning of the word *ſatan* ?

A. It ſignifies an adverſary ; and well he may be called ſo, for he is the adverſary that goes about as a roaring lion ſeeking to devour precious ſouls, 1 Pet. v. 8.

Q. What is meant by our praying to deſtroy ſatan's kingdom ?

A. We mean that Chriſt may bruiſe the old ſerpent's head, and deliver poor ſouls from his tyranny ; That Jews, Turks, Heathens, and wicked men, may be brought to the knowledge and obedience of Chriſt.

Q. How may we know if we be delivered from the kingdom of ſatan, and brought into the kingdom of Chriſt.

A. We may know it by our hearkening to the goſpel-call, by our cloſing with Chriſt in all his offices, by our ſurrendering our hearts to be his throne, our loving his laws and fighting againſt his enemies.

Q. Ought theſe to pray, *Thy kingdom come*, in whoſe ſouls the kingdom of grace is come already ?

A. Yes : For, it being in a weak condition, they muſt ſtill pray that it may come with more power into them ; that ſin may be more weakened, and grace more ſtrengthened and increaſed ; and that they perſevere in grace to the end.

Q. Would not the remarkable coming of the kingdom of grace produce bleſſed effects in the world ?

A. Yes : For then godlineſs would be in eſteem, truth would prevail againſt error, iniquity would ſtop its mouth, Jeruſalem would be a praiſe, her walls would be repaired, her grievances redreſſed, and her branches healed ; Then ſhould her miniſters be clothed with righteouſneſs, and her ſaints ſhout for joy ; Then ſhould ſinners fly together as a cloud, like doves to their windows : Then ſhould the lion ly down with the lamb, the weak ſhould be as David, and David as the angel of God.

Q. What do we pray for in this petition with reſpect to the kingdom of glory ?

A. That it may be haſtened.

Q. What is meant by the kingdom of God ?

A. The glorious ſtate of the church triumphant in heaven, when they ſhall be free from all evil, enjoy all good, and reign with Chriſt for ever.

Q Why is the heavenly ſtate called the kingdom of God ?

A. Becauſe in that ſtate God reigns over his people gloriouſly, there not being any mutinous luſt or rebellious thought to be found among them. And they themſelves ſhall be made kings, and ſhall ſit with Chriſt on his throne and reign with him for ever, Rev. iii. 21, and xxii. 5.

Q Who are theſe that are entitled to that kimgdom of glory ?

A. Theſe who receive Chriſt as their King now, who ſtrive to ſubdue their luſts, who live as pilgrims here, who keep up a correſpondence with that kingdom, and ſtudy to be made meet for it.

Q. Is there not a time fixed for the coming of this kingdom ? How then ſhould we pray to haſten it ?

A. Tho' the time be fixed, yet God makes it our duty to be longing and breathing out our deſires for the coming of it, according to Chriſt's promiſe, Cant. viii. 14, Rev. xxii. 20.

Q. How is this longing diſpoſition of the ſaints expreſſed ?

A. It is called a ‘ Looking for and haſting unto the coming of the day of God,’ 2 Pet. iii. 12.

Q. Why are ſaints of this longing diſpoſition ?

A. Becauſe the new nature inclines them to deſire perfect freedom from ſin, and full communion with God.

QUEST. CIII.

Q. *What do we pray for in the third petition ?*

A. In the third petition (which is, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven)* we pray, That God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey and ſubmit to his will in all things as the angels do in heaven.

Q. Why doth this petition follow upon the former ?

A. To teach us, that the doing of God's will is the way to promote the coming of his kingdom.

Q. What is meant by the will of God here ?

A. Both the will of God's precept and the will of his providence, Mat. vii. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 17.

Q. What is it that we pray for when we aſk that the will of God's precept may be done ?

A. We pray, That we and others may by God's word and Spirit be enlightened to know his will revealed to us, and may by his grace be inclined and enabled to obey it.

Q. Doth not this ſuppoſe that we are naturally blind and ignorant of God's will ?

A. Yes ; and ſo the ſcripture tells us, Eph. iv. 18. and v. 8.

Q. Are we not by nature alſo unwilling to know the will of God ?

A. Yes, Job xxi. 14. " They ſay unto God, depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways, Rom. viii. 7."

Q. What muſt we do, in order to know the will of God ?

A. We muſt ſearch the ſcriptures where it is revealed to us, and pray for the teaching of the Spirit of God, who only can effectually remove our blindneſs and enmity, and give us the ſaving knowledge of God's will, John v. 39. Pſal. cxix. 18, 33, 36.

Q. Is it enough for a man to know God's will in a literal manner ?

A. No; for we muſt likewiſe be inclined and ſtrengthened to obey it. Therefore ſaith our Lord, John xiii. 17. " If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Q. Will not knowledge without doing make a man's caſe the worſe ?

A. Yes, it will make hell the hotter, according to Luke xii. 47.

Q. Are we not naturally prone to rebel againſt God's will and to do the will of the fleſh and of the devil ?

A. Yes, Rom. viii. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 3, Eph. ii. 3. John viii. 44.

Q. Who are theſe that are inclined to do the will of God ?

A. Theſe who have God's law written in their hearts, which God promiſeth to do to all theſe whom he renews by his Spirit, Jer. xxxii, 33.

Q. What is it to write them in their hearts ?

A. It is to make them intimately acquaint with it, to give them a heart love and inward conformity to it, and a ready diſpoſition to obey it.

Q. Is it not the Spirit of God that muſt work in us both to will and to do what he requires in his law ?

A. Yes, Phil. ii, 13, Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

Q. What is it we aſk in this petition, when we pray that the will of God's providence may be done ?

A. It is a gracious diſpoſition of ſoul, whereby a Chriſtian is inclined to acknowledge God's wiſe hand in all he meets with, and to be content to be wholly at God's diſpoſals, without murmuring againſt him, 1 Sam. iii. 18, 2 Sam. xv, 26.

Q. Wherefore may we not murmur againſt affliction ?

A. Becauſe God is righteous in all his ways, and doth puniſh us leſs than our iniquities deſerve ; and, if he take away any of our comforts, he but takes what is his own, Pſal. cxlv, 17, Ezra ix, 13, 1 Chron. xxix, 14.

Q. When is it that a Chriſtian is in great hazard of murmuring ?

A. When he meets with poverty, reproach, the loſs of near relations, or with ſharp bodily pain.

Q. What ſhould quiet us in ſuch caſes ?

A. Serious conſideration, that we have procured all this to ourſelves, that he is a holy God that hath done it, and that he ſees it needful for us.

Q. What are we taught by theſe words in the petition, *On earth ?*

A. That our concern for the glory of God and good of ſouls ſhould be very extenſive ; for we ſhould deſire that all the inhabitants of the earth may be engaged to obey the will of our heavenly Father.

Q. What is meant by theſe words, *As it is in heaven ?*

A. Theſe words ſhew what manner of obedience we ſhould aim at and pray for, that it ſhould be like that of the angels and glorified ſaints in heaven.

Q. Where do we read of the angels doing the will of God ?

A. In Pſal. ciii. 21. " Ye angels that excel in ſtrength that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word."

Q. Where do we read of the glorified ſaints doing the will of God ?

A. In Rev. xxii, 3. " There his ſervants ſhall ſerve him."

Q. What may we infer from ſuch texts ?

A. That it is no diſparagement, but our higheſt honour, to ſerve God on earth ; ſeeing in heaven both angels and ſaints do ſerve him.

Q. Is there not a great difference between their obedience and ours ?

A. Yes ; for they do the will of God in a perfect manner, but we do it imperfectly.

Q. How then can we imitate theſe heavenly inhabitants ?

A. In doing the will of God according to our ſtate and ability, as they do according to theirs.

Q. How is it that angels and ſaints do the will of God in heaven ?

A. They do it preſently, ſincerely, humbly, cheerfully, entirely, diligently, fervently, conſtantly, and unweariedly, and in theſe we ſhould ſtudy thro' grace to imitate them, humbly bewailing ſhort-comings, and earneſtly praying to God in Chriſt's name for more ſtrength.

Q. May not all ſuch upright ſouls firmly hope the time is haſtening when they ſhall obey God like angels ?

A. Yes, according to Luke xx, 36.

Q. Are not the moſt part on earth unmindful of theſe excellent patterns of obedience ?

A. Yes, and particularly they who make the practice of the world the rule of their doings ; and they who delay performing God's will ; alſo, they who do it only by fits, and they who do it negligently.

Q. Is it not a great part of the ſervice of angels and ſaints in heaven to ſing ſongs of praiſe to God ?

A. Yes.

Q. What do they praiſe him for ?

A. They praiſe him for his works of creation and providence, and eſpecially for his work of redemption by Jeſus Chriſt : hence they are ſaid to ſing the ſong of Moſes and the ſong of the Lamb, Rev. xv, 3.

Q. Wherefore are their ſongs in heaven ſo ſtiled ?

A. They are called the ſong of Moſes, becauſe it was Moſes that gave us the account of God's wonderful work of creation, and alſo his wonderful works of providence in preſerving the church and puniſhing her enemies, in the deluge of Egypt and the Red Sea, upon which occaſion we have Moſes's triumphant ſong recorded, Exod. xv. Again, their ſongs may well be called the *ſong of the Lamb*, ſeeing Chriſt the Lamb of God is the ſubject-matter of their ſongs, in regard of his amazing free love in undertaking, carrying on, and finiſhing that glorious work of redemption. And in theſe works of creation, providence and redemption, ſaints and angels will find abundant matter of praiſe to all eternity.

QUEST. CIV.

Q. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition (which is, *Give us this day our daily bread*) we pray, That of God's free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life and enjoy his bleſſing with them.

Q. What is meant by bread here?

A. Food proper for our bodies, a part being taken for the whole; as in John xiii. 8. and other places.

Q. Are we not to pray for other things to our bodies beſides food?

A. Yes; and bread is ſometimes taken in a large ſenſe for all things needful for upholding the body in this life, as in Gen. iii. 19. and ſo it includes habitations, health, ſleep, clothes, medicines, and all other neceſſaries of life, which we are likewiſe to pray for. As alſo for averting of theſe evils which would deſtroy our bodies, or the means of ſupporting them; ſuch as bad ſeaſons, famine, war, violence, burnings, plagues, &c.

Q. Why doth Chriſt mention bread only in this prayer?

A. To teach us, that we have forfeited the good things of this life, and deſerve to be deprived of them all; that the leaſt crumb of bread is God's free gift, which we can nowiſe merit at his hand: And likewiſe teach us, not to aſk delicacies or dainties, but only neceſſaries and to be content with a ſober maintenance, 1 Tim. vi. 8.

Q. Is not the bread we aſk for the Lord's? Why then do we call it *Our bread*, as if we had a right to it?

A. It is called ours, not that we deſerve it from God, for he oweth no man any thing; but becauſe God is pleaſed, of his free gift to man to appoint it for preſervation: And likewiſe to teach us, to ſee what title we have to the bread we eat, that it be our own bread, and not another man's.

Q. Who are they that cannot call the bread they eat their own bread?

A. Such as eat the bread of idleneſs, mentioned in Prov. xxxi. 27. *that is*, bread they do not work for, but live at the coſt of others: likewiſe theſe who eat the bread of violence or deceit, mentioned in Prov. iv. 17. & xx. 17. *that is*, bread got by rapine and injuſtice; theſe cannot be ſaid to eat their own bread.

Q. What is required of us, that the bread we eat may be called ours?

A. 1ſt, We muſt ſee that we have a civil right to it, as having acquired it by honeſt and lawful means, 2 Theſſ. iii. 12. 2dly, We muſt ſee alſo to have a covenant-right to our bread, by being intereſted in Chriſt who is the heir of all things, thro' whoſe purchaſe earthly things are given to believers in a covenant way, Rom. viii. 32. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Iſa. xxxiii. 16.

Q. Can unbelievers ſay before God, as well as believers, *Our bread?*

A. No, for whatever civil right they have to what they poſſeſs, they have nothing by covenant-right: What ever they have by God's providence, or with his love; it is only believers who are rightful heirs and poſſeſſors of the world. So that unbelievers who abound in wealth have cauſe to be deeply humbled before God, and to ſay, Alas! we are but uſurpers of God's good things, we have no good right to them before him, Pſal. xxxvii. 9, 11. Mat. v. 5. 1 Tim. iv, 8.

Q. What is meant by *daily* bread in this petition?

A. Such a portion of outward things as is neceſſary and ſufficient for our ſubſiſtance from one day to another.

Q. Why doth Chriſt direct us to pray for *daily*, and not for *yearly* bread?

A. To teach us theſe things; 1ſt, Not to look for many days, or great things in the world, but to live every day as it were our laſt; hence it is added in the petition, give us *this day*, Prov. xxvii. 1. 2dly, To live in a daily and conſtant dependance upon God, without anxious cares about futurity, Mat. vi. 34. Phil. iv. 6. 3dly, To exerciſe ourſelves daily in prayer, acknowledging God for every mercy, and ſeeking his bleſſing thereupon, Pſalm lv, 17. 1 Theſſ. v, 17.

Q. May we aſk for riches or great things for ourſelves?

A. No; for God forbids us, telling us that they who will be rich fall into many temptations and ſnares, Jer. xvii. 1 Tim. vi, 9.

Q. What if God ſhould think fit to beſtow riches upon us?

A. Then we ſhould receive them out of God's hand with thankfulneſs, begging for grace to uſe them for his glory, and to preſerve us from the ſnares and temptations which uſually attend them, Gen. xxxii. 10.

Q. What are theſe temptations?

A. When riches increaſe, men are tempted to ſet their hearts upon them, to truſt in them, to be proud, to forget God, and to oppreſs others, Pſal. lxii. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17. Deut. viii. 13, 14. James ii. 6.

Q. Is not poverty attended alſo with temptations?

A. Yes.

Q. What are theſe temptations?

A The poor are tempted to diſcontentment with their lot, and to uſe unlawful ſhifts to better it, Prov. xxx. 9.

Q. What condition then is freeſt from temptations, and to be moſt deſired?

A. A middle condition, with a competent portion of the good things of this life: Upon which account Agur made it his prayer to God, Prov. xxx. 8. 'Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me.'

Q. What is to be underſtood by a competent portion?

A. Such a portion as our needs and circumſtances do require, and which God ſees to be fitteſt for us.

Q. Is God the beſt judge of what we need?

A. Yes; for our heavenly Father, who knows all our needs, is infinitely good and wiſe, Mat. vi. 32.

Q. Seeing our heavenly Father knows our need of temporal things, what need we aſk them of him?

A. Becauſe he deſires to hear his peoples voice, and he would have them to acknowledge that all things come from him?

Q. Have we nothing to do but pray for our daily bread?

A. God hath appointed us alſo to labour for it, Gen. iii. 19. 'In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.'

Q. Is not God offended with theſe who pretend to pray for bread, and will not work for it?

A. Yes. 2 Theſſ. iii. 10.

Q. If men muſt labour for their bread, why muſt they pray to God for it?

A. Becauſe it is God that muſt give us wiſdom and ſtrength to labour, that muſt make our labours ſucceſsful and make temporal things effectual to nouriſh and ſuſtain us, Deut. viii. 18. Pſal. cxxvii. 1. Lev. xxvi. 26. Deut. viii. 3.

Q. Ought the rich, who are well provided, to pray for their daily bread ?

A. Yes, they ought to pray that what is given may be bleſſed to them, continued with them, and that they may receive it as out of the Lord's hand.

Q. Why muſt we ſeek the bleſſing of God with outward good things ?

A. Becauſe without it they would be curſed and hurtful unto us, Hag. i. 6. Mal. ii. 2.

Q. Is not a little with the bleſſing of God better than the riches of the wicked ?

A. Yes, Pſal. xxxvii. 16.

Q. What muſt we do, that our portion in outward things may be bleſſed and comfortable to us ?

A. We muſt ſecure an intereſt in Chriſt the purchaſer, guard againſt diſtracting cares, truſt in the providence of our heavenly Father, be content with his allowance and thankful for it, deal juſtly with all men, and uſe the gifts of God for his glory.

Q. Doth this petition forbid all ſorts of care or laying up for afterwards ?

A. No; for ſome care in the way of prudent foreſight is needful to provide for children and families, and nowiſe inconſiſtent with truſting to God for daily bread; 2 Cor. xii. 14. 1 Tim. v. 8. We ſee Joſeph laid up for the approaching famine, and Solomon commends him that gathereth in ſummer. Nay, Chriſt himſelf deſired the remaining fragments to be gathered up, and he had a purſe-bearer to have ſomething before-hand for their needs, Gen xli 48. Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8, &c. John vi. 12, and xiii. 29, Prov. xxxi. 16.

Q. What are theſe cares which are inconſiſtent with this petition ?

A. Theſe which ariſe from affection to earthly things, which draw on men to uſe unlawful methods to get them, or are attended with diſquieting or diſtruſtful thoughts.

QUEST. CV.

Q. *What do we pray for in the fifth petition ?*

A. In the fifth petition (which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*) we pray, That God, for Chriſt's ſake, would freely pardon all our ſins; which we are the rather encouraged to aſk, becauſe by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Q. How is it that we find in the Lord's prayer but one petition for temporal things, and ſo many for ſpiritual ?

A. To teach us to be far more careful about the precious immortal ſoul, than about the poor dying body.

Q. Why is this petition annexed, by the copulative, *and*, to the former petition ?

A. To teach us, that worldly enjoyments can give no comfort without pardon of ſin; and therefore, when we aſk for the one, we ſhould with the ſame breath pray for the other: For let a man have never ſo much of the world, he is a miſerable creature if he want pardon.

Q. What is meant by our *debts* here ?

A. Our ſins againſt God.

Q. How can ſin be called a *debt*, ſeeing obedience is properly the debt we owe unto God ?

A. Sin is alſo called a *debt*, becauſe, when we fail to pay the debt of obedience, we contract a new debt to the juſtice of God: By ſin we become bound to ſatisfy juſtice for the wrong done thereto, by ſuffering eternal puniſhment; and God, as the Creditor, hath right to inſiſt for this ſatisfaction when he will.

Q. Have we not the properties of bad debtors ?

A. Yes; for we are wholly inſolvent, we are turned careleſs about paying our debt, we are unwilling to confeſs debt, we ſhift clearing of accompts, we keep out of our creditors way, and love not to meet with him.

Q. Doth not the debt of ſin expoſe us to greater miſery than any other debt whatſoever ?

A. Yes: For other debts but expoſe mens bodies to miſery here, which death puts an end to; but the debt of ſin expoſeth both our ſouls and bodies to eternal miſeries in hell, the worſt of all priſons, out of which there is no hope of liberation.

Q. Is there any man able to pay his own debt ?

A. No, not the leaſt farthing of it.

Q. How then ſhall we be delivered from the burden of our debts ?

A. We muſt pray to God for a free pardon, as we are taught in this petition, *Forgive us our debts.*

Q. Will God forgive our debts without ſatisfaction to his juſtice ?

A. No; but he hath provided a Surety for us, who hath made full ſatisfaction, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for whoſe ſake we muſt pray for pardon.

Q. If Chriſt hath ſatisfied for the debt, how is the pardon free ?

A. It is free to us, becauſe God exacts no ſatisfaction from us; and for the Surety from whom he exacts it, he gave him to us freely, without our deſerving or deſire: So that the pardon is ſtill free to us, according to Rom. iii. 24. "Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt."

Q. What means muſt be uſed by us for receiving of this free pardon ?

A. We muſt with believing and penitent hearts go to the mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt, and plead for forgiveneſs for his ſake: And at the ſame time we muſt be careful, as Chriſt teacheth us, to be in a diſpoſition to forgive our debtors.

Q. Who are theſe meant by our *debtors* here ?

A. All theſe who have injured or wronged us in our perſons, eſtates, names, relations, or in any thing elſe.

Q. What is it for us to forgive the faults of ſuch debitors ?

A. It is to paſs them over without any hatred or deſire of revenge againſt them, and to be ready to do them good when it is in our power.

Q. Do theſe forgive others heartily, who wiſh them evil, or are ſecretly glad when evil befals them ?

A. No.

Q. What caſe are theſe in, who will not forgive others their treſpaſſes ?

A. Chriſt ſaith, that neither will God forgive them, Mat. vi. 15.

Q. Do we any wiſe merit forgiveneſs from God, by our forgiving others ?

A. No; it is only an encouragement to expect forgiveneſs from God, when we feel this teſtimony of God's grace in our hearts, inclining us to forgive others.

Q. Are we not able of ourſelves to forgive others?

A. No; we muſt have the grace of God to enable us to do it, Luke xvii. 3, *&c.*

Q. Doth the particle *as*, in the petition, import an equality in our forgiving others with God's forgiving us?

A. No; for we cannot forgive as freely, perfectly, and finally as God doth: But it is a note of ſimiltude, and of our deſire to imitate God in his forgiving of us, and that we do it heartily and ſincerely.

Q. Is it not highly dangerous to uſe the Lord's prayer with a malicious heart?

A. Yes; for ſuch uſe a fearful imprecation againſt themſelves, praying that God may deal with them as they do with others, *which is*, that he may not forgive them at all.

Q. How ſhall we attain to this forgiving temper of ſpirit?

A. By ſeeking it from God, and conſidering our Saviour's precept and example, and the promiſe of forgiveneſs annexed to it, Mat. vi. 14. And alſo by minding that we wrong God much more than any man doth wrong us; and if God be willing to forgive us ten thouſand talents, we may well forgive our neighbour a few pence, Mat. xviii. 32. 33.

Q. Muſt we forgive theſe who do not deſire it of us, nor repent of what they have done to us?

A. Yes; for we find Chriſt and Stephen did ſo.

Q. Do they not ſtill remain *debtors* to God for theſe ſins if they repent not, tho' we have forgiven them?

A. Yes; and therefore theſe who injure their neighbours, ſhould not be ſatisfied with a remiſſion from them, but muſt cry to God for his forgiveneſs alſo, ſaying with David, Pſal. li. 4. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned:* As if he had ſaid, The wrong I have done to others is little, in compariſon of what I have done againſt thee.

QUEST. CVI.

Q. *What do we pray for in the ſixth petition?*

A. In the ſixth petition (which is, *And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil*) we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to ſin, or ſupport and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q. Why is this petition connected with the former by the copulative *and?*

A. To teach us two things; 1. That pardoned ſouls are the ſpecial objects of ſatan's malice. 2. That, when paſt ſins are forgiven, we ſhould be very watchful againſt ſin for the future, Pſal. lxxxv. 8.

Q. What are theſe temptations we are liable to?

A. They are of two ſorts, ſome to *try* us, others to *ſeduce* us.

Q. Whence come theſe temptations for trial?

A. From God; thus did he tempt Abraham, Gen. xxii. 1.

Q. Why doth God thus tempt his people?

A. For the trial of their faith, and their other graces, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

Q. Seeing God knows perfectly what is in every man, what need is there for the trying of them?

A. God tries his people, not for his ſake but for their own ſakes, that they may know themſelves the better; and alſo for the ſake of others, who by ſeeing their graces may be quickened to imitate them, or by obſerving their weakneſs may learn to walk humbly before God.

Q. How is it ſaid, James i. 13. that *God tempteth no man?*

A. The meaning then is, that God doth not tempt any man to ſeduce or entice him to ſin.

Q. Whence then come theſe temptations for ſeduction?

A. From the devil, the world and the fleſh.

Q. Is not ſatan called the *tempter*, Mat. iv. 4. And why?

A. Becauſe he hath a main hand in our temptations to ſin, and it is his conſtant work and buſineſs to ſeduce and entice men to evil.

Q. Is not ſatan a very ſubtile tempter?

A. Yes, as appears by his conſidering the conditions of men, and his chooſing the fitteſt ſeaſons and inſtruments, and the moſt ſuitable baits to prevail with them; and by his tranſforming himſelf ſometimes into an angel of light. And hence the ſcriptures call him the *old ſerpent*, and ſpeak of his devices, wiles, and ſnares, Job. i. 8 Rev. xii. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 11. Eph. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 26 2 Cor xi. 14.

Q. Is not the tempter very cruel as well as ſubtile?

A. Yes, and therefore he is called a *roaring lion*, 1 Pet. v. 8. for he devours his prey without mercy, when once he is maſter of it. Altho' at firſt he cunningly tempts and entices men to commit ſin, yet he afterwards cruelly accuſes them of it, and torments them for it.

Q. Doth not ſatan prevail the more eaſily againſt us, by reaſon of the ſtrong friends he hath within us?

A. Yes, the luſts of the fleſh are ready always, like Delilah, to deliver us up to him, Judges xvi.

Q. What is to be underſtood by theſe words, *Lead us not into temptation?*

A. In theſe words we pray, that God may not expoſe us to temptations, nor deliver us up to the tempter's will; that, when we are expoſed, God may not withhold his ſupporting grace, but may ſtrengthen us to reſiſt the temptation.

Q. Doth God ſometimes as a judge deſert men, and leave them to ſatan's power?

A. Yes; and he doth it juſtly, as being provoked to it by their ſins, 1 Sam. xvi. 14. Job. i. 12. Pſal. cix. 6. Rom. i. 24. 2 Theſ. ii. 11.

Q. Ought we not to pray that God would keep us from being tempted?

A. Yes; becauſe of ourſelves we are weak to reſiſt, and prone to yield.

Q. How doth God keep us from being tempted to ſin?

A. Either by ſanctifying our natures, or by binding up the tempter, or by keeping us from coming into the way of temptations. Sometimes the Lord doth hedge up his peoples way with the thorns of affliction, to keep them from ſtraying into dangerous by-paths, Hoſ. ii. 6.

Q. While we pray to God to keep us from being tempted to ſin, ſhould we not at the ſame time be diligent in watching over ourſelves?

A. Yes: our Lord will have watching to go alongſt with prayer, Mat. 26. 41. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation?'

Q. Did not God ſometimes ſuffer his dear ſaints to be tempted by Satan?

A. Yes; he ſees fit to do ſo for their good to try their graces, to abate their pride, to excite their prayers, to ſhew them their need of living by faith on Chriſt, to make them weary of the land where ſatan goes his circuit, and long for heaven where they ſhall be out of his reach for ever.

Q. Why doth ſatan continue his aſſaults againſt God's people, ſeeing he cannot ruin them?

A. Such is his malice, if he cannot keep them out of heaven, he will make their paſſage to it as uneaſy as poſſible.

Q. What grounds of comfort doth God afford his people under temptation?

A. It is comfortable to them to know that their Redeemer hath ſatan in his chain, ſo that he can go no further in tempting than Chriſt gives him leave; that he hath given them his ſweet and faithful promiſes to ſupport them; and that he himſelf was willing to be tempted of the devil, that he might be the more capable to ſympathize with his people, and ready to ſuccour them when tempted, Heb. ii. 18.

Q. What are theſe promiſes which Chriſt hath given his people to ſupport them under temptation?

A. He hath promiſed them his gracious preſence with them under their ſharpeſt trials; and that he will not ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able, but with the temptation will alſo make a way to eſcape, Iſa. xliii. 2. Heb. xiii. 5. 1 Cor. 10. 13.

Q. How is it that Chriſt ſuccours his people when they are tempted?

A. He ſends his ſpirit to fortify grace in them, and brings his promiſes to their remembrance; he interceeds for them that their faith fail not, and he ſeaſonably takes off the tempter from them.

Q. Can no man preſerve himſelf in the hour of temptation?

A. No; for it is God only that is able to keep us from falling, Jude 24.

Q. Doth not ſatan ſometimes throw in unbelievingand blaſphemous thoughts into the minds of God's people?

A. Yes.

Q. Will God charge his people with guilt upon account of theſe temptations?

A. No, if they hate them, grieve for them, and give no conſent unto them.

Q. What is meant by the *evil*, in this petition, we pray to be delivered from?

A. We here pray to be delivered from the *evil one*, the devil; from the *evil* of *evils*, ſin; from the *evil* of temptation here, and the *evil* of puniſhment in hell hereafter.

Q. Is there nothing elſe required of us, but to pray to be delivered from evil?

A. We muſt alſo watch, and carefully avoid all occaſions of ſin, ſuch as idleneſs, evil company, and the like; for theſe who do not ſo, their prayers are but mocking of the Lord.

QUEST. CVII.

Q. *What doth the concluſion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

A. The concluſion of the Lord's prayer (which is, *For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. Amen)* teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praiſe him, aſcribing kingdom, power, and glory to him: And in teſtimony of our deſire and aſſurance to be heard, we ſay, *Amen.*

Q. What are we taught by the particle *for* prefixed to the concluſion to this Prayer?

A. We are taught thereby to enforce our petitions with arguments; as we find was the practice of the ſaints in Scripture, Numb. xiv. 13. &c. Joſh. vii. 9. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. & xx. 6. &c.

Q. Why muſt we uſe arguments with God in prayer?

A. Not that we can thereby incline God to grant us any thing that he is averſe to; but we ought to do it in order to ſtrengthen our faith, and to excite our fervency in pleading with God,

Q. May we take our arguments or encouragements in prayer from any worthineſs or good thing in ourſelves?

A. No.

Q. From whence muſt we bring them?

A. Only from the infinite perfections of God, and merits of his Son.

Q. What are the arguments or grounds of encouragement mentioned in the concluſion of the Lord's prayer?

A. They are the kingdom, the power, and the glory of God, which laſt for ever.

Q. What is the deſign and meaning of this concluſion?

A. To ſhew us the reaſons why we ſhould pray to God, and the grounds we have to hope that he will hear us; and likewiſe to teach us, that the main end we ought to propoſe in our prayers is, that the kingdom, power, and glory of God may be declared and advanced more and more.

Q. What is meant by the kingdom of God here?

A. God's univerſal ſovereignty, dominion and authority which he hath over the world, and all things in heaven and earth.

Q. Hath God the diſpoſal of all the kingdoms and governments in the world?

A. Yes, he diſpoſeth of human kingdoms and ſtates; and he hath abſolute right to do it in the kingdoms of nature, of providence, of grace, and glory, as ſeemeth good to him.

Q. What encouragement may we draw from God's kingdom in prayer?

A. That ſeeing he is our King and Governor, who hath right to diſpoſe of all things, we have reaſon to expect he will be ready to give us what good things we need; for a king wiſheth well to his ſubjects. Hence the people of God do often plead with him upon this relation, Pſal. 5, 2. & 20, 9. & 74, 12.

Q. What is meant by the power of God here?

A. His infinite might and ability to do whatſoever he will.

Q. What encouragement may we take from God's power in prayer?

A. That, ſeeing he is almighty, he is ſufficiently able to give us all the good things we aſk: and this argument is often made uſe of in prayer, 1 Chron. 29. 12. 2 Chron. 20. 6 Mat. 8. 2. Mark 14. 36. Eph. 3. 20.

Q. But how doth it appear that God is willing to give, as well as able?

A. Becauſe he aſſumes the character of a gracious king to his ſubjects, and of a loving father to all his children.

Q. What is meant by the glory of God here?

A. The honour, dignity and praiſe which belong unto God, upon account of his infinite excellencies.

Q. What is the argument we draw from the glory of God in our prayers?

A. That the granting of theſe our petitions will greatly redound to the glory of his name; and that this is the great end we aim at in all we aſk, Pſal. 79, 9, & 86, 11, 12 & 113, 1, 2, Jer. 14, 21, John 14, 13.

Q. What encouragement may we take from theſe words, *for ever*.

A. It doth ſtrengthen our faith to think, that God's ſovereignty and perfections are everlaſting: that he ſhall never want power to help us, as earthly kings may.

Q. Doth Chiriſt by this concluſion teach us in prayer to extol and magnify the Lord, and to join praiſe to him always with our prayers?

A. Yes; for a thankful and praiſing diſpoſition is highly pleaſing to God, Pſal. 69. 30, 31. and engageth him to grant our deſires, Pſal. 67, 5, 6.

Q. What is meant by the word *Amen*?

A. It is a Hebrew word, which ſignifieth *truth*, or *certainty*; and it is as much as to ſay, Lord, *So it is*, or *So let it be*: And thereby we expreſs our fervent deſires to be heard, and our humble confidence of obtaining what we aſk in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, who, with the Father, and Holy Spirit, is the One ſupreme God, to whom be glory for ever, *Amen*.

SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS and ADVICES,

GROUNDED UPON

SCRIPTURE-TEXTS.

THE PREFACE.

THE eternal Son of God, when taking his leave of an ungrateful world, inſtituted the ſacrament of the Supper, as a lively reſemblance and memorial of his bloody ſufferings and death in the room of his people; and alſo to be a bright and laſting evidence of the amazing love of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt to periſhing ſinners.

As God once ſent his Son into the world in a lowly habit, clothed with human fleſh to ſave ſinners; ſo now he ſends him in a homely dreſs clothed with the elements of bread and wine to aſſure us of his love, and to engage us to come to him.——Kings expect that their children will be reſpected, tho' their officers be nelected. Surely (ſaith God) *They will reverence my Son*; They will make him welcome and hearken to him.

In this moſt auguſt ordinance of the New Teſtament, the great God approaches very near to us, and we to him; and yet it is to be deeply regreted that many who profeſs to believe this, come to it with ſo little thought and preparation, and with ſo much indifferency and careleſſneſs of ſpirit. Oh, ſhall we adventure ſo near the great God, who is infinitely holy, in whoſe ſight the heavens are not pure, and in whoſe preſence the ſun and ſtars are dimned, and the brighteſt ſeraphims do gather in their wings, and account themſelves as little flies before him! And ſhall we, who are creatures ſo mean and ſo vile, be careleſs and unconcerned, when we make the neareſt approach to this great and holy God, that we can make on this ſide heaven!

Ought we not to go bluſhing, aſhamed and deeply humbled on many accounts, and particularly for our ingratitude for redeeming love, that *love which paſſeth knowledge*; and for our contempt of *God's unſpeakable gift*, the greateſt ſin in the world; yea, we ſhould go wondering that we are out of hell, for many thouſands are burning there, who have not ſinned ſo heinouſly in making light of precious Chriſt as we have done.

Moreover, reader, conſider if you go to this ordinance unpreparedly, or with indifference, you not only make light of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but you are *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, 1 Cor. xi. 27. Surely that word may cauſe you to quake and tremble; blood guiltineſs of any ſort is a dreadful ſin, and eſpecially to be guilty of the *blood of the Lord*. Murder is a ſin that cries for vengeance on the actor, and gives God no reſt till he puniſh it, Gen. iv. 10. *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth*. If it be a crying ſin to murder a common perſon, what muſt it be to murder a king? *Who can ſtretch forth his hand againſt the Lord's anointed, and be guiltleſs*, 1 Sam. xxv. 9.

O then what a crime muſt it be to murder the eternal Son of God, who is thy exalted King, thy everlaſting Father, thy dear Redeemer, and thy God who gave thee a being. Child murder is a heinous crime, but, what Chriſt murder is, no tongue can tell! If on him that ſlew Cain (that wicked man) vengeance ſhould be taken ſevenfold; what vengeance will be taken on him that crucifies afreſh the Lord of glory? This conſideration ſhould make all of us afraid of careleſs and unworthy communicating.

If we would communicate worthily, we muſt be earneſt, not only for the life of grace, but alſo for the livelineſs of grace; not only for the truth and ſincerity of grace, but likewiſe for the activity and vigorous exerciſe of grace. So that a believer himſelf doth not eat and drink worthily, unleſs the grace that is in him be excited and exerciſed at this ordinance.——There muſt be not only faith in the truth of it, but there muſt be faith realizing, applying, appropriating and making uſe of Chriſt's death and purchaſe in this ordinance.——Not only muſt there be a diſpoſition of ſoul to be humbled for ſin, but there muſt be actual mourning and melting of heart for ſin, and for particular ſins, when we look on him we have pierced by them.——Not only muſt there be a principle of love to Chriſt, but alſo an exciting of love to flame out to Chriſt, who loved us and gave himſelf for us.

Worthy communicating being a work of ſuch importance, the following Scriptural Meditations and Advices are humbly offered to Chriſtians, as an help in their preparations for it. Reading and thinking much on the ſubjects here propoſed, may, through God's bleſſing, be uſeful to promote their habitual preparation for the holy ſupper.—Chriſt's body and blood herein exhibited, are pure and holy things, and ſhould be received in prepared and cleanſed hearts. His body never ſaw corruption in the grave, nor will be mixed with it in hearts where corruption is allowed. It lay in a virgin womb, and in a virgin ſepulchre, and will ſtill be entertained in virgin ſouls and affections; in hearts purified and conſecrated to God. In theſe Chriſt chuſes to reſide, and not in theſe where ſin and the world, with the luſts thereof are haboured. Oh, had we grace to maintain and cheriſh the fear of God, and the love of Chriſt habitually in our ſouls, we might, without much pains, be prepared for coming to him at his table.

Did we always bear in our minds, that ſacramental occaſions are ſolemn appointments, and Bethel-meetings with God, for renewing covenant, and entertaining fellowſhip and communion with him, we would guard more againſt formality creeping in upon us in our preparation for, and in our attendance upon this ordinance, than, alas, we do. Oh, ſuch formality will provoke the Maſter of our ſolemn feaſts to withdraw from them, and then what poor, dry, melancholy and lifeleſs things will they be? What are ſacraments without Chriſt's preſence in them? O let us never be ſatisfied with communion-ſabbaths, without communion with Chriſt in them.

On the other hand, if we would keep up communion with Chriſt in theſe ordinances, let us beware of relying on our previous pains or preparations, either for our right performing of our duty, or for our acceptance in it: For we are never more ready to miſcarry, and to be diſappointed, than when we are guilty of this reſting. Sundry go to the Lord's table with great humiliation for ſin, and yet come away without comfort: Why? becauſe they make a Chriſt of their ſorrow.——O what worth can we ſee in our beſt preparations, confeſſions, prayers, tears, humiliations, &c. if we compare them with the law of God? We have more cauſe to be aſhamed of them, than to lay any ſtreſs on them. Could we renounce all ſelf-confidence, and diſclaim all our proviſion in point of dependence, and caſt ourſelves wholly on Chriſt for ſtrength, through-bearing and acceptance, we would have better ſucceſs at the Lord's table, than commonly we have.

We are never more fit for this holy table, than when we are moſt humbled, and moſt aſhamed of ourſelves, becauſe of our unfitneſs for this ſolemn approach; and we are never leſs fit than when we think ourſelves moſt fit and prepared for the duty.—A holy deniedneſs to all ſelf ſufficiency, and a deep ſenſe of unworthineſs and unfitneſs, is the beſt preparation we can attain to for this ſolemn ordinance. Let us make holy David our pattern, when going to partake, Pſal. lxxi. 16. "I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God: "I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of "thine only"—And let us pray with the ſpouſe, Cant. iv. 16. "Awake, O north-wind, and come thou "ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof "may flow out." *Amen.*

MEDITATION I.

From Heb. xi. 7. *By faith Noah prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe.*

THOUGH the flood that drowned the old world was at many years diſtance, yet Noah was moved with fear at God's warning him of it, and prepared an ark for his ſafety. And ſhall not unconverted unbelieving ſinners, who have a far more terrible flood threatened againſt them, and may be only a few days diſtant, take warning, and provide with all ſpeed for their ſafety?—Oh, ſhall I, a wretched guilty ſinner, take reſt, while I am within the flood-mark of God's wrath, and not ariſe in time to provide an Ark to flee to for my ſafety?—But O good news! I have not the Ark to provide, it is prepared to my hand: God, in his infinite wiſdom and pity, hath made ready an Ark long ago for loſt ſinners of Adam's race to fly to; and now it is completely furniſhed and finiſhed, and all things are ready, ſo that I have nothing to do but go and take poſſeſſion.

O what had become of me, and other periſhing ſinners, had we the Ark to build for ourſelves? Nay, the whole creation had not been able or ſufficient for this purpoſe. How ſoon would the raging flood of divine wrath ſweep away all the arks of men or angels building! But thanks be unto God for ever, for the excellent well built Ark of God's deviſing, for the many ſpacious rooms and ſafe lodging-places within it, for the ſuitable accommodation and plentiful proviſion laid up therein, and for the door opened in the ſide thereof for periſhing ſouls to enter by.——The ſalvation of ſinners by a *crucified Chriſt* is a well-ordered ſcheme, a beautiful contrivance! bleſſed be the infinitely wiſe Contriver for it. I ſee all things in Chriſt crucified neceſſary for me: He is made of God to men, *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption.* There is in him infinite wiſdom to guide me, a ſpotleſs righteouſneſs to cover me, precious blood to waſh me, the holy Spirit to ſanctify me, his good word to direct me, his juſt laws to govern me, and his infinite fulneſs to ſupply all my needs: Safe and happy then would I be, were I found in him. O that, upon trial by ſcripture-marks, I could conclude myſelf to be within the Ark, to wit, a *crucified Jeſus!*

Can I ſay, I have been warned of God, and moved with fear, to fly to this Ark? Have I diſcovered my ſhelterleſs ſtate by nature, the waves and billows of wrath riſing and rolling againſt me? Have I ſeen my own inability to provide an Ark for myſelf, and the excellency and fitneſs of the Ark of God's providing? Have I been made willing to abandon all falſe arks, and earneſtly inquiſitive how to get into the true Ark? Have I been made willing to uſe all appointed means for this end, to read, hear, meditate, pray, repent, believe, eſſay to climb up the ſides of the Ark, and preſs to get in at the door thereof? Have I been willing to venture my all in the Ark, like Noah, notwithſtanding of the diſcouragements, ſcoffs and hatred of the world for ſo doing? Have I willingly acquieſced, ſheltered, and lodged my ſoul in God's Ark, and been made to ſay, *This is my reſt for ever, here will I dwell?* Come what floods will, Chriſt ſhall be my Ark, his righteouſneſs alone my refuge and hiding-place.

Alas! upon impartial ſearch, have I not cauſe to fear that I have not yet fled to the Ark, but am ſtill expoſed to the devouring flood? And can I be eaſy or quiet in ſuch a caſe? Can I forbear crying, What ſhall I do to get into the Ark Chriſt? Nay, what would I not do to get into it? Lord, what would thou have me to do? Wouldſt thou have me to humble myſelf, confeſs, mourn, part with ſin, cloſe with Chriſt in all his offices? Preſcribe, Lord, what thou wilt, I will not ſcruple what thou enjoins me, but obey thee without reſerve. I am reſolved upon it, whatever it coſt me, that the ſolicitations of the fleſh, the temptations of ſatan, the ſcoffs, reproaches or perſecutions of the world, ſhall not ſtop me from flying to the Ark; I would break thro' all theſe to be found in it. Lord, increaſe and ſtrengthen my faith for that end; and help my unbelief.

O how ſuitable is the Ark Chriſt to my deſtitute and miſerable condition: In myſelf I want all things, but I ſee a ſupply for all my wants in the Ark. I am poor, but I ſee gold in the Ark to make me rich: I am wounded by ſin, but I ſee balm in the Ark to heal my wounds: I am blind, but there is eye-ſalve in the Ark to make me ſee: I am periſhing with hunger, but I ſee bread in the Ark to ſatisfy me: I am naked, but in the Ark there is white raiment to clothe me: I am polluted, but in the Ark there is a fountain to waſh me: I am expoſed to more terrible floods than Noah was, but I ſee the Ark Chriſt can ſave me from them all: *Noah's ark* ſaved him only from a flood of water, but the *Ark Chriſt* ſaves from a flood of the curſes of the law, and the wrath of God which will ſweep away all the unbelieving world. This flood roſe, ſwelled high, and daſhed furiouſly againſt our Ark; but the Ark was proof againſt it, and ſheltered all the elect world from the flood, ſo that not one drop did light on them.——O how excellent is this Ark! for it can ſave me from being overwhelmed or carried away with any flood, and particularly it can ſave me from being carried away with a flood of Satan's temptations which ſweeps away many, or with a flood of indwelling corruption, with a flood of error, with a flood of profanity, or with a flood of neutrality and indifferency about ſpiritual concerns; by which floods, multitudes are deſtroyed. Let me then by faith fly to this bleſſed Ark, where all believers are preſerved from theſe deſtroying floods. Behold I run, I fly: May Jeſus draw me, and help me in.

Bleſſed for ever be the God of heaven, for providing ſuch an Ark for fallen ſinners upon earth. I deſire to count all things but loſs and dung, that I may be found in this Ark, among the *preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus,* whom no flood can reach. However this Ark be ſlighted by the world, I'll prize it above all things, and count them for ever happy who get into it, ſeeing God declares it, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.—The ark was ſlighted by the old world, and Noah ridiculed for preparing it for himſelf and his houſe; but it ſoon appeared that Noah was the wiſeſt man that then lived upon the earth. Few there were that entered with Noah into the ark, and no doubt were reproached and mocked for their ſingularity; but ſoon was the world perſuaded that they were the only wiſe and happy men in it. Better ſurely it was to have followed the eight perſons that went into the ark, than to have joined eight millions of theſe who were drown'd in the flood. Should I be ſo fooliſh as follow the old world in undervaluing the Ark, I muſt lay my account to be ſhut out and periſh with them too: Wherefore I will not fear the reproach of men, for being ſingular in my eſteem for glorious Chriſt.—May I be numbered among that happy company (however few they be) who love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity, and will bleſs God eternally for providing this Ark for drowning men! May I be one that will ever bleſs my lovely and loving Jeſus, that pitied me and took me in, when others were waſhed off from the ſides of the Ark, as adhering only to it by a dead and formal profeſſion! May I be one that will ever ſing to his praiſe, O amazing free love! that pitied and diſtinguiſhed me, when the flood came; that graciouſly drew and determined me in ſuch a manner, that I got into the Ark and was ſafe, when many others were waſhed off and periſhed for ever!

MEDITATION II.

From 2 Pet. ii. 4. *God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt them down to hell.*

HOW admirable, free and diſtinguiſhing is the love of God to mankind ſinners, in pitying them in their low and loſt eſtate! O how different is the caſe of *fallen men* upon the earth, from the caſe of *fallen angels* in hell, and that of damned ſouls there! Manna is rained down upon us, while an eternal ſhower of fire and brimſtone falls down upon them. They are bound in chains of darkneſs, whilſt thou, Lord, art drawing us with cords of love. Thou didſt not ſpare angels, nor take on their nature; but thou haſt ſpared us, married our nature, and exalted it to the heavens. They continue without hope under the deluge of God's wrath, whilſt the pleaſant rainbow of the ſacrament appears to us, as a token of God's covenant of grace, and of his willingneſs to ſecure us from that overflowing flood, by the interpoſition of his dear Son in our nature. O how welcome ſhould we make that goſpel rainbow!

Lord, thy wrath ſoon broke out againſt the angels that fell; thou didſt puniſh them immediately upon their ſinning aginſt thee. Thou didſt not wait for their repentance, nor make any offer of mercy to them: but, preſently upon their firſt offence, didſt condemn them to everlaſting chains of darkneſs. O how far different is thy manner of dealing with us! Long haſt thou waited upon us after we have ſinned; yea, thou haſt followed us with thy mercy after many refuſals of it, and even after our trampling the precious blood of Chriſt under our feet! Marvellous and peculiar is thy mercy to fallen men in reſpect of fallen angels! Glory to ſovereign free mercy, that thou didſt not caſt us off for ever without a parley, as thou didſt them; but waits to be gracious to us, long ſtretching out thy hand, and calling us to repentance, ſaying, *Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?*

Againſt the ſinning *angels* God was ſo provoked, that he reſolved within himſelf, and hath kept his reſolution ever ſince the beginning of the world, and will keep it to all eternity, that he will not ſo much as enter into a parley with theſe creatures, however glorious they once were, nor be reconciled to them upon any terms; yea, that he will hear of no terms, but will revenge himſelf upon them to all eternity—May not then the hearing of this cauſe us to quake and tremble? for, why might not the Lord have dealt with us in the ſame manner, who were far more wretched and miſerable creatures than angels? Surely if a king be ſo angry with an offending *nobleman*, that was once his ſpecial favourite, as to baniſh him from court, and afterwards hear of no terms of reconciliation with him; Would not a *footman* or mean ſervant, that had offended, when hearing of this, begin to dread, and ſay, O what will become of me a poor man, when the king treats his peers ſo ſeverely? I may ſurely deſpair of a remiſſion or reconciliation with him. So, in like manner, we poor clay worms, upon hearing of God's ſeverity to fallen angels, might have been overwhelmed with fear, if the Bible had not told us, that the Son of God his *delights were with the ſons of men;* that *verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took upon him the ſeed of Abraham*, Heb. ii. 16. and that he gave himſelf to be a ſin-offering and ſacrifice for men! Aſtoniſhing news! Glory to God for theſe glad-tidings of great joy.

O admirable love to *Adam's* rebellious offspring! Haſt thou, Lord, paſt by angels, and remembred us in our low eſtate! and in thy infinite compaſſion become our Surety, to appeaſe divine juſtice for our heinous ſins, when no other ſacrifice could do it! O what ſhall we render to thee for this diſtinguiſhihg love! Surely our condition in *Adam* was no better than that of the *angels* who left their firſt eſtate. By nature we were in a moſt dreadful caſe, lying like *Iſaac*, bound on the altar, to be a ſacrifice to the juſtice of God, and the ſword of juſtice lift up to give the killing blow, until the Son of God diſcovered himſelf as the *ram* caught in the thickets, and calling to juſtice, Hold thy hand, looſe them, and bind me in their room; I'll be the ſacrifice for them. In chooſing fallen men, and not angels, God gave an amazing inſtance of the ſovereignty of his grace, that would be merciful to whom he would be merciful; he would paſs by the ſuperiour nature, and chooſe the inferior; prefer veſſels of clay to veſſels of gold! What can we ſay? Nothing, but wonder at God's free grace!—Unſpeakable love! Lord, it had been much if thou hadſt provided an angel to mitigate our ſufferings in hell, by giving us drops of water to cool our tongue; but that thou ſhould have condeſcended to come and change rooms with us, ly in hell for us, and ſuffer the very pains and agonies due to us, is *love that paſſeth knowledge*.

Lord, when I conſider thy diſtinguiſhing pity, and low ſtoop, to purchaſe and recover ſuch clods of earth and ſin with thy blood and agonies, I am amazed at thy love, confounded at my own ingratitude, and aſhamed at the coldneſs and hardneſs of my heart! Oh! was Chriſt willing to change rooms with the like of me, and ſhall not I be willing to change rooms with him, and at his demand to part with the filthy rags of my ſins, and take on the robe of his righteouſneſs? O ſhall not this amazing love of Chriſt conſtrain me to love him again, and live to him that died for me? Shall it not conſtrain me to think on him? conſtrain me to cloſe with and truſt in him? conſtrain me to commend him? conſtrain me to hate and avoid his enemy, ſin? conſtrain me to adhere to Chriſt's truths and ways? to perſevere in prayer, praiſe, and holy walking?

Are fallen angels left, and fallen men pitched upon to be the monuments of free grace, to fill up the vacant rooms which angels fell from? What ſhall I ſay to this, but, "even ſo, Father, for ſo it pleaſed thee:" Let thy ſovereign free grace be the eternal ſong of both men and angels. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory."—Bleſſed be God, that I hear this joyful ſound of reconciliation with fallen men, and of a treaty of peace carried on with them: The devils never heard, and never will hear ſuch news.—But Oh, if I come not in, and accept of the terms and offers made to me in the goſpel, I'll put myſelf in a worſe caſe than the devils: For it cannot be charged upon fallen angels, as on fallen men, that God was willing to be reconciled to them, and they would not. Now then, when the goſpel-treaty is proclaimed, God forbid I be found guilty of refuſing his terms, ſcorning his offers, and defying his threatenings. O how ſhall I eſcape, if I neglect ſo great and wonderful ſalvation as is tendered to me? Neglect it, Lord, I dare not, I will not. Lo, I come, I accept, I embrace, I take hold of thy covenant, and the ſeal of it tendered to me: I renounce the old covenant, I break league this day with all thine enemies, I proclaim war againſt them: I cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus, both as my righteouſneſs and my ſtrength: I make a full and free ſurrender and reſignation of myſelf unto the Lord, to be his and his only, in all I am, and in all I enjoy, to be ordered and diſpoſed of for his glory and ſervice. Lord, I am thine; I will not be my own, I will not be the world's, but I'll be thine, thine only, and thine wholly; thine to love thee, ſerve and obey thee without reſerve: Since thou wouldſt have no nature but mine, I will have no will but thine. I renounce my own will, and take thine for my rule. Lord, I am thine, O ſave thou me; and I will trumpet forth the praiſes of free grace and redeeming love for ever. *Amen.*

MEDITATION III.

From Pſalm cxlvii. 20. *He hath not dealt ſo with any nation.*

THE nation of Iſrael was ſingularly privileged above others; they were taken into covenant with God, they had God's word and ordinances, the means of converſion and ſalvation; they had the goſpel-revelation, the knowledge and promiſes of the Meſſiah.—But we under the New-Teſtament times, and in Britain, are yet more peculiarly privileged with clearer light and diſcoveries of the Meſſiah than the nation of Iſrael had. They lived under a darker and harſher diſpenſation of the covenant of grace by Moſes, whoſe firſt miracle was the turning of *water into blood;* but we live under the clearer and ſweeter diſpenſation of it by Chriſt himſelf, whoſe firſt miracle was the turning of *water into wine,* that cheers the heart. The nation of Iſrael were called a people near unto God; but in goſpel-times we are allowed yet nearer acceſs to God, than they had.—The children of Iſrael were not allowed ſo much as to touch the mount on which the Lord came down; the men of Bethſhemeſh had not liberty to look into the ark, the place of his reſidence: But, behold, we are allowed to take a near view and ſteady look of a crucified Jeſus in the ſacrament, who is *the image of the inviſible God, the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.* Yea, we have liberty not only to look to him, but alſo to touch him, handle his wounds, embrace his perſon, and lodge him in our hearts.

The advantage of a clear revelation of a crucified Chriſt in the goſpel-ordinances, and particularly in the Lord's ſupper, is an invaluable privilege. If the royal pſalmiſt admired the divine goodneſs in cauſing the ſun, moon and ſtars to ſhine in the firmament for man's behoof, and therefore cries, *What is man, that God is thus mindful of him?* How far greater cauſe have we to ſay ſo, when we obſerve how God cauſes the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhine ſo brightly in the firmament of goſpel-ordinances, and *the day ſpring from on high to viſit us* with the light of ſaving knowledge, and of eternal ſalvation through him?—Again, if the Pſalmiſt exalts God's goodneſs ſo much in his giving the beaſts of the field, fowls of the air, and fiſhes of the ſea to be food for man: What ground have we to admire and praiſe God's infinite mercy, in giving us the fleſh and blood of his own dear Son to preſerve the lives of our ſouls? O what rare goſpel-feaſts are theſe which God allows us in the land wherein we dwell! And O how wonderfully are they preſerved and continued with us, from time to time, by the miraculous working of God's mercy and power! While others are viſited with cleanneſs of teeth, and a famine of the word of God? *He hath not dealt with every nation* as with us.

And, Lord, how diſtinguiſhing is thy goodneſs unto me a moſt unworthy creature! By thy mercy I was born in a valley of viſion; and I dwell in a lightſome Goſhen, when multitudes of others, in Pagan and Popiſh nations, are covered with Egyptian darkneſs, and ſit in the region of the ſhadow of death; I hear heaven's free market-days of grace proclaimed, when others have ſilent ſabbaths; I am invited to a rich banqueting-houſe, when others are ſtarving for the want of the bread of life. O that I could value my mercies aright!—It is a great privilege that I am allowed to ſpeak to the great God in prayer, and to hear him ſpeak unto me in his word! But ſtill he puts a greater honour upon me, by calling me to enjoy intimate communion and fellowſhip with himſelf, yea, inviting me to ſit down with him at his table, and feaſt upon the fruits of Chriſt's death, and benefits of his purchaſe!—Oh, I am not worthy of the leaſt crumb that falls from the children's table, and far leſs of being ſet down at the table with the children to eat of their bread, and ſhare of the dainties provided for them by their heavenly Father. If Peter after having ſeen Chriſt's glory, and his own vileneſs, judged himſelf unworthy to be in the ſame ſhip with Chriſt, and therefore cried, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man.* How ſhould I, the chief of ſinners, adventure to ſit at the ſame table with him, and feed upon his fleſh and blood! Amazing condeſenſion!

O what diſtinction doth God make among nations, in ſending the goſpel to them, with clear views and preſſing offers of a crucified Jeſus to periſhing ſouls? And what cauſe have we in theſe nations of admiring the diſtinguiſhing goodneſs of God to us in this reſpect beyond others! Would we not admire his goodneſs, if he cauſed the ſun ſhine only in our horizon, as he did on Goſhen; when other nations were covered with darkneſs, as the land of Egypt was? Yet ſurely the goſpel-ſun is by far a greater mercy.—The goſpel is indeed a *joyful ſound,* Pſal. lxxxix. 15. ſo called, with alluſion to the ſilver-trumpets made uſe of under the law to call people to the ſolemn aſſemblies, and to intimate to them the feaſt of the paſſover, which repreſented the love and ſufferings of the Meſſiah. A joyful ſound the goſpel is indeed, if we compare it with the ſound of the law's curſes and threatenings thundered from mount Sinai againſt ſinners. But, behold, this joyful ſound bringing ſalvation comes from heaven, even to heaven-daring ſinners, who had openly rebelled againſt the God of heaven! Glad news! bleſſed are they who know this joyful ſound; know it ſo, as to believe it, admire it, entertain it, and comply with it ſo as to receive Chriſt offered therein to loſt ſinners.

Lord, I make this joyful ſound welcome; it is muſic to my ear, and a cordial to my heart. I reckon their feet beautiful who bring ſuch glad tidings to my ſoul. O how welcome would men make them, who would bring them an invention, that would ſecure their eſtates from conſuming, their houſes from burning, or their bodies from dying! But here we have the ſure news of an invention that doth much more for us than all this, even a device that ſecures us from hell, and enſures us of heaven. Ought I not then cheerfully to comply with this joyful ſound, and fall in with the call thereof? God forbid that I ſhould ſtop my ears at it; it had been better for me then never to have heard of it at all: How dreadful would my caſe be at the judgment-day! How would devils, Turks, heathens, and my own conſcience upbraid me in hell to all eternity for my folly in ſlighting this joyful ſound! Surely God may ſlight the mournful ſound of their prayers in the time of diſtreſs, who ſlight the joyful ſound of his goſpel in time of health.—But, Lord, I bleſs thee for it, I love it, I receive it, I welcome it, I fall heartily in with it, and will admire it for ever.

MEDITATION IV.

From 1 John iii. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us!*

IN the amazing work of our redemption, we are called to behold and admire both the love of the Father, and the love of the Son. Unſpeakable love of the Father! that contrived our redemption, pitched upon and gave the Redeemer. O how readily accepted he of the Son's offer to ſuffer and ſatisfy infinite juſtice for ſin in our room! Upon our fall he might juſtly have ſaid, No, the ſoul that ſins ſhall die perſonally, I'll admit of no ſurety. But glory to the bleſſed Father, ſuch was his love to us, that when the dear Son ſaid, Father, I will be the Surety for ſinners of mankind, let my blood be ſhed for theirs, let the blow light on me, let me die in their room; ſuch was the love and pity of the Father to us, that he preſently accepted the offer, held our Redeemer at his word, ſaying, Be it as thou haſt ſaid: *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my Fellow; ſmite the Shepherd,* and ſpare the ſheep. I'll glorify my juſtice upon my own dear Son, rather than upon them. *Amen,* ſaid the bleſſed Son of God: I will be the ſacrifice!

O love unſpeakable, both in the Father and the Son! human love, angelical love is nothing to it! O what is the love of creatures one to another, to this love of God to man! aſtoniſhing love! that the eternal Son of God, intreated by no man, but hated of all men, ſhould in his love and pity intreat for men: yea, undertake and die for them, when enemies to God and all that is good! *O the breadth, O the length, O the depth, O the height of this love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge!* I may poſſibly feel it, but I cannot fathom it. The love of creatures is nothing to the love of Chriſt. It was great love that Jacob bore to Rachel, that he endured the heat of ſummer, and froſts of winter for her: But all this was nothing to the winter-ſtorm which Chriſt ſuffered for us. It was extraordinary love that Jonathan had to David, that he would peril his life to avert his father's wrath from him: But what was that to Chriſt's love, that took on his eternal Father's wrath, which was infinitely greater than Saul's, and actually laid down his life to avert that dreadful ſtorm of wrath from us! What love was it that made him ſtand before the mouth of hell furnace, and ſuffer himſelf to be ſcorched with it in the moſt terrible manner, that he might ſtop the flame from breaking out on us! Behold him receiving the ſword of juſtice into his bowels, to prevent its being ſheathed into our hearts! Behold, when the ſea of God's wrath raged and was tempeſtuous, threatening to ſwallow us all up; Chriſt came, and ſaid, like Jonah, Spare theſe poor ſinners! take me up, and caſt me into the ſea in their ſtead, that the ſtorm may be appeaſed againſt them! Chriſt was willing to be caſt into the ſea of wrath, to be a bleſſed plank of mercy for ſhipwrecked ſouls to grip to, and be ſaved.

Admirable love of the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who would give his dearly beloved Son, out of free love and pity to man, to die and ſuffer wrath for him! and would chuſe rather to ſee his dear Son agonizing and ſtruggling under infinite wrath for a time, than to ſee an elect world ſtruggling in hell among devils for ever! O who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord! who can ſhew forth all his praiſe! O Father of mercies, from all eternity thou foreſaw our fall and miſery, and, in thy wiſdom and love, didſt contrive a noble remedy for us: Thou even didſt provide a Surety for man before the debt was contracted, a Saviour for him before he was loſt; and by this glorious Surety thou haſt found out a noble way to ſatisfy both the demands of juſtice and intreaties of mercy, and glorify both theſe divine perfections at once.——By this, Lord, we know thou loveſt us, that thou haſt not with-held thy Son, thine only Son from us, to be ſacrificed in our room, and graciouſly calleſt us to commemorate thy love, in providing this ſacrifice, at thy holy table.—Inſtead of this, thou mighteſt juſtly have called multitudes of us together, to make us a ſacrifice to thy juſtice for our heinous ſins and rebellions againſt heaven. But, behold, thou calls us together to thy table upon a quite other deſign, even to intimate to us, a ſacrifice of thy own providing, ſufficient for us all; and actually to behold the bleeding victim of the innocent Lamb of God, who willingly, at his Father's call, gave himſelf to be ſlain to take away the ſins of the world!—Lord, what didſt thou ſee in ſuch creatures, to make thee to love us after this manner? Nothing, but much to make thee lothe us; yet the time when we were moſt lotheſom, thou mad'ſt it the time of love! Surely *thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways!* How aſtoniſhing was thy conduct in redeeming us when loſt? And worſe are we than devils, if we be not raviſhed with the love of the Father in projecting our redemption, and with the love of his eternal Son that made him leave his glory in heaven, and even wade through hell to ſave the dregs of the creation.

O what manner of love is this, that the Father did give his eternal Son, to die for theſe who deſerved eternal wrath for their rebellion and treaſon againſt himſelf! When notice was firſt given in this lower world, that the Son of God was coming down to it from heaven; what could have been expected, but that his buſineſs here would be to condemn the world, and haſten the execution of thoſe he found in arms againſt him? But O who can think, and not wonder, that he ſhould have ſent him to ſuffer and die for ſuch as forfeited their lives, and deſerved to be ſlain; yea, for ſuch as were alienated from the life of God, and full of enmity againſt him, unworthy of any place of abode upon earth, and by their wickedneſs fully prepared for hell: O how ſurprizing is it, that God would, in this our miſerable ſtate, ſend the Son of his love to die for us, to reſcue us from deſerving wrath, and purchaſe a new title for us to life and glory! Behold what manner of love this is, that the juſt ſhould ſuffer for the unjuſt, the juſt Prince for the unjuſt rebels, that were in arms againſt him, the King of Glory for the children of diſobedience, the obedient Son for mortal enemies ! O this is ſuch a manner of loving, that the higheſt tranſport of wondering cannot reach : *For ſcarcely for a righteous man will one dare to die ; but God commends his love to us, in that, while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us,* Rom. v. 7, 8.

Oh how am I able to hear, ſpeak, or think of this love, and my heart not burn with an admiring ſenſe of the freeneſs and riches of God's grace ; and with a vehement hatred and indignation againſt my ſins, which contributed to pierce and crucify my glorious Redeemer ! Can I be but raviſhed with love to him, when he comes to communicate his love to me at his table, and ſay, Behold how I have loved you, and given myſelf for you ! I was *cut off, but not for myſelf ; I was wounded for your tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for your iniquities.* It was for you I was betrayed, reviled, condemned and crucified ; for you my hands and feet were nailed to the tree, my head crowned with thorns, and my ſide pierced with a ſpear : And all this I ſuffered, that you might be ſaved from hell, and get ſin forgiven, and God reconciled to you for ever.

MEDITATION V.

From Pſalm viii. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him ?*

WHEN David beheld the heavens, with its glorious luminaries, the ſun, moon and ſtars, and the mighty works of God in the creation, and conſidered what a mean figure man made amongſt them ; he admires God's condeſcenſion and goodneſs in his concern and pains about him, in his works of providence and redemption. Lord, what is man, fallen man, that thou ſhouldſt notice him ſo much ? A poor vile ſinful worm ! And yet how ſingularly minded and honoured is he, in God the Son his undertaking to be his Cautioner and Ranſom ? Had he done it for angels, it had not been ſo marvellous ; but what is man that God ſhould viſit him in this manner ! ſhould pay him a homely viſit in human nature, to ſee what ailed him, to hear his complaints, and know feelingly his wants and miſeries, that he might the better ſympathize with him, relieve, and ſupply him !

But who is this that comes to pay this viſit to man ; even he that is King of kings, and Lord of lords, who is infinite in majeſty and power, in riches and glory. How awful are the deſcriptions given us of him in the Bible ? *Great is the Lord and of great power, his underſtanding is infinite. He calls the ſtars by their names. Whatſoever he pleaſed, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the ſeas, and all the deep places.* And it is ſaid of his coming to judgment, Dan. vii. 10. *A fiery ſtream iſſued forth from before him, thouſand thouſands miniſtred unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him.* And yet this almighty Perſon, the great God, condeſcends to clothe himſelf with our nature, and ſtoops to the very ground, in the moſt lowly manner, to pay a kind viſit to his rebellious creature, man, even man that is a worm ; and when he gets not acceſs to him at firſt, he continues to ſtand and knock at his door.——O how marvellous is this, that he who was Omnipotent, that could by a word have annihilated fallen man, and created a more amiable creature in all reſpects in his room, ſhould ſtoop ſo low to him ! that he who was Omniſcient, and perfectly knew man's unworthineſs, his enmity, his ingratitude, and what unkind returns he would make for the greateſt kindneſs, ſhould court him ſo earneſtly ! That the Judge of heaven ſhould come down from the bench, and put on the pannel's clothes, that he might anſwer and ſatisfy the law for him !——That the great General of the armies of heaven, ſhould put himſelf in the room of a poor condemned deſerter to ſuffer for him !—That the Creator ſhould ſtoop to die for the creature, even the great God for a worm, man, is love that ſwallows up our thoughts and language ! What can we think ! what can we ſay of it ! it is love that paſſeth knowledge ! the moſt penetrating angel cannot fathom its height, its depth, its breadth, or its length ! Why ; for its height, it is infinitely higher than the higheſt heavens. For its depth, none can ſee its bottom, for it made him ſtoop as low as hell. For its breadth, it is as broad as the whole earth and the whole heavens too ; it comprehends all his people, even the pooreſt out-caſt on earth, as well as the higheſt ſaint in heaven. For its length, it never ends, but continues without interruption, notwithſtanding of provocations ; nay, it is drawn out parallel with the longeſt line of eternity.

Lord, what is man that thou ſhould have minded him, viſited him, and loved him ſo ! a creature moſt unlovely, ugly and black as hell ; that had got the image of God razed out, and the image of Satan pictured in its room.—A creature lame and impotent, that could not riſe but as Chriſt lifted him, could not ſtand but as he upheld him, could not walk but as he led him, nor move but as he drew him.—A rebel, that was in league with hell, that hated his Sovereign, and was plotting with the devil to pull the crown off his head.—A creature made lothſome by ſin in God's ſight, yea, more lothſome than the new born infant wallowing in its blood, than Job when full of boils, than Lazarus full of ſores, or a dead carcaſe crawling with worms.—A creature that was undeſirous of God's viſit or help, and unwilling to accept of it ; that ſaid to him, *Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways.* A creature that contemned his love, rejected his offers, and trampled his blood.——Who would have pitied ſuch a creature ? one ſo poor, ſo vile, ſo miſerable ! It had been much to have given him an alms ; but for the Son of God to give his life for him, may ſtrike men and angels with aſtoniſhing ſurpriſe for ever. *Lord, what is man* ! a poor feeble crawling worm, *that thou ſhouldſt be mindful of him* after this manner ? And what are we, that we ſhould ſtill have the offers of this love continued to us ? Oh, ſhall we ever make light of this love any more ? *I believe, Lord help my unbelief.*

There is a parallel text, Pſal. cxliv. 3. *Lord, what is man that thou takeſt knowledge of him ? Or the ſon of man, that thou makeſt account of him ?* What a poor little thing is man, that thou ſhouldſt make ſo great account of him, put ſuch reſpect upon him above all other creatures, ſo as to condeſcend to ſtand in a nearer relation to him than to any other, as that of a *Father*, a *Brother*, a *Huſband*, a *Friend*, &c. yea more, thou haſt dignified this poor thing, *man*, ſo much, as to aſſume his nature into an ineffable, perſonal union with the ſecond Perſon of the ever glorious Trinity, whereby the nature of man is exalted above all the angels of heaven. It is not the angelical, but the human nature, which God hath choſen to tabernacle in; and now it is honoured ſo far, as to be ſet on the right-hand of the Majeſty on high.——The great account God hath of this little thing, *man*, appears further in the great coſt he hath laid out for him. Why, God not only gives his creatures to die for man, to yield him food, but he alſo gives his Chriſt to die for him, to procure him eternal life. Again, how great is the goodneſs which God hath laid up for him hereafter? Eye hath not ſeen it, ear hath not heard it, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive how great it is! O what a favourite of heaven muſt this little creature, *man*, be.

Lord, who can but wonder at the honour thou haſt already put upon *man*, and at the favours thou ſtill deſigns for him! great things haſt thou laid out, and great things haſt thou laid up for *man*. I admire thy low ſtoop in the viſit thou madſt man, in the incarnation of thy dear Son, and in thy viſit in the goſpel-proclamation, and offer of pardon thro' him! but let me ſtill plead for another viſit in the effuſion of thy holy Spirit: This other viſit thou knoweſt is neceſſary to make the former effectual to my ſalvation. May then thy holy Spirit work faith in me, to fall in with thy glorious device for the redemption of man in all points, to accept of thy love offers, and reſt upon thy free promiſes of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt, and his moſt perfect righteouſneſs. *Amen.*

MEDITATION VI.

From 1 Cor. x. 4. *And that Rock was Chriſt.*

HOW uſeful was that rock in the wilderneſs to the Iſraelites ſojourning there, after it was ſmitten by Moſes his rod: When they were ready to periſh in that dry deſert, the rock ſent forth ſtreams of water to them in great abundance; ſtreams that followed them, up hill and down hill, in all their turnings and windings, marches and countermarches through that weary land. That rock was to them a lively type of Chriſt, who being ſmitten by the rod of the law's curſes, whoſe miniſter Moſes was, ſends forth plentiful ſupplies to his people, while travelling in the wilderneſs of this world. There are two principal ſtreams of bleſſings which he ſends forth, moſt uſeful to us, to wit, a ſtream of *blood* for our *juſtification*, and a ſtream of the *Spirit* for our *ſanctification*. The channel or conduit-pipes, for conveying theſe ſtreams to us, are the *ordinances* and *promiſes* of the goſpel; and through theſe pipes, theſe bleſſed ſtreams run freely to all true believers, from the Rock Chriſt, which was broached for them.

Oh, how coſtly was our redemption to our dear kinſman Jeſus Chriſt, dear did our ſouls coſt him! The Rock of our ſalvation was cleaved aſunder, rent and pierced to the very heart, to let out the waters of life to us, by which only we can be preſerved from eternal death, and obtain eternal life. How coſtly and precious are the ſtreams of Chriſt's blood and Spirit, his mercy and grace, which flow from the ſmitten Rock, and follow us through the wilderneſs in the free offers of the goſpel! They are life-giving ſtreams, fire-quenching, heart-ſoftning, ſoul cleanſing, healing and fructifying ſtreams: Welcome then ſhould we make theſe ſtreams to our ſouls in this dry and thirſty land.——Likewiſe the rock was to the Iſraelites a ſhadow from the heat, and a covert from tempeſts and ſtorms: So Chriſt our Rock ſcreens us from the ſcorching heat of vindictive juſtice, and from the waves and billows of God's wrath.—How neceſſary and uſeful is the Rock Chriſt to the ſouls of fallen men! Oh, let me never Jeſhurun-like, lightly eſteem this Rock of our ſalvation. O let me never go to falſe rocks, or falſe ſtreams, for ſhelter and ſupply in ſtraits, when the true Rock is ſo near, and the ſaving ſtreams run ſo cloſs by my door; yea follow me daily in the channel of the word and ſacraments: Streams appointed by Heaven to anſwer all the caſes and ailments of loſt ſinners. O ſhall God in his tender mercy provide ſuch a wonderful remedy, ſet the Rock a-broach for me, and cauſe its ſtreams to follow me; and ſhall I be ſo fooliſh as turn my back upon them, and refuſe to apply or make uſe of them? O ſave me from ſuch curſed ingratitude and madneſs; *I believe, Lord help my unbelief.*

O how much ſhould my heart be affected at the holy table, when I ſee the Rock of my ſalvation ſmitten by the rod of juſtice, and behold the bloody ſpear pierce into his heart! O Rock of ages, what made thee to rend and cleave ſo! O brightneſs of thy Father's glory, who hath disfigured thee ſo? O River of life, clear as cryſtal, who hath troubled thee ſo? Oh, it was my ſins, my pride, my paſſion, my unbelief, my worldlineſs, my hardneſs, impenitence, &c. theſe were the cauſe of my Redeemer's ſufferings. The iniquities of ſinful men were laid upon him. When he was pierced, it was I that ſhould have been ſmitten. When he groaned and ſwate blood, I ſhould have howled and roared in hell. Harder than the rock is my heart, if I can ſee my dear Saviour ſmitten and pierced, and not mourn. O can I ſee his ſide and heart ſtreaming out blood, and mine eyes not pour out tears! Can I behold the Rock ſmitten for the ſins of men, and not adore the holineſs and juſtice of God manifeſted therein? Can I ſee my innocent Saviour wounded and ſlain for my ſins, and my ſoul not hate them; yea, ſhall I not be filled with horror and trembling at temptations to ſin?

Let me, at my Saviour's call, approach to his table, and come near to the Rock of my ſalvation, and hearken to the raging billows of infinite wrath, daſhing againſt the Rock for my ſins, and even making the Rock to grone, ſweat and tremble under the preſſure. O what a dreadful hurricane of wrath did he endure, to keep the ſwelling ocean of divine wrath from overflowing guilty men? Surely my glorious Immanuel's groaning and ſweating blood under the ſtrokes of God's vengeance, is a greater evidence of the implacable wrath and indignation of God againſt ſin, than if he had hurled all the rocks of the creation into the midſt of the ſea, yea, or a thouſand worlds of men and angels into hell. O that, while I am beholding this ſight, I may tremble at ſin, come by faith under the ſhadow of this Rock, and run into the clefts of it for ſafety. Here I would be out of the reach of the law's curſes, and threatenings of wrath; and though I hear the roarings and daſhings of the ſea upon the Rock, yet a drop of it could not touch me.

O that I could imitate Moſes, when I am at the table, and ſmite the Rock by the rod of faith, that the ſtreams of Chriſt's blood and Spirit may flow out to me. What was his error will be my wiſdom, to ſmite the Rock oftner than once, to put forth many acts of faith on Jeſus Chriſt, ſuch as the diſcerning, aſſenting, approving, deriving, receiving, cloſing, embracing, truſting, pleading, applying, appropriating acts of true faith. May I, like Iſrael of old, Deut. xxxii. 13. be helped by faith to ſuck honey out of the Rock, and oil out of the flinty Rock: Honey and oil, ſweetneſs and fatneſs, quickening and comfort. How ſhall I come at this honey and oil? only by ſucking: And how ſhall I ſuck, but by the mouth of faith? There is no ſucking without it. Neither can I ſuck by faith, unleſs God make me do it; for it is ſaid Deut. xxxii. *He made them to ſuck honey out of the rock.* It is God that muſt give me both a mouth and ſtrength to ſuck, faith in the habit, and faith in exerciſe. It is only the blowings of the north and ſouth winds on the garden, that make the ſpices to flow out. *Awake, O north wind, come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden;* bring faith to life, that I may ſuck honey from Chriſt in the ſacrament. Chriſt's breaſts are now full; O let not faith be wanting, for if it be wanting, I can ſuck nothing: Bleſſed be God, Jeſus Chriſt, my Redeemer, is the author of faith. Lord, increaſe my faith, that I may ſuck honey from the Rock. 2. But what honey may I expect from it? *Anſw.* The honey of pardon of ſin. O how ſweet is this honey!—The honey of peace and reconciliation with God; —the honey of a law-biding righteouſneſs;—the honey of acceſs to, and communion with God;——the honey of enlargement of heart, and looſing of bands, &c. O let me ever ſuck from this Rock, the Rock that anſwers all my needs, and richly ſupplies all my wants.—Let me alſo under all my ſtraits, ſupport myſelf with the Pſalmiſt's cordial, Pſal. xviii. 46. *The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my Rock.* Why ſhould believers in Chriſt droop in any condition, or look like dead men, while their Lord liveth, and their Rock ſtandeth? Bleſſed be God my Rock is a living and laſting Rock, my hopes may die, my comforts die, my frames die, my gifts, my wealth, and my relations, they may all die; but I rejoice in the news, that my Lord will not die, nor my Rock fall. He once died for me, but he is riſen again; good news! Now he is alive, and will die no more.

MEDITATION VII.

From Zech. xii. 10. *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.*

THIS promiſe hath a reſpect, not only to the Jews when converted, but to all ſinners when brought to repentance. We have all pierced Chriſt, in as much as our ſins were the cauſe of his death; *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions.* Now, a believing ſight of a pierced Saviour, is the beſt ſpring of ſorrow for ſin; it is faith's look to a crucified Chriſt, that will ſet us a mourning after a godly ſort. O that this promiſe may be made good to me at this time, that I may be helped to look believingly upon Chriſt as pierced for my ſins, my pride, my paſſion, my unbelief, my carnality, my diſobedience, my impenitence, my ſins of the heart, of the tongue, and of the life, that I may confeſs and bewail them, mourn and weep over them before the Lord. O! when ſhall I mourn and weep if not now, when I am called to look upon my dear Lord and Surety at his table, all red with blood for my red and ſcarlet coloured ſins? I will not now ſtand afar off, and look to my Saviour on the croſs, as theſe women who followed him from Galilee, Luke xxiii. 49. No, I will come cloſe to him, take a near look, and a narrow view of his wounds and piercings by my ſins, that I may ſee how wide and deep they are, that my eye may affect my heart with godly ſorrow for ſin.

When I look on him, I'll conſider the dignity of the Perſon pierced by and for me; he is the almighty Creator, the glorious *Immanuel,* the Plant of renown, the Prince of the kings of the earth, that is pierced and nailed to a croſs. *Jeremiah* laments in the captivity, that princes were hanged up by the hands, Lam. v. 12. But what were the princes of Iſrael to the Prince of peace, the King of glory, whom I ſee hanging nailed through the hands on the croſs, and his blood poured out like water upon the earth! O it is royal blood, the blood of God, that I ſee running down to ſatisfy juſtice for my ſins; and will not ſuch a ſight cauſe me to mourn for them? Can I look on my lovely Redeemer, ſtript naked, mounted up, and fixed with nails to a tormenting croſs? Can I ſee his head pierced with thorns, his back pierced with ſcourgings, his hands and feet pierced with big nails, his ſide pierced with a ſpear, and his heart pierced with ſorrows for my ſins, and my heart not mourn for them? Yet all the piercings and wounds of his ſacred body were but ſmall, to the piercings and agonies of his ſoul, when he drank of the cup of the Father's wrath for me, which made him cry out, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful even unto death; my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Can I behold this loving Jeſus, ſtanding in my room, bearing the wrath of a Deity for me, and my heart not bleed? Can I ſee him, when the ſword of juſtice was drawn to ſmite me, opening his breaſt to receive the ſtroke into his heart, and my heart not melt within me? Lord, grant me ſuch a ſight by faith, of a wounded bleeding Saviour, as to make me a melting and mourning ſinner.

How can I leave this ſubject until my heart be more affected? Had I been perſonally at mount Calvary, and with my bodily eyes had ſeen my dear Redeemer racked and nailed to the tree! Had I ſeen him lifted up between heaven and earth, that the nations might behold him, with his arms ſtretched out to embrace ſinners! Had I beheld his dying looks, and heard his dying groans! Had I ſeen his precious blood for many hours run from his wounded hands and feet to the earth! Could I have ſtood by with dry eyes, or an unconcerned heart, eſpecially when I had thought he was ſuffering all this out of love to me, for my ſins, and in my room!——Why then ſhould not I be as much concerned, when I come to his table to celebrate the memorial of that fearful tragedy, and look upon the outward ſigns which repreſent the ſame! Lord, give me faith's eye to behold the things ſignified thereby, even the bleeding and dying of the glorious Immanuel.—And what kind of blood is it I ſee running down! It is innocent blood! precious blood! royal blood! heart-blood! Nay, the blood of the eternal Son of God, one drop whereof is worth an ocean of our blood, and is of infinite value; and yet behold all this blood is ſhed for ſuch worms as

I am! O can I think long upon this ſubject, and not find my heart pained with love, and be ready, with Joſeph, to ſeek a ſecret place to weep in? Had an ordinary man been executed for my crime, it would have affected me all my days; how much ſhould it touch me to ſee the Son of God put to death for me! The ſun fainted, the heavens mourned in black, the earth quaked, and the rocks rent, when this black tragedy was acted; how much more ſhould my heart rend and mourn at the repreſentation of it before my eyes! Surely my mourning ſhould be great, deep, and bitter mourning, as in the text, like the mourning of a parent for the death of an only ſon; or like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo! O what was the death of king Joſiah to the death of King Jeſus, the eternal Son of God! O my dear ſlain Lamb, ſhall I not mourn and weep over thee!

Oh! can I ſee his blood run down in ſtreams, and my eyes not pour out ſome drops! Did Chriſt ſweat blood, and weep blood for my ſins, and ſhall not I weep tears for them? Shall I not give drops of water for ſtreams of blood! Alas! am I more ſparing of my tears for Chriſt, than Chriſt was of his blood for me! How faſt did the blood trickle down Chriſt's cheeks in the day he wore the crown of thorns for me? But how ſlowly do the tears fall from my eyes when I commemorate his dying love; Can I ſhed tears in plenty for a dead child! and have I reſerved none for a ſlain Saviour? Yea ſlain for my ſins! How ſad is it to ſee ſo many weeping eyes at a funeral, and ſo many dry eyes at a communion-table: Alas, this is a ſad ſign of few looking by faith to him we have pierced! few ſenſible of the evil of their ſins that were the hammers which drove in the nails into his body. O for a realizing act of faith, repreſenting all that the Lamb of God ſuffered, in the greateſt certainty and cleareſt evidence, that it is no deviſed fable. O for an applying and appropriating act of faith, to bring all home to myſelf, and ſay, *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me!*

What a hard heart is this I have beyond others! Can I ſee others weeping and mourning over a ſlain Saviour, that ſit at the ſame table, eat the ſame bread, and drink the ſame cup with me, and cannot I get one tear! Is God come with his bottle waiting for my tears? Do others pour into it plentifully, and have I not one tear to drop into God's bottle? Lord, what means the hardneſs of my heart, and the dryneſs of my eyes, at the ſight of my Saviour's bleeding and dying for my ſins? When ſhould I mourn and weep if not now! Was there ever ſuch an occaſion for tears? Oh! doth God intend to reſerve weeping for me in hell, where tears ſhall never be dryed up! This is what I deſerve, if I be hard-hearted and dry eyed now. But, Lord pity my hardneſs, and give me ſuch a look as thou gaveſt Peter, that may cauſe me weep, and weep bitterly, at the remembrance of my ſins which pierced thee.

MEDITATION VIII.

From Luke xxii. 61, 62. *The Lord looked upon Peter.— And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

LORD, ſince my looks to thee are ſo ſlight, ſo wavering and inconſtant, that they make little or no impreſſion on my hard heart, do thou vouchſafe to look upon me with pity and with power; for thy looks are efficacious, and melt down the hardeſt heart. O give me ſuch a look as thou gaveſt Peter, when he denied thee, and began to curſe and ſwear: A look that may bring me to myſelf, and cauſe me weep, and weep bitterly, at the remembrance of my ſins, my unbelief, my pride, my paſſion, my diſobedience which pierced thee, my deareſt Lord and Saviour. *Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me,* Pſal. cxix. 132. Chriſt's look to backſliding Peter was merciful, and full of compſſion; his bowels yearned for his poor diſciple, when ready to fall into the devil's arms by total and final backſliding, and prevents him ſpeedily. He would not let him ly long in that diſmal ſtate he fell into, as it were on the very brink of hell, but preſently plucks him back, and recovers him. In like manner, Lord look on me, and recover me ſpeedily when I fall into ſin, leſt my next ſtep be into hell.

Chriſt's look to Peter was a preventing look; he looked on Peter before Peter looked to his Saviour for mercy, and before he looked on himſelf, or upon his ſin, and the danger he was expoſed to by it. Glory to my Redeemer that watches over his people, ſees and minds their danger, when they themſelves are little thinking upon it; he is more careful of them than they are of themſelves. How marvellous was Chriſt's love, that would be ſo concerned about Peter at ſuch a time, when he himſelf was amidſt his bloody enemies, and upon trial for his life: Even then, as it were, he forgets his own danger, and takes notice of the danger of his ſervant: He being *the great Shepherd of his ſheep,* ventures all to reſcue one of his flock out of *the mouth of the lion, and from the paw of the bear.* O who would not deſire to belong to the flock of ſuch a faithful, loving, and compaſſionate Shephed!

The look Chriſt gave Peter was a convincing look; it laid open his ſin to him with all its aggravations, which made it very bitter to him. It ſpoke ſuch language to him as this; "O Peter, what haſt thou done? Haſt thou caſt off thy Saviour? And haſt thou ſaid, thou knoweſt not me, who knew thee from the womb, and am going to die for thee? Doſt thou not know me that called thee from thy nets, that impowered thee to preach the goſpel, and work-miracles, that kept thee from ſinking in the waters? Am I not he thou ſaweſt ſhining on mount Tabor? Even he thou ſaidſt thou wouldſt rather die than deny?" O for ſuch a convincing look from Chriſt, that would pierce and melt my heart, and make me weep bitterly both now and at his table, for my baſe ingratitude, in diſowning and piercing my dear Redeemer!

Chriſt's look to Peter was a powerful and overcoming look, it conquered his will, looſed him from the world and ſin, and made him yield preſently to Chriſt: He was not able to hold out a moment longer, but, like Joſeph, ſeeks a ſecret place to weep in. O how powerful is a look from Chriſt! it is ſufficient to bow the moſt ſtubborn will, and melt the hardeſt heart; it can turn *the rock into ſtanding water, and the flint into a fountain of water,* Pſal. cxiv. 8. How powerful was the look he gave to poor Jeruſalem when *lying in their blood;* a look that cauſed them to live, Ezek. xvi. 6. How powerful was the look he gave to Zaccheus on the ſycamore tree, Luke xix. 5. O for ſuch a look as would bring me preſently down, in like manner, from the ſycamore of my ſelf-conceit and ſelf-righteouſneſs, and from my beſt beloved ſins and idols, and cauſe me receive Chriſt joyfully into my heart, and go with chearfulneſs to his table, and receive the ſeal of his covenant, ſaying, *My Lord, and my God.*

Chriſt's look to Peter was a peculiar and diſtinguiſhing look; the power and grace of God went alongſt with it to change Peter's heart, and bring him to his right mind. Chriſt looked on many thouſands that were never the better of it. He looked on Judas after he betrayed him, and when he preſumed to kiſs him, and reproved him too for his baſe treachery: But neither that look nor reproof melted his heart. As the beams of the ſame very ſun hardens clay and ſoftens frozen earth; ſo a look from the ſame Jeſus, *the Sun of righteouſneſs*, left Judas hard and impenitent, whilſt it ſoftened Peter's heart. The one went on in his villany, whilſt the other relented, and melted into tears. Why? he looked but on the face of Judas, but he looked on the heart of Peter. He looked upon the one with a frowning judicial look, but looked upon the other with a recovering and drawing look. Chriſt's look to Peter was accompanied with the inward influences of his Spirit on his heart, otherwiſe it had been ineffectual. Oh, if he would vouchſafe ſuch a gracious look to my frozen heart, and ſoften it! I would fain bring my hard heart and lay it before this bleſſed Sun, and wait until he draw by the cloud, look through, and ſhine upon it. Lord, I tremble to go to thy table with this hard heart, leſt thou ſhould look on me with anger, as thou didſt upon theſe, Mark iii 5. upon account of the hardneſs of their hearts. Lord, I deſire to be grieved for my heart hardneſs, and to look to thee whom I have pierced by it. Give ſuch a look to my heart as thou gave to Peter's, melt it down into penitential tears, and cauſe me to go aſide *and weep bitterly*.

Chriſt's look cauſed Peter to remember and think upon Chriſt's words to him. It is in and by his word that he works upon ſinners hearts. O if the Spirit would bring the word to my mind, ſet it powerfully home upon my conſcience, and ſo give the happy turn to my ſoul. Lord help me, to lay up thy words, and ponder them in my heart; and O bring them always ſeaſonably to my view, that when I fall, I may not ly long under ſin, nor continue in a ſtate of backſliding from thee. May I have ſuch a look from thee, as ſhall look all my idols out of countenance, and look my wandering heart into a right frame for the covenanting and communicating work: A look that ſhall put new life in all my drooping graces, and kindle ſuch a flame of love to Chriſt in my heart, and of indignation againſt ſin, as all the devils in hell ſhall never be able to quench. A look that ſhall make me weep, while I live for piercing Chriſt the Lamb.

Oh, ſhall others ſhed tears in plenty for ſin, and my eyes remain dry? Shall others get their hearts broken, and mine continue hard! Lord, thy grace is free; O how eaſy were it for thee to melt my heart, and moiſten my eyes: One touch of thy hand, nay one look of thy countenance, one caſt of thine eye is ſufficient to do it. O turn unto me, and give me one merciful look; for thy ordinance will be lifeleſs, and loſt unto me, if thou look not on me. How can I go to thy table to behold Jeſus, my Surety, all red with blood for my red and ſcarlet-coloured ſins, while my heart doth not mourn, nor my eyes run down? Surely the ſtreams of my Saviour's blood deſerve to be lamented with tears of blood, and ſhall I not do it, at leaſt with tears of water? Was he wounded for my tranſgreſſions, and ſhall not my heart bleed, and eyes weep for his wounds given him by my ſins?

MEDITATION IX.

From Math. xv. 27. *And ſhe ſaid, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs.*

THis woman was a Canaanite, and lived among heathens, yet ſhe had greater knowledge and faith of the Meſſiah than moſt of the Jews. Her faith, humility, patience and reſolution, amidſt the greateſt diſcouragements, are here recorded for a pattern and encouragement to diſponding believers in all ages.

This woman was ſo ſenſible of her miſery, that ſhe addreſſes Chriſt with great earneſtneſs for help: She doth not ſpeak calmly or coldly to Chriſt, but ſhe cried unto him, and followed him with her cries, ver. 22, 23. Surely, if I were duly affected with my ſpiritual wants and miſeries, I would ſpeak to God in no other language than that of cries and tears. O what cauſe have I to bewail my coldneſs and indifferency in prayer, and the little ſenſe I have of my dangers and neceſſities, which are great beyond expreſſion.

This woman, notwithſtanding of her great earneſtneſs and ſtrong faith, met with very great trials and diſcouragements in her addreſſes to Chriſt.

1. Her firſt trial is Chriſt's ſilence to her, when crying to him for mercy, ver. 23. *He anſwered her not a word.* Strange! not a word from a meek and merciful Saviour, that never put a poor ſinner, ſeeking for mercy, away from him before; but ſtill invited all to come to him for it. That is a ſore temptation, Lam. iii. 8. *When I cry and ſhout, he ſhutteth out my prayer.* Believers are apt to think that God ſhuts out their prayers in wrath, when it is not ſo. Chriſt heard this woman, accepted her, was pleaſed with her, and ſtrengthened her to hold on in prayer, tho' he did not immediately anſwer her. He entertained her with ſilence to draw her on to be more importunate, and to try her faith, patience and perſeverance, and thereby to teach us to be *followers of thoſe who through faith and patience* do now *inherit the promiſes*. Chriſt keeps the door bolted for a time, that we may knock the harder, Math. vii. 7. *Aſk, ſeek, knock.* The choiceſt mercies come to us after the greateſt wreſtlings. Likewiſe I ſee here, that there is love in Chriſt's heart to wreſtling ſouls, even when frowns appear in his looks; wherefore let me take encouragement from him, *though he ſlay me, yet to truſt in him*.

2. Another ſore trial the woman met with, was the anſwer Chriſt gave his diſciples when interceeding for her, whereby he ſeems to exclude her out of his commiſſion, ver. 24. *I am not ſent but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.* The Jews were called *ſheep*, but the Gentiles, *dogs*. The Jews were indeed to have the firſt offer of Chriſt's grace and purchaſe. Though the woman might have taken Chriſt's words as a plain repulſe, yet ſhe ſtudies to put the beſt ſenſe on them ſhe can, and continues her importunity. Which teacheth us never to leave the throne of grace for any diſcouragement.

3. She gets a repulſe yet more ſharp than the two former, even after ſhe had come cloſe up to him, and fallen down at his feet, ſaying, *Lord, help me.* Then it is Chriſt ranks her among the dogs, theſe that were without the covenant profane and unclean. Now, one might think, ſhe is cut off by that word, and will inſiſt no more after it. Nay, ſhe takes hold of that word of reproach, and pleads upon it in the text, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog,* vile and unworthy; yet let me humbly aſk the dogs room and privilege, even to creep beneath the childrens table, and gather ſome crumbs of mercy. O how much is contained here for our inſtruction and imitation!

1ſt, What cauſe have we, O Lord, to bleſs thy goodneſs, that we Gentiles, of *dogs* are now become *children,* and allowed to come to thy table! And, at the ſame time to fear thy juſtice, ſince the Jews, of *children,* are now become *dogs,* and ſhut out as unclean! If they were cut of who crucified thee in thy low eſtate, what may we expect, if, by our ſins we crucify thee in thy glory? Let us not be high-minded, but fear.

2dly, Chriſt puts the ſtrongeſt faith of his people upon the ſharpeſt trials: He thinks fit, for his own glory, where he gives much grace, to try grace much.

3dly, Theſe who are eminent in faith are moſt humble; this woman was ſo. O how humbly did ſhe plead with Chriſt! She threw herſelf on the ground, lay low at his feet, and from the duſt cried for help; ſhe claimed nothing, only begged for mercy. And when Chriſt ſpurned her from his feet, calling her *a dog,* ſhe doth not murmur nor complain of his harſh carriage, but humbly takes with the charge; *Truth Lord,* thou doſt not miſcall me, nor call me ſo bad as I am, *I am a dog,* a moſt vile and unworthy creature, and have no right to the childrens bread, and muſt ſtarve if thou haſt not mercy on me. She can bear any thing, the worſt frown or chaſtiſement from Chriſt, only ſhe can't bear being excluded from his mercy and grace, ſhe would have ſome token of it, tho' never ſo ſmall: ſhe claims not a Benjamin's meal, nor a child's portion, only let her have a dog's crumb. Lord, I take patiently the ſtripe from thee; give me but a crumb after it, and I'll go away ſatisfied. Surely the more humble any ſupplicant is at the throne of grace; he comes ſtill the better ſpeed, for the *Lord reſiſts the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

4thly, God's uſual method of diſpenſing his mercy and grace to ſinners, is firſt to caſt them down before he raiſe them up; he firſt humbles and lays them low in a ſenſe of their unworthineſs and vileneſs, before he advance them to his favour. We muſt ſee ourſelves to be as dogs, *leſs than the leaſt of all God's mercies,* before we are fit to be dignified with *the privileges of children.*

5thly, When unbelief draws diſmal concluſions from every thing, and tempts us to quit our grips and hopes upon any dark diſpenſation, and to ſay with that wicked king, 2 Kings vi. 33. *This evil is of the Lord: What ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* Behold, faith is a valiant and importunate grace, it puts the beſt conſtructions upon all Chriſt's actions; it is ſharp ſighted, to ſee and take hold of all advantages to ſtrengthen itſelf, and finds encouragement even in that which is diſcouraging. That which ſeemed to cut off this believing woman's hope, ſhe improves it as a ground of hope, and an argument in prayer, *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat,* &c. *q. d.* Even the worthleſs dogs belong to the family, and though they may not feaſt with children at the table, they may creep under it and gather crumbs, theſe off fallings that would be ſwept to the door, this will not wrong the children. Let me ſtand in relation to Chriſt, though in the meaneſt ſtation, even that of his dog; I'll be thankful for it, or for any thing, if he do not turn me out of the houſe.

6thly, When our diſcouragements are greateſt, we ſhould learn, from this woman, never to give over the exerciſe of faith and prayer; but to look on all our diſappointments in the ſucceſs of prayer, as excitements to greater earneſtneſs in prayer. Faith will not ſet limits to the *holy One*; though ſpeedy anſwers be not given to our prayers, it becomes us to wait on God's time, who is the beſt Judge of the fitteſt ſeaſon: *He that believeth will not make haſte.* Why? he knows his extremity is God's fit opportunity.

7thly, A reſolute adhering to Chriſt by faith under trials is moſt pleaſing and acceptable to him; as when we perſevere in the uſe of means when ſucceſs is ſmall, when we depend upon his promiſe, and look to his power; when under the darkeſt diſpenſations we watch over our hearts and ſteps, that they do not decline from his ways, as theſe in Pſal. xliv. 17. 18. And, glory to him that gives us ſuch encouragement for this reſolute adherence to him, as the mercifulneſs of his nature, and his faithfulneſs, which aſſure us, there is more good-will in his heart than is viſible in his dealings; and that his providence will never give his word the lie. He gives in ſecret ſtrength to his people to adhere to him, when he ſeems moſt oppoſite to them, as he did to this woman. He loves to bring about his peoples mercies by means improbable and contrary, to glorify his wiſdom. He delights to bring light out of darkneſs.

8thly, Great will the reward at laſt be of the believer's faith, humility and perſeverance in prayer; for, ſaith Chriſt at length, ver. 28. *O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

MEDITATION X.

From 1 Cor. xi. 24. *This do in remembrance of me.*

O My ſoul, here is a ſolemn ordinance inſtituted for keeping up the remembrance of a crucified Jeſus; and behold it was appointed by himſelf, when he was juſt a-going to do more for us than all the angels of heaven could have done, even to make atonement for our ſins by his death and ſufferings; and he twice repeats his dying charge to us, ver. 24. and 25. *This do, this do ye.* Men uſe to regard the commands of their dying friends, and perform their wills religiouſly; and ſhall not I with pleaſure obey the will and command of a dying Redeemer, when the thing he requires is ſo eaſy and agreeable, to eat and drink at his table in remembrance of him? If I forget thee, O Friend of ſinners, let my right-hand forget its cunning, &c.

Our loving Redeemer well knew the treachery of our memories, the worldlineſs of our hearts, and inconſtancy of our affections, that we would be ready to let his death and love ſlip out of our thoughts, and therefore he would have the ſigns of his ſufferings frequently preſented to our eyes. Alas! for the curſed ingratitude of my heart, that is ſo apt to forget him that remembred me when there was none to pity me: but glory to him that takes ſuch pains to cure my forgetfulneſs, by ſetting forth Chriſt crucified ſo evidently before my eyes in the broken bread and poured out wine in the ſacrament.—I look upon this ordinance as a viſible repreſentation and commemoration of my Saviour's death and ſufferings for his people, which he will have continued till he come again to judgment. It is like a marble pillar ſet up upon his grave, with an inſcription bearing account of his glorious atchievements and mighty deeds, his glorious ſufferings, conflicts and victories for his people.—Wherefore, as oft as he calls me, I will go thither, and put all the honour and reſpect I can upon my kind Benefactor; I will remember his love, proclaim his worth, and publiſh his praiſes. I'll hereby own myſelf before the world to be one of his diſciples, and a follower of the Lamb. I'll declare my abhorrence of ſin that pierced him, and my gratitude to the Lamb for the atoning ſacrifice he offered up for me upon the croſs. I'll triumph in this as the only ground of my hope. I'll put the crown on his head, and caſt all my crowns down at his feet, and cry, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, and has redeemed* me from my ſins *by his blood;* worthy is he *to receive all honour, power, glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

Glory to my dear Saviour, that ſeeks no greater return for all his labour of love, than a thankful remembrance of it at his table. Oh, ſhould I grudge to give ſuch a ſmall return to him that ſuffered the pains of death and hell for me! Had he bid me ſacrifice my firſt-born, gave all I have to the poor, or go in pilgrimage to the Holy Land to viſit his ſepulchre, or go to the top of mount Calvary where the croſs ſtood, as a token of thankfulneſs for his love, could I have refuſed it! But he puts me to no ſuch hard taſk.——Lord, thou bids me not go to a bloody ſcaffold to remember thee, but to a well-covered table to do it. Thou bids me not go there to bleed or burn for thee, but to eat and drink; not the bread of affliction or water of adverſity, but bread that ſtrengthens the heart, and wine that cheers the drooping ſpirit, bread and wine which thou haſt ſanctified and bleſſed for me.——Surely, O dear Saviour, I owe my life to thee, nay, a thouſand lives if I had them; but it is not my life, but my memory and thoughts, thou art calling for; it is not to die for thee, but to remember thee.——Didſt thou drink a cup of wrath on the croſs for me, and will not I drink a cup of bleſſing at the table for thee, nay for myſelf, and for my eternal ſalvation!

Let me go then to this holy table, with faith, love and thankfulneſs, to remember Chriſt and his dying love, as he commands me. And while I remember him, let me alſo receive and embrace him, as my bleeding High Prieſt, in the arms of my faith, and at the ſame time throw my guilty ſoul into his wounded arms, for ſaving me from wrath.——Let me go and remember the woundings and piercings of my Redeemer, with a pierced and wounded heart for theſe curſed ſins which nailed and killed the Prince of life. Let me henceforth be the death of ſin, which was the death of my dear Saviour. Oh, ſhall I ſuffer ſin to live any longer in me, that would not ſuffer my Redeemer to live in the world!

But let me conſider my High Prieſt before-hand, and what of his ſufferings I ſhould remember at his table.——I'll remember how the glorious Heir of all things denuded himſelf of his riches and glory, how he left his throne of majeſty to lodge in a virgin's womb; yea, to be born among beaſts, and cradled in a manger, for ſuch a worm as me.——I'll remember how he was attacked by the devil, contradicted by ſinners, and reproached by the world for my ſake!——I'll remember how ſorrowful his ſoul was in the garden, when the bitter cup was put in his hand; and how he ſwate, how he prayed, how he fell to the ground, till he was quite overwhelm'd with wrath, and cover'd with his own blood for my ſake!——I'll remember how he was ſold for a ſmall price, and baſely betrayed by Judas; how he was taken by the ſoldiers, tied as a malefactor with cords, denied by Peter, forſaken by all his diſciples, and left alone among his cruel inſulting enemies. I'll remember how he was blindfolded, mocked, ſpit upon, buffeted and affronted by ruffians a whole night, and patiently ſuffered all for my ſake! I'll remember how his lovely countenance was disfigured with blows, and the plucking the hair off his cheeks; and how the ſweeteſt face ever the ſun ſaw, was all beſmeared with blood and ſpitting for my ſake.——I'll remember how he that clothes the lillies of the field, was himſelf ſtript naked, bound to a pillar and cruelly ſcourged, till the pavement of Pilate's judgment-hall was all bedewed with his precious blood.——I'll remember how the crown of thorns was platted with the ſharp points turned inward, put upon his head, and driven into his temples with a reed, till they pierced his ſkull in many places, and a new ſhower of blood run down his bleſſed neck.——I'll remember how the heavy croſs-tree was laid upon his ſcourged and bleeding ſhoulders, and he made to carry it thro' the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, forth of the gates, and up mount Calvary, to the place of execution, until his ſtrength was ſpent, and he foundered under the burden.——I'll remember how the croſs tree was laid down, and my Saviour ſtript naked and ſtretched out upon it as a rack; and how he was faſtened to it with four big iron nails through his hands and feet, and the croſs lifted up and let fall into a deep hole digg'd for the foot of it, to the violent rending and widening of his ſacred wounds by which he hang, until all his blood ſtream'd forth at them, and he expired amidſt the moſt exquiſite tortures.

I'll remember alſo the ſufferings of his ſoul at that time, when the Lord ran upon him as a giant, and made his ſoul the butt of his envenom'd arrows, the poiſon whereof drank up his ſpirits, until his ſtrength was dried up like a potſherd.——I'll remember how his ſoul was troubled and non-pluſſed at the diſtant proſpect of this cup; and how ſore amazed he was ſoon after when it was put into his hand.——I'll remember how the taſting of it caſt him into a bloody ſweat and agony, which dyed his garments red, and bedewed the ground where he lay.——I'll remember how he was broken with breach upon breach, till all the ſea-billows of divine vengeance went over him, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah was made to roar under the ſtrokes and bruiſes of the flaming ſword, Pſal xxii. 1.——I'll remember the dreadful hidings of God's face he lay under, until he was made to cry, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*—I'll remember the inexorableneſs of divine juſtice, that would not ſpare him one ſtripe, bate him one farthing of the debt, nor one drop of the cup; ſo that he drank till he cried, *It is finiſhed*, and gave up the ghoſt. Glory to him for his love in finiſhing the work.

MEDITATION XI.

From Philip. i. 23. *For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two*—

AS the apoſtle was in a ſtrait whether to chuſe to die or live, ſo I am in a ſtrait whether to go to the Lord's table, or ſtay back. Now, thou calleſt me, Lord, to celebrate the memorials of thy death, yea, to feaſt with thee at thy holy table, and I know not what to chuſe; I am in a ſtrait betwixt two. My heart is ſo unholy, and my unworthineſs ſo great, I tremble to go forward to feaſt with a God ſo holy, and whoſe purity is infinite; and yet my wants are ſo many, and my neceſſities ſo great, that my caſe is hopeleſs if I ſtay back! Lord, I can go to none elſe in all the world to ſupply my needs, but to thyſelf alone.—But oh, when I think of going forward, my guilt ſtops my mouth, and fills me with bluſhing. Lord, if the holy angels, theſe pure and unſpotted ſeraphims, who burn in zeal for thy ſervice, muſt even cover their faces before thee; how ſhall I venture into thy preſence, I whoſe zeal is ſo languiſhing, whoſe love is ſo cold, whoſe mind is ſo earthly, and prayers ſo dull? Shall I approach ſo near a holy God in ſuch a caſe? But what then ſhall I do! Shall I join with theſe worldlings who were bidden to the feaſt of the great King, refuſe, and make my excuſe? Then I fear the King will be angry, declare me unworthy to taſte of his ſupper, yea, ſwear in his wrath that I ſhall never enter into his reſt.

Lord, I abhor myſelf for my unworthineſs and vileneſs, my guilt and pollution; but where ſhall I go to get help and remedy for it, but unto thee alone? Haſt thou not bidden me come, though my ſins be red as crimſon? Have not many ſuch come to thee, and found relief and help? Surely, O Lord, thy goodneſs is greater than my ſinfulneſs, and thy mercy ſurpaſſeth my miſery; for though my ſins reach even to the clouds, yet thy mercy is above the heavens. O merciful Father, extend thy free, boundleſs mercy to a miſerable, helpleſs ſinner: Surely miſery is the proper object of mercy. Holy God, if thou help me not for the ſake of my miſeries which I have deſerved, yet help me for the ſake of thy mercies which thou haſt promiſed in Chriſt thy dear Son. Wherefore I plead for Chriſt's ſake that thou wilt hear the cry of my miſeries, and not the cry of my ſins. O doth not his precious blood cry louder for pardon, than my ſins for puniſhment? Lord hear the cry of that blood, and let it not be as water ſpilt upon the ground. For the ſake of that prevalent blood, pity, pardon, and accept a poor unworthy creature, that deſires to obey thy call, and prepare his heart to ſeek thee, tho' he be not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctuary.

O Lord, though I may be aſhamed to come to thee, my needs are ſo preſſing and pinching that I cannot ſtay away. *To whom ſhall I go but unto thee, for thou haſt the words of eternal life?* The whole creation cannot ſupply my wants. Thou only art my Sun, from whoſe beams I muſt receive ſaving light: Thou art my Head, from whom I muſt get ſpiritual life: Thou art my Root, from which I muſt derive ſap and growth: Thou art the Fountain from which I muſt draw living water: Thou art the Treaſure from which I muſt obtain the riches of grace. So that without thee I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing.——To thee then I muſt go for all my ſupplies, and out of thy fulneſs receive grace for grace.——Lord, thou haſt enough to ſupply many worlds of needy ſouls; for the ſun is not ſo full of light, nor the ſea ſo full of water, as thou art full of grace and mercy to needy creatures: and as thou art full, ſo, I am aſſured, thou art free, and willing to communicate thy fulneſs.—In ſpite then of all objections and difficulties, forward to thee I will go, and caſt myſelf down at thy feet; *if I periſh, I periſh*. Oh! did ever any periſh at mercy's door?

Lord, I have heard of thy mercy to the very chief of ſinners, and cannot this mercy reach the like of me? Surely the viler ſinner I am, thou haſt the fairer opportunity to ſhew the riches of thy mercy, the freeneſs of thy love, and the efficacy of thy blood; and if I be allowed to ſhare therein, the ſweeter and louder will the eternal hallelujahs be, that will be ſung to the Lamb of God on my account. O that he would glorify his mercy, his love and blood, in my relief O where ſhall a poor heavy laden ſinner go but to him that can free him of his burden? Where ſhall I go with a multitude of ſins and miſeries, but to thee who haſt a multitude of tender mercies? Where ſhall I go with my deep and heinous guilt, but to thee who haſt a deep fountain to waſh it away? Behold one depth called to another, the depth of my miſery to the depth of thy mercy? My wound is great, but thy balm is excellent! My ſore is broad, but thy plaiſter is anſwerable! *O Lord be merciful to me, heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee.*

Lord, is not the goſpel-feaſt I am invited to, a feaſt of charity, to which thou calleſt not the rich, but the poor, maimed, halt and blind, who cannot make any return for thy bounty? And may not ſuch a miſerable object as I am, take encouragement from ſuch a free extenſive invitation? Luke xiv. 21.——My bleſt Redeemer, while he was on earth, did not diſdain to eat with publicans and ſinners, nor to dine with Simon a leper. And though he is now exalted in the higheſt heavens, yet he ſtill retains the bowels of a man, and all the pity and charity to periſhing ſinners he had while here in his ſtate of humiliation. Wherefore, ſenſible of my unworthineſs, loathing myſelf for my vileneſs, and truſting to my Saviour's compaſſion to the miſerable, I deſire to go forward to his holy table: O that he would direct and ſtrengthen me to go about ſuch a weighty work! Let not that ordinance, which God hath inſtituted for a bleſſing, be made a curſe to me through my unworthy partaking. Lord, rebuke all unſeaſonable thoughts and wanderings that would mar the duty; excite and actuate in me every proper grace, and enable me to manage ſo, that I may not diſhonour, but glorify thee; I may not increaſe my guilt, but augment my grace; I may not bring more hardneſs, but ſoftneſs into my heart. Lord, deſcend thou into my heart by the influences of thy Spirit, that I may aſcend unto thee by the actings of grace; and when the King ſits at his table, let my ſpikenard ſend forth the ſmell thereof. Lord, I look to thee for ſtrength, conduct and through-bearing, in every ſtrait. I truſt not in my preparation, but in thy free mercy for acceptance; I truſt not in my faith, but in thy faithfulneſs, who haſt promiſed to give power to the faint; I truſt not in my repentance, but in thy free pardoning mercy; I truſt not in my doings, but in Chriſt's doings. O take away my filthy garments, and clothe me with the beſt robe, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. *I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only. Awake, O north-wind, and come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices may flow out. If thy preſence go not with me, carry me not up hence.*

The Lord made a breach on the Iſraelites, for not ſeeking him after the due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13.—He ſmote 50,000 of the Bethſhemites for an irreverent look into the ark, which typified Chriſt, and what cauſe have I then to fear a ſtroke, ſhould I raſhly touch the ſymbols of his body and blood?—Seeing this ordinance is intended for doing honour to the King of Zion, O ſave me from doing indignity to him, by betraying him with a kiſs, or by throwing his picture, or great ſeal, into a puddle.—May I ſo prepare for this feaſt, that the bleſſed Maſter of it may ſee I am watchful of his eye, tender of his honour, and fearful of his anger. Lord, awake my heart, ſtir up my graces, and prepare me for a meeting with my Saviour, and let not my ſoul, whoſe only hope is to be ſaved by Chriſt's blood, be ſent away from his table with the guilt, inſtead of the benefit, of that blood upon it.

MEDITATION XII.

From Philip. iv. 19. *But my God ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.*

HEavenly Father, out of thy rich bounty thou waſt pleaſed once to lay up a great ſtock for me in my progenitors hands, but they very ſoon ſquandered it all away, ſo that I am become extremely poor and needy. Oh! what can I do in this indigent condition, but come back to thee for pity and new ſupplies?——For ever bleſſed be thy name, for the reviving news thou haſt publiſhed in the goſpel; that thou haſt now laid up a new ſtock for bankrupt ſinners in the hands of a Surety that cannot fail, and haſt erected a throne of grace for ſuch as I am to come to in time of need, where Chriſt Jeſus my Surety ſits, as commiſſioned by thee, with glorious riches to ſupply my wants.——Many are the needs which thou thinks fit to leave upon me, that I might have the more errands unto this throne, and that thou mayſt the oftener hear my voice. O pour out upon me a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication, and cauſe me delight in approaching to thee, and pouring out my wants before thee.

Behold, Lord, a needy creature, an object of pity, approaching to a liberal Saviour whoſe fulneſs is infinite! O how ſuitable is it to my wants which are great and innumerable! I am ſtarving and have no bread; I am naked and have no cloathing; I am wounded and have no cure; I am in debt and have no money; I am polluted and have no fountain; I am burdened and have no reſt; I have deſtroyed myſelf and can find no help in myſelf.——But yet there is help for me elſewhere; I have heard of the mercy of the King of Iſrael, and of the remedy he hath provided for theſe who are helpleſs, loſt and miſerable. Wherefore, though I be poor I will not deſpair, for thou art the Lord of the whole world, and haſt opened thy treaſures to the needy: Though I be polluted, I will not diſpond, for thou haſt the fountain of ſalvation: Though I be naked, I will not with Adam run from thee, and hide myſelf; nay, I will run to thee to cover me with the wool and fleece of the Lamb of God, even the ſpotleſs righteouſneſs and innocence of my Saviour: Though I be hungry and ſtarving, I will take encouragement from the glad tidings thou haſt proclaimed in the goſpel of a rich feaſt for the poor and needy.—Lord, I come to thee as the hungry to be fed, as the naked to be cloathed, as the wounded to be healed, as the cold ſtarving creature to the fire, as the unclean to be waſhed in the Fountain that is opened not to the houſe of David only, but even to the pooreſt inhabitant in Jeruſalem. Glory to God that it is ſo free and open to the poor and needy.

Lord, I come not to thy table, becauſe I am worthy; but becauſe thou art rich in mercy, and doſt promiſe that "the needy ſhall not be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh." And that "when the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, thou the Lord wilt hear them, and open rivers in the wilderneſs, and fountains in midſt of the vallies." O come, do as thou haſt ſaid, pity a poor, needy periſhing creature, and fill my narrow veſſel out of the ocean of thy mercy, where it will not be miſſed.—Come to the feaſt of thine own appointment, and diſplay thy fulneſs and liberality. Caſt open the doors of thy treaſures, and allow me acceſs to Chriſt's unſearchable riches.—Thy word, Lord, doth aſſure me, that in all ages thou haſt beſtowed theſe riches upon the poor and needy, without money, and without price. And this doth warrant me to plead with thee to come to thy houſe, where many needy beggars are gathered, and ſcatter thy bounty among them, and admit me to gather with them.—O let not ſuch a miſerable object go from thy door without an alms, without a crumb of the childrens bread, ſeeing there is bread enough in thy houſe, and to ſpare. O let none return aſhamed from the Fountain who come expecting water. Thou haſt promiſed to pour water upon the thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground. Oh, is there any more dry, more poor, more needy than I am! Lord, make me as thirſty as I am dry, as humble as I am poor, and as ſenſible as I am needy. Alas, that I have ſo little ſenſe of my wants! Oh, deal not with me according to my ſenſe of need, which is ſmall, but deal with me according to my real need, and thy royal bounty, which is exceeding great.

O that I were poor and needy in my own eyes, and truly ſenſible of my own wants: that I am drowned in debt to the law and juſtice of God, owe many thouſands, and have not one farthing to pay: That I am deſtitute of every thing that is good, can do nothing to pleaſe God, and am unworthy of the leaſt of his mercies. O that I were made willing to quit all confidence in my own righteouſneſs, duties, frames or attainments; and well content to go intirely out of myſelf to Chriſt, for righteouſneſs to juſtify me, and for his Spirit and grace to renew and ſanctify my nature

Lord, I am poor, but I ſee God has treaſured up unſearchable riches, and infinite fulneſs in Jeſus Chriſt to anſwer all my needs;—I am naked, but I ſee in Chriſt a robe of righteouſneſs, that is ſufficient to cover me, and a whole elect world;—I am a ſtarving creature, but in Chriſt there is the bread of life, and the waters of life for my ſoul;—I am fooliſh and ignorant, but Chriſt hath infinite wiſdom to teach me and guide me;—I am loaden with guilt, but Chriſt's ſacrifice is ſufficient to atone for it;—I have ſtrong luſts and corruptions, but Chriſt hath a kingly power to ſubdue them;—I am under much darkneſs, but Chriſt is *the light of the world*;—I am under fears and diſcouragements, but Chriſt is *the Conſolation of Iſrael*;—I am wounded and ſick, but Chriſt, my Phyſician, hath excellent balm for me;—I am under a burden of debt, but Chriſt, my Surety, is rich, and fully able to pay it;—I am in priſon, and under bonds, but Chriſt opens priſon doors, and looſes them that are bound;—I am fatherleſs, by Adam's fall, but Chriſt is the everlaſting Father *in whom the fatherleſs find mercy*;—I have many enemies to purſue and accuſe me, as law, juſtice, ſatan, and conſcience; but Chriſt my Advocate can anſwer them all:—Therefore I flee to him for refuge, I cloſe with him in all his offices, and put my whole confidence in him.

It gives great encouragement to my poor needy ſoul, that I have a Saviour ſo full of goodneſs and pity to look to, a mighty agent in heaven to plead my cauſe, and to preſent my bills, petitions and ſupplications to the Father. I put all my requeſts and concerns in his hand, and commit them to his care and management; he knows the fitteſt time to preſent them, and to ſend me an anſwer. In the ſacrament I ſwear allegiance to thee, as my Sovereign Lord and King, over thy broken body and ſhed blood; I engage to be a true and faithful ſoldier in thy army, and to take the field againſt thy enemies. Many pieces of furniture do I need for this warfare; I need the girdle of ſincerity, the ſhield of faith, the helmet of hope, the ſword of the Spirit, the breaſt plate of righteouſneſs, and to have my feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace. But glory to thy name, my Redeemer and Captain of ſalvation hath provided a noble armoury and ſtore-houſe to anſwer all theſe my neceſſities and wants. Lord, ſupply all my needs out of thy infinite fulneſs, and furniſh me with every thing requiſite and neceſſary for the work and warfare thou calleſt me unto. Oh, my enemies are lively, and they are ſtrong: But I look to my glorious Captain, to gird me with ſtrength for the battle, and to teach my hands to war.

MEDITATION XIII.

From Epheſ. iii. 19. *And to know the love of* CHRIST, *which paſſeth knowledge.*

WHere ſhall I begin my thoughts upon the ſubject of the love of Chriſt to men? And when begun, how ſhall I make an end? It hath a breadth and length, a depth and height, that paſſeth knowledge. If the apoſtle Paul, that had the brighteſt diſcoveries of this love, owned this, much more may I. I may ſooner find out the height of heaven, the breadth of the earth, or the depth of the ſea, than meaſure Chriſt's love. It is an unfathomable ocean that hath neither bank nor bottom. O whither did his love carry him! From the height of glory to the depth of miſery. How low and deep was our fall, that nothing could recover and raiſe us up, but the low abaſement of the Son of God, the King of glory! How low was the ſtep he made to help us up; even to put on our nature and ſuffer himſelf to be pierced for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities! Bleſſed Lord, thou tookeſt not on thee the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham; theſe are faſt bound up from thee with chains of darkneſs, whilſt thou draweſt us to thee with cords of love! How diſtinguiſhing was thy love to man, that brought thee from heaven to earth, from the throne to the manger, from the manger to the wilderneſs, from the wilderneſs to the garden, from the garden to the judgment hall, from the judgment-hall to the croſs, from the croſs to the grave; yea, from the glory of heaven, to the very torments of hell, and all for creatures that were black and ugly as hell! How wonderful is the ſight thou calleſt me to ſee at the Lord's table! even to ſee him ſuffering for ſin that never committed ſin! To ſee *him made ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we*, who knew no righteouſneſs, *might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him!* An amazing ſight indeed!

Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him! O what is he that thou ſhouldſt magnify and ſet thy heart on him! And what am I, the worſt of men, and vileſt of ſinners, that thou ſhouldſt ſtoop ſo low to exalt me! That thou ſhouldſt endure the poverty of this world, that I might enjoy the riches of heaven! Be content to live in the form of a ſervant, that I might have the adoption of ſons! Be willing to bow thyſelf unto death, to raiſe me to eternal life! Content to be numbered among tranſgreſſors, that I might have a room among the bleſſed! To be crowned with thorns, that I might be crowned with glory! To be condemned before men, that I might be juſtified before God! To drink the bitter cup of wrath, that I might drink the pure river of life! To cry out in ſorrow upon the croſs, that I might triumph with joy upon the throne! To ſtand before the mouth of hell-furnace to keep its flames from breaking out on me! O Lord Jeſus, thy love hath overflown all banks, and thy compaſſion knew no bounds! Can I think on it and my heart not burn! Can I ſpeak of it and not be overcome, ſo as to ſeek, with Joſeph, a ſecret place to weep in!

O love that paſſeth knowledge? How ſhall I think of it, and not ſtand amazed! that the General ſhould die for the ſoldier, the Phyſician for the patient! That the righteous Judge of heaven ſhould come to the bar, put himſelf in the malefactor's clothes, and be condemned for him! That the bleſſed Son of God ſhould interpoſe his innocent breaſt to receive the mortal ſtroke for us! That God all ſufficient ſhould be expoſed to hunger and thirſt, to grief and wearineſs, and the vileſt reproaches and indignities for worms like us! Behold the Creator of the world wounded, mangled and killed by ungrateful creatures whom he came to ſave! Behold his bowels yearning towards them who raked in them with their bloody hands! Behold his heart burning with affection toward them that cruelly pierced it! Surely a believing view of this love of Chriſt is ſufficient to mollify a heart more cold and frozen than ice itſelf! O love unfathomable! Who can meaſure its dimenſions! It hath a hieght without a top, a depth without a bottom, a breadth without a ſide, a length without end! Aſtoniſhing love! that my exalted Lord ſhould ſtoop ſo low as become a man; nay, a poo man, a man of ſorrows, a deſerted man, a dying ma and alſo a dead man, for ſuch a wretch as me! Nay, more, that he ſhould ſtoop to be made a curſe, and underly a dreadful load of wrath upon his innocent ſoul, infinitely more heavy than what is laid upon any damned ſoul in hell!

O what a ſea of wrath did my loving Jeſus ſwim through, to ſave me from periſhing! Behold how that raging ſea wrought and was tempeſtuous, roared moſt terribly, and threatened to ſwallow me up with the reſt of the elect world; till once my Redeemer ſtept in, and undertook to be the Sacrifice for calming the ſea! Take me up, (ſaid he like Jonah) and throw me into the ſea, and ye ſhall be all ſafe. In this red-ſea our bleſſed Jonah was content to ſwim for thirty-three years, without ſeeking deliverance, till once the ſea was perfectly calm, and every elect ſoul out of danger. Marvellous loving-kindneſs! Oh that I could, with a ſuitable frame of heart, both remember and admire redeeming love, and redeeming blood, when I go to ſit down at my Redeemer's table. O that I may there get faith's ſight of the various inſtances of his love, *that paſſeth knowledge*. Let me there view Chriſt in the womb, and in the manger; in his weary ſteps and hungry bowels; in his proſtrations in the garden, and clotted drops of bloody ſweat. Let me view his head with a crown of thorns, and his face beſmeared with the ſoldiers ſpitt. Let me view him in his march to Calvary, and his elevation upon a painful croſs, with his head bowed down, and his ſide ſtreaming blood! O unparalleled love! It had been wonderful love to have ſent one of the lofty ſeraphims to ſuffer for us; but to give him whom all the ſeraphims ſerve and adore, is *love that paſſeth knowledge!* Let me view the Scripture-deſignations and titles of *him that loved us, and gave himſelf for us*, that he might waſh us in his blood.

He is our *Immanuel, the Wonderful, the Counſellor, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Lord of glory, the Roſe of Sharon, the Plant of renown, the Brightneſs of his Father's glory, the expreſs Image of his Perſon, the bright and Morning ſtar, the Sun of righteouſneſs, the Light of the world, the Head of the Church, the Beginning and Firſt born from the dead, the appointed Heir of all things.* This is *he that loved us, and gave himſelf* to die for the redemption of a crew of rebels, grace-abuſing, and goſpel ſlighting ſinners! Oh! what am I that thou ſhouldeſt ſpare, yea ranſom and feaſt me in ſuch a manner! Long ago mightſt thou have ſhaken off the hand of thy providence ſuch a viper as I am into fire unquenchable; and there made me to know, to ſad experience, what it is to abuſe free grace, by the loſs of eternal glory.——But, inſtead of that, thou haſt pitied me, loved me, become my Surety, to appeaſe juſtice for my heinous ſins by thy blood, when no other ſacrifice would do. Lord, I welcome thy love-feaſt; I lay my hand on the head of thy Sacrifice, and reſt upon it; *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.* O that I may henceforth live under the continual ſenſe of my infinite obligations to my glorious Surety, that would make *his ſoul an offering for my ſin.* O what return ſhall I give him for all his ſoul travail and agonies for me? O that I could ſpend my whole life, and each day of it, in magnifying his love, and living to his praiſe. Now, “bleſſed be his glorious name for ever and ever; let the whole earth be filled with his glory.” *Amen*, and *Amen*.

MEDITATION XIV.

From Luke xxii. 44. *And being in an agony——his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood*—

O My ſoul, this text affords thee great ſubject of thoughts, when thou goeſt to remember thy dear Saviour at his table. Here I ſee him in a bloody agony! And firſt, let me obſerve the place where his agony began, the garden of Gethſemane, which lay in the valley of Jehoſhaphat, on the eaſtſide of Jeruſalem, at the foot of the mount of Olives. Now, it was in the valley of Jehoſhaphat that God did plead with the nations in Chriſt their Surety, Joel iii. 2. The word Gethſemane ſignifies a mill or preſs for olives, as being probably the place where they preſſed the olives that grew on the mount, and there ſqueezed the oil out of them. In this place, it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe Chriſt our true Olive, that ſo out of his fulneſs the freſh oil of his merit and grace might flow abundantly to needy ſouls. Never was there ſuch an Olive preſſed there before ſince the firſt planting of that mount! Never was there ſuch precious oil ſeen as Jeſus's blood! O that I may partake of the root and fatneſs of that good Olive which was preſſed here, and of that oil, which will make my grace to grow, and my face to ſhine!

As it was in a garden that man's ſin and miſery firſt began, ſo it was in a garden that our bleſſed Surety began his laſt expiatory ſufferings for ſin, which caſt him into a fearful agony. As the garden of Eden produced man's miſery; ſo the garden of Gethſemane provided a remedy. O that when I walk and retire myſelf in a garden, I may have grace to think ſeriouſly, and with ſuitable affections upon the ſins of men, and the ſufferings of my Saviour for them! and, at the ſame time, to ſend up my ejaculations to God for an intereſt in his agony and atonement, and for the comfortable intimation thereof to my ſoul. When my dear Redeemer was in his agony of ſoul, I read of his offering up *prayers and ſupplications* to God, *with ſtrong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. And have I no prayers nor tears to offer up to God at the remembrance of his agony? eſpecially when I conſider how much my ſins contributed to throw him into it.——O how ſtrong and bitter were my Surety's cries at this time, when God bruiſed his ſoul, and poured down a flood of his wrath upon him! He cried, till he was ſpent with crying; he grew hoarſe with it, and his throat ſo dried, that he could cry no more, Pſal. lxix. 3. Now was his ſoul in travail, and great cauſe had he for his ſtrong crying and tears! He was ſilent under all the pains of his body, and under his ſufferings from men; all that time he is dumb *as a ſheep before her ſhearers*: But, behold, when fierce wrath from God alighted on his ſoul, he cried vehemently; and he prayed moſt earneſtly and importunately for ſupport and through-bearing under this terrible ſtorm. O that, from my Saviour's example I may learn, when under ſoul-trouble and inward diſtreſs, to make my prayers to God more earneſt and fervent, and to perſevere without fainting; which I have great encouragement to do from this, that my Saviour's fervent prayers and tears have made way for mine.

I obſerve alſo in this paſſage, that the agony of Chriſt's ſoul increaſed ſo much, that it produced a ſweat of blood over his body; yea, great drops or clods of blood, which, by his violent agony, burſt through his very clothes, and watered the ground where he lay. O what trouble and anguiſh, pangs and ſorrows, deſertions and ſtrugglings, muſt his ſoul have endured at this time under the burden of God's wrath for his peoples ſins, which put his ſacred body and blood into ſuch a dreadful commotion and ferment! O what a prodigious and preternatural ſweat was this! Never was the like heard of ſince the world began! According to the courſe of nature, Chriſt's lying in the open air, in a cold night, upon the cold ground, with the greatneſs of his conſternation, ſhould have drawn all his blood inward from the external parts of his body; but Chriſt's ſweating and bleeding was altogether preternatural. He ſwate without external heat, he bled without external wound. The fire of divine wrath now kindled in his ſoul, was ſo very hot and raging, that it made the blood about his heart to boil, and burſt through both fleſh and garments.——He had received, at this time, no wound nor external violence from any hand; no Judas, no ſoldier, no tormentor, had yet attacked him; no ſpear, no nail, no thorn or ſcourge had yet touched his ſacred body, and yet he bleeds moſt plentifully! Oh, but the ſword of juſtice had reached him, and made a deep wound and wide gaſh in his ſoul; at which breach a ſea of wrath brake in with ſuch violence, that it overwhelmed him; made him fall firſt on his knees, and then flat on the ground, where he lay agonizing and crying, till all the waves and billows of divine vengeance went over him. Oh, what a dreadful preſſure was my Saviour's ſoul under at this time! What ſqueezing anguiſh had he upon his heart, that made his body to ſtruggle, and ſweat in ſuch a manner, ſo that every pore of his body became a bleeding wound! O how awfully ſhould I be affected with this tragical ſight! How thankfully ſhould I remember my Redeemer's love, when he calls me to do it at his holy table!

In my Saviour's agony I may ſee, as in a glaſs, the malignant evil and curſed nature of ſin, that no leſs could atone for it, than the ſoul-travail and agony of the dear Son of God! Can I ever make light of ſin, when I view the great drops of blood ſtanding above his garments, while he lay groveling on the earth in the anguiſh of his ſoul! Shall I not henceforth abhor ſin, and ſtand in awe of offending a juſt and holy God, ſeeing it is ſuch a fearful thing to fall into his hands: *If ſuch things* were *done in the green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?* Was the cup of wrath ſo terrible to the innocent human nature of Chriſt, when preſented to him, that he ſhrinked and cried out? O what will it be to guilty ſinners! Here I may ſee how coſtly the redemption of ſouls is; ere this could be compaſſed, God muſt become man, Eternity muſt ſuffer death, the Lord of angels muſt weep in a cradle, the Creator of the world muſt hang like a ſlave! He muſt lie in a manger at Bethlehem, cry in an agony at Gethſemane, die on a croſs at Calvary! Unſpotted Righteouſneſs muſt be made ſin, and unblemiſhed Bleſſedneſs muſt be made a curſe! O did Chriſt value ſouls at ſo high a rate! and ſhall men be ſo fooliſh as throw them away for a thing of nought?

Here I may ſee the great difficulty of making peace with God, when once his law is broken; no leſs could do it than the blood and ſoul-agony of the Son of God; even an infinite Ranſom muſt be paid ere God would be reconciled to man. O how much am I beholden to Chriſt that undertook the reconciliation, that prevented my ruin by taking the cup out of my hand! O the cup he drank for me was mingled with wrath and curſes, a cup full of vengeance, preſſed down, heaped up, ſhaken together, and running over; a cup, which if men or angels had but taſted, they had reeled, ſtaggered and fallen headlong into hell: Yet, ſaid Chriſt, ere any of my elect ones drink it, I will drink it for them; reach it hither to me bitter as it is.——Oh how ready was Chriſt to engage for men! and how willing was he to perform! How ready, full and free was his blood to waſh the defiled! Behold how freely it iſſued forth before a wound was opened; all his veins and pores poured it forth, without waiting for the tormentors. Lord make me as willing and ready to apply it. Did Chriſt wreſtle in an agony to obtain the redemption of loſt ſinners; and ſhall not I wreſtle as in an agony to get an intereſt in this redemption, and the evidence thereof cleared up to my ſoul! O for faith and fervency in prayer, that I may wreſtle without ceaſing for the aſſurance of his love, that I may go with joy to his table.

MEDITATION XV.

From Iſa. liii. 7. *He opened not his mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the ſlaughter.*——

IT becomes me to read and conſider theſe words with great attention, ſeeing they were the occaſion of the Ethiopian eunuch's converſion; for it was while he read and thought on theſe words, that God ſent Philip to join him, Acts viii. 29. O that God would, in like manner, ſend his holy Spirit to join me while I am meditating on them.

1. I obſerve that Chriſt is the great Sacrifice provided by God to make atonement for our ſins: He is the great Antitype and ſubſtance of all the lambs and beaſts that were offered up in ſacrifice under the law, and therefore he is often in the New Teſtament called *the Lamb, the Lamb of God, and the Lamb ſlain.* The Spirit of God ſeems to have a peculiar delight in dwelling upon this type of *the lamb*, more than in any other of the Old-Teſtament types; and ſhould not I delight in it too, and often with pleaſure make mention of *the Lamb, the worthy Lamb*, that will be the object of the praiſes of ſaints and angels through all eternity?

2. Chriſt is repreſented by a lamb to point out the innocence of his perſon, the meekneſs of his nature, the uſefulneſs of his benefits, and his patience under ſufferings. How patient is the lamb under injuries! It is ſilent both before the ſhearer and the butcher; it parts with its fleece in ſhearing time, and with its life in ſlaughter time, without any noiſe or reſiſtance. Dogs and ſwine howl and cry when violence is offered to them, but the lamb is quite ſilent. So Chriſt the Lamb of God opened not his mouth, under the greateſt revilings, mockings, buffetings, ſpittings, piercings, and the moſt cruel death, which he ſuffered from men, 1 Pet. ii. 23. and hence it is ſaid in the text, when he was led to the ſlaughter, *he opened not his mouth*: He opened

not his mouth, unleſs it was to bleſs, teach, or pray for theſe who injured him; yea, he not only did pray, but alſo plead an excuſe for them, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And after his reſurrection, how ready was this meek Lamb to forgive all that wronged him! When giving orders to preach remiſſion of ſins to a loſt world, he bids *begin at* Jeruſalem, Luke xxiv. 46. where they mocked and pierced him, becauſe there they had greateſt need of his blood to waſh them from guilt. How meekly did our bleſſed Lamb carry to Peter, when he denied him in his own hearing? He did not turn and frown upon Peter, as he well deſerved, though he might have frowned him into hell; it is ſaid only, *He turned and looked on* Peter, Luke xxii. 61. not with an angry look, but with an affectionate melting look, which recovered him to a penitent frame: Neither did he afterwards upbraid him with his carriage. O meek Lamb of God! can I remember thee at thy table without being filled with remorſe and grief for my impatience under injuries, and the proneneſs of my heart to reſent them? Shall I not be aſhamed of my unchriſtian temper, when I ſee my meek and loving Jeſus, willing to be the ſport and deriſion of men and devils, that he might be the author of ſalvation to periſhing ſouls? O, how aſtoniſhing is it to ſee the Creator affronted by the creature, the Potter by his clay, the King of glory by worms of the earth, and yet hold his peace! Now, is the Head ſo meek and patient, and ſhould not the members be ſo too! O how unſeemly is it to ſee a company of fierce lions following a meek Lamb! O that I could learn more of him that is meek and lowly in heart.

3. Here I ſee the greateſt inſtance of divine love that ever the world ſaw. Behold an offended God willing to ſpare wretched criminals, and take ſatisfaction from a Surety in their room; and he himſelf finds out the Lamb to be the ſacrifice, even his eternal Son, who willingly undertook to aſſume a body for that end. How aſtoniſhing are the Lamb's words, Heb x. 5 *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me;* as if he had ſaid, “Father, ſince all the legal ſacrifices are inſufficient to ſatify thy juſtice, atone for ſin, and ranſom precious ſouls; even take the body thou haſt prepared for me, let that be the ſacrifice to juſtice; it is more valuable than any other, being the tabernacle of my divine Perſon; it will bring glory to thy offended juſtice, and ſatisfy it to the full. I yield myſelf willing to be the priſoner of juſtice, and go quietly as a lamb to the ſlaughter; not dragged to it as an ox or bullock, but meekly and pleaſantly like a lamb.” When, according to this agreement, juſtice required the Lamb to be ſacrificed, O how patient and ſilent was he under all the accuſations led againſt him, though he was wholly innocent; he would ſay nothing in his own defence; at which Pilate (not knowing the cauſe of his ſilence) marvelled greatly, having never ſeen the like before. But our Lamb conſidered that he ſtood not only at Pilate's bar, but alſo at the bar of God's juſtice as our Surety, bearing our guilt; and though man had nothing to lay to his charge, yet he knew what divine juſtice had to charge upon him, and therefore he is ſilent and anſwers nothing, that he might hinder our redemption, nor ſtop the payment of our debt. When juſtice charged him with our ſins, our *unbelief, pride, covetouſneſs,* &c. he might have ſaid, “O Father, theſe tranſgreſſions are not mine, I never offended thee;” but he will do nothing to reſcue himſelf. Therefore when the fearful charge of the whole ſins of an elect world was exhibited againſt him, and the ſword of juſtice drawn, ready to ſtrike, he opened not his mouth, but takes with the charge, as if he had been guilty of all. Glory to the ſilent Lamb for ever, that would not hinder our releaſe from puniſhment, but meekly took the ſtroke for us.

4. Behold this meek Lamb, before he was brought to the ſlaughter, led up and down from place to place; from the garden to the high prieſt, from the high prieſt to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back to Pilate, from Pilate to Calvary. Behold him mocked, abuſed, and diſgraced by them, buffeted and ſpite upon, crowned, ſcourged, and pierced, and yet never reſiſts nor complains. He willingly *gave his back to the ſmiters, and his cheeks to them that plukt off the hair,* and hid not his face from ſpitting. Now the meek Lamb is content to be, as the ram caught in the thickets, to be ſlaughtered and ſacrificed in our room, who were lying bound like Iſaac, to have been the ſacrifice. Oh, it was our ſins that platted the thorns; they alſo were the reed that drove them into his temples, yet he opened not his mouth.

5. Now this ſlaughtered Lamb is ſet before my eyes in the ſacrament, and God's call to me is, *Behold the Lamb of God,* John i. 29. Now let me behold him with an earneſt and ſteady look, with faith and expectation, that I may get healing to all my diſeaſes. As no ſtung Iſraelite got healing from the brazen ſerpent, unleſs they looked to it, ſo none can get benefit from Chriſt unleſs they behold him. May I never look away from this Lamb, to my tears, convictions, prayers, reformations, or any thing elſe; ſeeing the beſt of duties will make bad ſaviours. If I expect ſalvation from other things, I am undone, for there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be ſaved: But if I look to the Lamb of God, my ſalvation is ſecured by his promiſe, Iſa. xlv. 22.

6. There was no houſe in Egypt ſafe from the deſtroying angel, but theſe who had the doors ſprinkled with the blood of the paſchal lamb: So there is no ſoul ſafe from the ſword of revenging juſtice, but theſe who by faith put themſelves under the protection of the blood of this ſlain Lamb: Let me therefore take the bunch of hyſſop, *faith,* and dip it in the baſon of the new covenant, and ſprinkle this blood on my guilty ſoul, and ſo I ſhall be ſafe.

7. How bleſſed is their characters who follow the Lamb, Rev. xix. 4. May I follow him as my Phyſician to cure me, my Righteouſneſs to juſtify me, my Life to quicken me, my Huſband to ſupply my wants, my Guide to conduct me, my Pattern to direct me in my ſteps. Let me learn, from his example, to be patient without murmuring, when I am under affliction. Let me learn meekneſs towards men, when I meet with reproaches or injuries from them.——Let me learn a readineſs to obey God's call to every duty. O did Chriſt go willingly to the ſlaughter for us; and ſhall I be backward to pray, communicate, part with ſin, or do any thing he requires of me? Let me, in all duties and ordinances, ſeek the Lamb's preſence, ſeeing my

eternal happineſs lies in being ever with the Lamb, and to be fed and led by him, Rev. vii. 16.

MEDITATION XVI.

From Eph. i 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood.*

HOW diſmal is our caſe by nature! We are ſlaves to ſin and ſatan, and priſoners to the juſtice of God, being ſentenced to die, doomed to wrath, and reſerved to public judgment and execution. In this miſerable condition were all mankind, until Chriſt came to ranſom us: And O how difficult and coſtly was our redemption to Chriſt! no leſs could be the price of it, than his precious blood. The glorious Son of God who created heaven and earth, muſt become a creature, be born of a woman, and pour out his blood on an ignominious croſs, before we could be redeemed from ſin and wrath. O how valuable muſt the blood of this infinite Perſon be! What is the blood of earthly kings and princes to this blood! Surely one drop of it is of more value, than an ocean of theirs! and yet every drop of this blood was poured out upon the ground for our redemption.——In this blood I ſee ſundry things;

1. The amazing love of Chriſt, in ſhedding his blood for the redemption of ſuch creatures as I am; creatures muſt ugly, that had loſt the image of God, and got ſatan's image pictured in its room, and were thereby become black as hell.——Creatures, lothſome as dead carcaſes, being dead in treſpaſſes; and, yet theſe he loved ſo as to ſhed his blood, and bleed to death for them. For as lovely as Sarah was, while alive, yet when dead, Abraham could look on her no more, but would have her buried out of his ſight. But Chriſt ſaid not ſo of his elect ſpouſe when dead; no, ſaid he, let me bleed and die for her to bring her to life; though at the ſame time ſhe was more lothſome than Job with his boils, Lazarus with his ſores, or any dead carcaſe with vermin. O what cauſe could be given for the love of a bleeding Jeſus? Well might he ſay, *I loved you, becauſe I loved you; and I loved you freely.*——And O with what ſorrow, pain and agony, was his bleeding love attended, while his dear ſoul was overwhelmed with the terrible billows of his Father's wrath! Chriſt knew well before hand all theſe ſufferings, and all the ingredients in the cup, yet he would needs drink it for us: He foreſaw the poiſon of God's arrows that would drink up his ſpirits; the burning thirſt that the heat of divine wrath would create in him; yet willingly did he go to bleed and die, like a lamb to the ſlaughter. O *love that paſſeth knowledge!*

2 In Chriſt's blood I ſee the glory of infinite wiſdom diſplayed: Who could have found out a way to reconcile juſtice and mercy, and ſatisfy both their demands about Adam's fallen race? A general council of angels could never have thought of the Son of God his being made fleſh, and ſhedding blood! How ſhocking would the ſuggeſtion have been, if God had not made it? But, behold hereby *infinite wiſdom* hath diſcovered a way to gratify both juſtice and mercy; to puniſh ſin, and yet pardon the ſinner; to maintain the honour of the *Law-giver*, and yet preſerve the life of the *law-breaker*: Hereby *mercy* is ſatisfied in ſparing the rebel, and yet *juſtice* more glorified, and *ſin* rendered more odious, than if the ſinner himſelf had been eternally damned for it.—Nay, though all the men on earth had been caſt into hell fire for ſin, and the angels with them, it had been no ſuch inſtance of juſtice, as Chriſt's bleeding and dying for ſin: For what is the puniſhing of creatures, to the ſuffering of the Creator!

3. This blood being the blood of God, hath infinite virtue and efficacy; it hath purchaſed the church of God, and all grace and glory to her, Acts xx. 28. it protects all who come under the covert of it from the wrath of God, Exod. xii. 13. *When I ſee the blood, I will paſs over you, and the plague ſhall not be upon you to deſtroy you, when I ſmite the land of* Egypt.—This blood, which is the price of our redemption, hath marvellous effects; it pleads for the guilty, and obtains pardon of ſin, peace with God, nearneſs to and communion with him. It cleanſes, heals, ſatisfies and beautifies periſhing ſouls; it ſeals the New Teſtament, overcomes our enemies, liberates the priſoners, opens heaven's gates, and gives boldneſs to enter in: The Perſon of our Redeemer being preferable to a million of worlds full of men and angels, his blood alone might well ſerve for an elect world. What ſins can be ſo heinous or ſo numerous, but the blood of God can waſh away? This was famous Cranmer's ſupport that day he ſuffered martyrdom; when his heinous ſin of renouncing the truth ſtared him in the face, and he was greatly dejected for it; he brake out, *Surely God was made fleſh, and ſhed his blood, not for leſſer ſins only, but for great ſins alſo:* This relieved him, and made him die with courage. This blood can help in all ſtraits, deliver from all fears, and is able to ſave to the uttermoſt. It hath ſaved many who have condemned themſelves, and thought their ſalvation impoſſible. It hath eaſed many conſciences, when the terrors of the Almighty have ſurrounded them, and his arrows have ſtuck faſt in them. It hath unſtinged death, and carried many ſafe through its darkeſt vallies. This blood hath cleanſed many whoſe hearts were filthy as the mire, and whoſe lives ſwarmed with the moſt abominable luſts, ſuch as the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 11. and three thouſand of theſe who had imbrued their hands in ſhedding of it, Acts ii. 36. Nay, it is able to take away the ſins of a world, John i. 29. and much more the ſins of any one ſoul, though like a mountain for weight, or the ſand for number.

4. I ſee this redeeming blood to be a ſuitable remedy for all my maladies; O that I could look to it by faith, apply it to my ſores, and plead it with God: 'Lord, 'I am an unrighteous creature, but here is juſtifying 'blood; my heart is unholy, but here ſanctifying 'blood; my ſoul is wounded, but here healing blood; 'my luſts are ſtrong, but here mortifying blood; my 'heart is hard, but here ſoftening blood; my affections 'are dead, but here quickening blood; my love i 'cold, but here is heart-warming blood.——When I 'am at the holy table, I am near this bleſſed remedy; 'O let me not miſs a cure when the balm of Gilead i 'among my hands; let me not periſh in my guilt be'ſide the open Fountain. Oh, this blood hath healed 'thouſands, and ſhall I remain under my plagues?— 'Let that innocent blood, which ran from thy hands, 'heart and ſide, drop on my guilty ſoul, and cleanſe 'me from all ſin. O my glorious bleeding Lamb,

‘*thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* O ſay to me as thou didſt to the leper, *I will, be thou clean.* Surely thy blood is more able to ſave me, than my ſins are to deſtroy me.’

5. How juſt is it that I ſhould commemorate the ſhedding of his blood in the way that Chriſt appoints? Lord help me to go to thy table, and realize the ſhedding of this blood to myſelf, as much as if I had ſtood by the croſs, and ſeen it with my eyes flowing from his wounds. Let my faith be the evidence of things not ſeen, and let it realize the ſhedding of Chriſt's blood as evidently to me, as if I had actually ſeen it. Ah, I cannot ſay it is ſo, while my eyes are ſo dry, and my heart ſo hard; alas for my ſtupid unconcerned heart, that doth not burſt into love and tears at the ſacramental view of this blood-ſhedding! How can I ſee theſe hands, that ſway the ſceptre of the heavens, nailed to the tree of reproach, and not mourn? How can I ſee theſe feet that trample on the powers of hell, nailed to a tree, and not weep! Did the earth tremble, rocks rend, ſun hide, and heavens darken, and will not my rocky heart rend for ſin that cauſed all?——Since thou, Lord, comes to me in ſtreams of blood, let me go forth and meet thee with ſtreams of tears. Oh, ſhall I be more ſparing of my tears for Chriſt, than he was of his blood for me? Can I ſee this precious blood run down in ſtreams, and my eyes not pour out ſome drops? Can I refuſe drops of water for ſtreams of blood? Can I ſee the blood of the King of kings ſpilt like water on the ground, and the earth drinking it up, and my heart not rend for ſhedding it? Oh, that *my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night* for the ſlain Lamb of God!

6. How dreadful muſt the crime be to tread this blood under foot by unbelief, or unworthy communicoting! *Had Zimri peace that ſlew his maſter?* And can I have peace if I be guilty of the blood of him that is my Maſter and Redeemer both? How ſad will my caſe be, if that blood, which alone can procure my pardon, ſhall cry for my eternal puniſhment? *Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God.*—O that I could value and eſteem, plead, and apply this precious blood more! Lord, accept of it as a full ſatisfaction for all my ſins, and an all-ſufficient price for my ſoul's redemption. Is not one drop of thy Son's blood of more value, than a ſea of mine? My ſins, alas, have ſhut me out of paradiſe, but O let this blood open paradiſe to me again; and let me, through this Red-ſea, enter into the heavenly Canaan; I know I can have no other paſſage to it. Lord, impute not the guilt, but the merit of this blood to me.

MEDITATION XVII.

From Pſal. lxxii. 6. *He ſhall come down like rain upon the mown graſs, as ſhowers that water the earth.*

THIS is ſpoken and promiſed of Chriſt, and ſerves to teach us, that Chriſt coming to his church and people, by the gracious influences of his holy Spirit, is moſt uſeful and refreſhing to their ſouls, like ſhowers of rain to the dry ground, or a meadow newly cut to make it ſpring again.——Chriſtleſs ſouls are like the dry ground, without the moiſture of ſaving grace, their hearts are hard; neither rods, mercies, nor ſermons, make impreſſion upon them; Why? they are without Chriſt the Fountain of grace and ſpiritual influences.——Before the fall man's ſoul was like a well watered garden, beautiful, green, and fragrant; but by his apoſtacy from God, in Adam our firſt head, the ſprings of grace and holineſs are quite dried up in his ſoul; and there is no curing of this drought, but the ſoul's union with a new Head, to wit, *Chriſt our ſecond Adam*, who has the Spirit given him without meaſure for the uſe of all his members. Now, when we are united by faith to Chriſt, our Head of influences, *the dry land is turned into water-ſprings*; Chriſt comes down as the rain by his Spirit of regeneration, and brings the ſprings of grace into the ſoul. He is the firſt and immediate receptacle of the holy Spirit, and all the regenerating and ſanctifying influences, and out of his fulneſs we muſt by faith receive them. And when at any time the ſprings of grace are interrupted in the ſoul by ſin or unbelief, ſo as the ground turns dry, the plants wither, and the things which remain are ready to die; the ſoul hath need to look up to Jeſus Chriſt, to come down with new ſhowers upon the thirſty ground, and decayed plants.

1. As the rain is the free gift of God to the dry ground, it comes free and cheap to poor and rich, ſmall and great, and coſts them nothing: So Chriſt with his bleſſings is God's free gift to a dry periſhing world, for which we ſhould continually be thankful. 2. As nothing can ſtop the falling of *rain*; ſo nothing can hinder Chriſt's gracious influences, when he deſigns to awake, convince, or ſoften a hard heart. When theſe ſhowers do fall on ſinners, the moſt obſtinate will muſt yield, and cry, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* 3. As the *rain* is moſt neceſſary and ſuitable to the dry ground, and to the various plants it produceth, and alſo to the different parts of every plant or tree; ſuch as the root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit: So Chriſt is abſolutely neceſſary, and his influences moſt ſuitable to all his peoples ſouls, and to every faculty of them, the underſtanding, will, memory, and affections; and to all their different graces, faith, love, repentance, *&c.* to root and eſtabliſh them, ſtrengthen and confirm them, quicken and increaſe them, cheriſh and preſerve them. 4. As the *rain* comes down in diverſe ways and manners to the earth, ſometimes with cold winds and tempeſts, thunders and lightnings; and at other times with calmneſs and wrath: So Chriſt comes to ſinners, ſometimes with ſharp convictions and legal terrors, and ſometimes with alluring invitations and promiſes. 5. O how pleaſant are the effects of *rain* to languiſhing plants, to make them green and beautiful, lively and ſtrong, fragrant and fruitful? So the effects of Chriſt's influences are moſt deſireable to drooping ſouls, for enlightning and enlivening them, for confirming and ſtrengthning them, for comforting and enlarging them, for appetizing and ſatisfying them, transforming and beautifying them. A ſhower from Chriſt would ſoon make the church, though withered, turn green and beautiful, and to ſend forth a ſmell as of a field that the Lord hath bleſſed; and likewiſe ſome drops of this ſhower, falling down upon the languiſhing graces of communicants, would ſoon make vigorous and lively in ſhewing forth their Saviour's death at his table.

Here I may ſee the reaſon why many ſouls continue as dry ground in their parched natural condition, while others near them are flouriſhing and fruitful; Chriſt's ſhower hath come down upon the one, and not upon the other; one piece is rained upon, and another piece is dry and withered, according to that word in Amos iv. 7.—Oh, what cauſe is there to bewail the evident ſymptoms of this continuing natural drought in multitudes of ſouls! Why! their hearts are hard, impenetrable and unaffected with the miſerable ſtate they are in by nature, and with the woful plagues of their hearts. They have no ſenſe or feeling of the evil nature of ſin, notwithſtanding of all the reproofs and threatenings of the word, or the rods and ſtrokes it brings upon them; or of the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin. And though God aſſures them, that the end of dry ground is *curſing* and *burning* they are impenitent and unconcerned under all.——O if parched ſouls in their natural eſtate were made ſenſible of their miſery, and brought to bewail their caſe, and ſay, "Oh, I am as the heath " in the deſart that ſees no rain; I am a dry tree, if " I continue in this ſtate, I will be cut down as cumbering the ground, and made fuel to hell-fire. I ſee " the ax of juſtice laid to my root, every hour I am " in danger of the blow. O if Chriſt would interpoſe " to ſpare me, and come down upon me as the rain, " and bring the moiſture of grace into my ſoul."

How lamentable alſo is the caſe of thoſe who once ſeemed to be watered by this heavenly rain, and now are parched by a long conſuming drought and withering wind! They have loſt their former greenneſs and moiſture, their ſpirituality and livelineſs, and their duties are quite dwindled away into a lifeleſs carcaſe and dead formality. They have loſt their wonted freedom and enlargement in prayer, and are fallen under ſad bonds and ſtraitnings of ſpirit, which makes them count holy things a wearineſs, and frequently neglect ſecret prayer. Surely ſuch have great need of Chriſt's coming down upon them as the rain, to make them ſpring up as the graſs, and reviving as the corn.——Alas, we have a ſinful hand in bringing on ſuch a ſpiritual drought, by quenching the motions of the Spirit, indulging filthy luſts, giving the world Chriſt's room in the heart, and neglecting to live by faith on the Son of God, who is the Rain and Dew of Iſrael.

How happy are theſe who live under the droppings of this rain! They are like trees planted by the waters, their roots ſpread forth, and their leaves are green, Jer. xvii. 8. "Have I the ſigns of ſuch perſons? Is " my heart ready to melt at the ſight of a crucified Jeſus ſet before me in the ſacrament? Do I mourn " for my ſins that pierced him? Am I ready to think " worſe of myſelf than any other perſon can? Is my " heart ſoft and plyable to the will of God, both in " his precepts and providences! Do the world's good " things bulk but little in my eye? Is it my deſire to " meet with Chriſt in every duty and ordinance? Do " I ſtill look on ſin as Chriſt's enemy? Am I afraid " of provoking him by ſin to withhold the ſhowers, " and make the heavens as braſs to me? Am I deſirous to bring forth fruit anſwerable to the waterings he graciouſly allows me." O may I find theſe marks in my ſoul.

O that I could earneſtly plead for the fulfilling of this promiſe in the text, that Chriſt would come down as the rain, that he would ſend the ſhowers he hath merited and promiſed, ſend them to myſelf, to the church, and to the whole land; to the preſent age and to the riſing generation. O what glorious effects would theſe ſhowers produce! They would beautify the church and her aſſemblies, make both miniſters and profeſſors to ſhine in holineſs, and congregations to be lively in worſhip. They would open priſon-doors, looſe bonds, inlarge hearts, revive drooping ſouls, turn their water into wine, their ſorrow into joy, their complaints into praiſes, and make them ſing in the ways of the Lord.—By theſe ſhowers God would be glorified, the church cemented, and her diſtempers healed. Ordinances would be ſucceſsful, communions more pleaſant, the godly more valued, religion more eſteemed, and the way to heaven more delightful.—Lord, look on the dry ground and preſent droughty ſeaſon with pity, open the windows of heaven, and ſend down ſhowers as in former times, and as in other parts of the world. Send a ſhower to young communicants, and to theſe who have not ſeen thy goings in the ſanctuary: A ſhower to ſtony hearts and withered hands; a ſhower to ſoften the clods, looſe the roots, and open the ſprings. O how much good would one of Chriſt's ſhowers do to a poor dry land! what wonders would it work! what priſoners would it looſe! What cloudy minds would it brighten, and what doubting ſouls would it reſolve! Come down Lord Jeſus. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XVIII.

From Matth. viii. 8 *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof.*

FAith and repentance do ſtill go together; every believer is a true penitent: He that puts on the Lord Jeſus, is alſo clothed with humility. The higher thoughts a man hath of Chriſt, the lower thoughts will he have of himſelf. When the man's eyes are open to ſee the holineſs and excellency of Chriſt, he is made to own his own nothingneſs before him, and his infinite diſtance from him, and to ſay, like the centurion in the text, *I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof*, *q. d.* It is too great a honour for ſuch a guilty and filthy creature to entertain a Saviour of infinite purity; my heart is more unworthy than my houſe, I have nothing to commend me to thee.——The lowly ſoul abhors himſelf, as vile in the ſight of a holy God; he ſays, I am all as an unclean thing, and all my righteouſneſs is as filthy rags; in me dwells no good thing; I am inſufficient of myſelf to do any thing that is good, or even to think a good thought; it is God that muſt work in me, both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure. He is under no obligation to pity or help me, it will be abſolute free mercy in him if he do it.——The lowly man hath undervaluing thoughts of himſelf, and of all his own doings and attainments: He renounceth all confidence in his own righteouſneſs and humbly ſubmits to the righteouſneſs of God by faith: He is content to be ſtript of all his own garments, that Chriſt may be his cloathing. He looks not to his own performances to recommend him to God, but only to Chriſt his Surety. He is willing to go out of himſelf, and live wholly upon borrowed righteouſneſs and borrowed ſtrength; even to live upon Chriſt crucified, and to derive, daily and hourly, from him ſtrength both for duty and difficulty, for work and warfare. ——The man that is lowly in heart, ſubmits to the will of God in all his diſpenſations, is content with every condition he thinks beſt for him; he is patient in affliction, and ſilent under God's rod without anſwering again. He is ſenſible that he juſtly deſerveth hell, and therefore is very thankful for the leaſt mercy; like the woman of Canaan, he owns himſelf unworthy as a dog, and will be thankful for the crumbs that fall from the childrens table. He will be thankful for a word from Chriſt, for a look, for a ſmile, for the leaſt token of his favour, or the ſmalleſt influence of his Spirit.

Wherever faith is in exerciſe, it is a ſoul-humbling and ſelf-emptying grace, and lays the ſoul very low before God; and God always hath reſpect to ſuch faith, and to ſuch lowlineſs, Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. Chriſt put great reſpect upon the *centurion*, v. 10, 13. *I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael; go thy way, and as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done unto thee.* He alſo put great reſpect on the humble *publican*, Luke xviii. 13, 14. and declared him juſtified; for (ſaith he) *He that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.* He put great honour on the humble woman of Canaan, that owned herſelf vile as a dog, Matth. xv. 27. *O woman, great is thy faith* (ſaid he) *be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* And he ſaith of himſelf, Iſa. lviii. 15. though he be *the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, yet he dwells with the humble ſpirit:* And thus he ſets himſelf before us, as the great Pattern of *humility*, and bids us learn it of him. When he appeared unto Moſes, it was not on a *lofty cedar*, but in a low, mean, *humble buſh.* And when he would appear in our nature, it was not a *great exalted woman* he takes up with, but a *low humble virgin*, as Mary herſelf obſerves, Luke i. 48. 52. May I be helped then to appear before him at his holy table, with a humble ſpirit, and lowly frame, that he may vouchſafe to dwell and hold communion with me.

O that I had the marks of a lowly heart, and could ſay, that I bluſh, and am aſhamed before God in prayer, becauſe of my ſinfulneſs and pollution! that I am made to wonder at free grace in ſparing ſuch a vile unthankful wretch, in keeping me out of hell, in offering me Chriſt and pardon through his blood, and calling me to his holy table.——That I diſclaim all righteouſneſs by the law, and expect nothing but wrath and ruin from that airth; that I look only to Chriſt, and have admiring thoughts of him and his law biding righteouſneſs.——That I have a deep ſenſe of indwelling ſin, and of the corruptions of my heart, and think more meanly of myſelf than any other perſon can.——That I am jealous of my wicked heart, and afraid leſt I betray or wound the Son of God, and contract bloodguiltineſs; and therefore I adventure to his table with much fear and trembling. Lord beſtow upon me ſuch a humble heart.

O can ſuch an ill-deſerving creature appear before God, and expect mercy, who have ſo long abuſed mercy! Lord, inſtead of ſtretching forth a ſceptre of mercy to invite me to thy table, thou mighteſt, with the rod of thy juſtice, juſtly daſh me in pieces as a potter's veſſel. Inſtead of entertaining me with the bread of life, and the cup of bleſſing, thou mighteſt give me the bread and water of affliction; yea, caſt me into that pit, where I ſhould cry in vain for a drop of water to cool my tongue. O ſhall ſuch a wretched dog as I preſume to come to thy table, and eat of the children's bread, who am not worthy to eat of the crumbs that fall from it! But I have heard of the mercy of the King of Iſrael, that he delights to ſhew it to the unworthy, that humble themſelves before him. Oh, I am vile, and unfit to appear before thee; but ſurely, they are undone who keep away from thee. I am come to thee, not becauſe I am fit or worthy, but becauſe thou art rich in mercy; and haſt contrived a way for ſaving the like of me. —Lord I am not worthy to come within ſight of thee, but far leſs that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof to lodge with me! *Will God in very deed* come and *dwell with men!* This is a wonder, though all men were as innocent and righteous as once Adam was! But will he lodge or feaſt with me that am a leper? Will he come under the roof of my ſoul, a houſe ſo ruinous, ſmoaky and defiled, where he has not a fit place to lay his head? But, O my humble, condeſcending Saviour did not diſdain to ly in a manger among beaſts, nor to dine with Simon a leper! O Lord Jeſus, come in thyſelf and furniſh the houſe, prepare an upper-room in my ſoul, large, ſwept, and garniſhed, and there abide, and keep the paſſover with me.

Lord, I am not worthy to eat the crumbs that fall from my own table, much leſs thoſe that fall from thine. I deſerve not a room to ſtand among thy ſervants, far leſs to ſit down with thy children. I am not worthy of my daily bread from thee, and ſhall I be allowed to eat of the bread of life? Shall I, who deſerve not the bread of *men*, be admitted to eat the bread of *angels?* Shall I ſit down with him, at whoſe feet they fall? If John the Baptiſt (one of the greateſt that was born of women, who was filled with the Holy Ghoſt from the womb) thought himſelf not worthy to looſe Chriſt's ſhoes, how unworthy am I, the meaneſt of creatures, a tranſgreſſor from the womb, to be admitted to touch, nay feed upon Chriſt's broken body and ſhed blood! If Peter, after ſeeing Chriſt's glory, and his own vileneſs, judged himſelf unworthy to be in the ſame ſhip with Chriſt, and cried, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man:* How ſhall I, the chief of ſinners, adventure to ſit down at the ſame table with him in a familiar way! If the woman with the bloody-iſſue was afraid to come and touch the hem of Chriſt's garment, how much more may I, who am full of the running iſſues of ſin, fear to touch the ſymbols of his body and blood, or put my hand into his ſide? If the pureſt angels muſt cover their faces when before him, how ſhall I, who am ſo impure, appear openly in his preſence? But glory to God, for the bleſſed covering provided for my guilty ſoul, under which I may appear and be accepted. I come to thee wrapt in it, Lord, accept of me.

O how diſtinguiſhing are thy favours to me an unworthy creature! Thou mighteſt juſtly have put in my hand a cup of trembling and unmixed wrath, a cup filled with horror of conſcience and fearful deſpair: But, inſtead thereof, thou giveſt me the cup of bleſſing, filled with the hope of pardon and eternal life. I might have been in hell drinking the damned's cup of wrath, into which juſtice is ſtill pouring in as faſt as they drink out: But glory to free grace, thou calleſt me to drink the cup of ſalvation, which my Saviour hath purchaſed with his blood, and ſweetened with his bleſſing. Thanks be to God for it for ever.

MEDITATION XIX.

From 2 Cor. ix. 15. *Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable gift.*

MANY give thanks to God for meat and drink to their bodies, which indeed is the duty of all; but alas, few give thanks to God for Jeſus Chriſt the only food of precious ſouls, and God's unſpeakable gift to men! Many are fond of temporal gifts and earthly riches, which are nothing but vanity; but ah, they are eaſy about this Pearl of great price, this matchleſs gift, whoſe value no tongue can expreſs, nor open up what is contained in it. The apoſtle tells us a great truth, Eph. i. 3. that *God bleſſes us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt.* In this *gift of God*, we have innumerable gifts beſtowed on theſe who believe on him, ſuch as the gifts of ſpiritual illumination, pardon of ſin, a law-biding righteouſneſs, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family, reſtoring of his image, ſanctifying influences, ſpiritual ſtrength for work and warfare, looſing of bonds, witneſſing of the Spirit, unſtinging of death, conduct through the dark valley, and a title to the manſions of glory, and the eternal enjoyment of God. Chriſt is the moſt neceſſary and moſt enriching gift ever was given to the world. God gave him to be a *Plank of mercy*, to ſave our ſouls when ſhipwreck'd. He gave him to be our Phyſician and balm, to heal us when our wounds ſeemed incurable. He gave him to be *the Lord our righteouſneſs*, when we had no righteouſneſs. He gave him to be our Advocate to plead for us when we had many accuſers, and none to take our part. He gave him to us to be *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.* In this gift there is infinite *fulneſs*, and *unſearchable riches.* Well may the ſpouſe call Chriſt a *bundle of myrrh*, and a *cluſter of camphire*, Cant. i. 13, 14. becauſe ſo many gifts and bleſſings are bundled up in this one gift. Oh, what can I conceive, or what can I expreſs of this gift! He that would deſcribe, or ſpeak of this gift, would need to have his tongue dipt in heaven. Should an angel come down from it to tell us of this gift, he would outſpeak all the men on earth; yet, when he had ſaid all he could, the gift would be far above his expreſſion; Why? becauſe he is *unſpeakable.*

Thanks be unto God that gave us not a ſervant, not an angel, not a friend, but *his Son.* Not an adopted ſon, but his own Son by eternal generation; "A Son, "who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his Perſon." Yea he gave us his only Son, to die as a ſacrifice in our room! How bitterly did Jacob bewail the parting with one ſon, when he had eleven behind! But God gave his only begotten Son, and the Son of his love for us! It is recorded as an admirable inſtance of Abraham's obedience, that he was willing to part with his only ſon at God's command, Gen. xxii. 12. "Now I know that thou feareſt God, "ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy ſon, thine only ſon, "from me." But what was Abraham's ſon to God's eternal Son, the ſecond Perſon of the glorious Trinity! a Son that was his equal! a Son in whom his ſoul delighted! a Son that never diſpleaſed him at any time! How bitterly did David mourn at parting with a rebellious ſon! *O* Abſalom, *my ſon, my ſon, would to God I had died for thee*, &c. But what are all the ſons of men, or ten thouſand worlds full of men, or as many heavens full of angels, to the beloved Son of God, whom all the angels worſhip and adore! And yet this is the gift which God gives us. In giving this gift, divine bounty hath ſtretched itſelf to the uttermoſt: He could have created a million of heavens more bright, and millions of angels more glorious for us; but a more glorious Son he had not, nor could have; a greater gift he had not in all his treaſures, than his own co-eternal and con-ſubſtantial Son, yet he makes a free gift of him to us! O who would not give thanks unto God for this unſpeakable gift! And who would not part with all the world to have an intereſt in this gift ſealed to him at the Lord's table! This is the gift that ſweetens all other gifts, and without which nothing in a world hath any ſweetneſs in it.

This gift of God is moſt free; it was impoſſible that the world could have Chriſt any other way, than as [illegible] free gift. A man like old Jacob may be bereaved of his children, but it was not poſſible that God could be bereaved of his dear Son. Neither could we have him by purchaſe; we were ſo poor, we had nothing wherewith to pruchaſe the leaſt bleſſing. And what though all the riches of the world had been ours, though all its mountains had been gold, pearls or diamonds, they would not have been ſufficient to purchaſe one ſight of this gift, far leſs a right to it. Nor could ever any motive be found out for beſtowing this gift but the mere free love of God, John iii. 16. "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son:" As if he had ſaid, ſince the world hath no merit, nor price, worth nor motive, to obtain this bleſſing, I juſt make a free gift of him to the world; Take him freely, poor beggars of Adam's family; take him, and he will enrich you all! And O how ſeaſonable and unexpectedly was this gift given! Adam, when he came trembling before God after his fall, looking for his final doom, did little expect ſuch a gift, until God himſelf to the aſtoniſhment of angels and men, promiſed the ſeed of the woman. Who could have thought, that the great God would have gifted his dear Son to ſuch vile wretches, ſinners that were not ſeeking him! Nay, who of mankind could have deſired ſuch a gift? Indeed, when we had been periſhing, we might have looked up, and cried, O God, have mercy upon us: But who would have ſaid, O give the Son of thy love to bear the wrath due to us! We neither deſerved, nor deſired this gift, but God gave it moſt freely and ſurprizingly! When Adam broke God's covenant, he was purſued with a cry, *Adam, where art thou?* Doubtleſs, Adam expected a terrible blow from the ſword of juſtice; but, behold, he is purſued with a cry, and the unſpeakable gift in the Crier's hand! O how ſurprizing was this to poor, trembling, guilty Adam! What cauſe had he to cry, *Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable Gift! What ſhall I render to the Lord for ſuch a Gift!* And the ſame cauſe have we.

O wonderful love! this free gift is offered freely to the pooreſt creature of Adam's family; ſo tha ſuch an one as I, am warranted to accept and embrac it, and make ſure my intereſt in it; *Lord, I believ help thou my unbelief.* Many covet other gifts, but covet this beſt Gift, this enriching Gift; this is a lawful covetouſneſs: I receive this Gift of God into my boſom, into my very heart. O that I had the mark of theſe who poſſeſs this Gift, and are truly thankf for it! Can I ſay, that this Gift is truly precious in my eyes, and that I eſteem it far above all temporal gifts whatſoever: That I am oft thinking upon his matchleſs excellency, his low ſtep and condeſcending love; and do I frequently break out with the Pſalmiſt, *whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I deſire beſides thee.*——Have I low thoughts of myſelf, as unworthy that Chriſt ſhould come under my roof, reckoning myſelf, with Paul, *the leaſt of ſaints, and chief of ſinners?* Do I renounce all Chriſt's rivals and competitors, ſuch as my beloved luſts, and beloved righteouſneſs? Do I count all my doings and duties *but loſs and dung* for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt? Do I take the crown off every head, and put it upon Chriſt's head, and give him all the glory of my ſalvation, and ſay, that *in the Lord Jeſus only I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength?* Am I careful to avoid every thing that would diſhonour Chriſt? and do I ſay to every temptation that offers, *How ſhall I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God,* or bring a reproach upon Chriſt and his ways? Do I rejoice when Chriſt is honoured, his throne raiſed, his glory advanced, and his ſubjects increaſed; and when ſtrangers and young ones are drawn to love and admire him? Am I often ſaying, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for his unſpeakable Gift?* I am at a loſs how to expreſs my thankfulneſs: I have nothing to give him; but I'll render all I have to him, my ſoul, my body, my love, my praiſes, my time, my talents, my walk and converſation. Lord, accept of my two poor mites, ſoul and body, in token of my gratitude for God's redeeming love and free Gift; and make me fit for giving thee thanks eternally for this unſpeakable Gift: O that I could apply theſe bleſſed marks to myſelf.

And O what thanks do I owe to my dear Saviour, that willingly ſubmitted to be Heaven's Gift to the children of men; yea frankly offered, and gave himſelf to be a Sacrifice for them, to drink of the brook in the way, even the cup of God's wrath, that we might drink the cup of God's bleſſing! O how low was our fall, that nothing could raiſe us up again, but the low abaſement of the Son of God! And O how low was the ſtep that he behoved to make to recover us! The Son of God muſt be tread upon as a worm! The almighty Phyſician muſt come from heaven, and let his heart be pierced, to prepare a medicine to cure our diſeaſe! He that *thought it no robbery to be equal with God,* muſt be made equal to robbers and murderers! He muſt not only ſuffer death, but deſertion alſo, from God, from man, and the whole creation! He gave himſelf not only to ſuffer the pangs of death, but the pains of hell; not only the ſorrows of dying men, but the ſorrows of damned ſouls! O unſpeakable Gift!

MEDITATION XX.

From Luke ix. 22. *The Son of Man muſt ſuffer many things.*

OUR Lord oft ſpoke of his ſufferings to his diſciples, becauſe he would have them deeply imprinted upon the hearts of all his people, that they might always think upon them, and carry about with them the dying of the Lord Jeſus. As Chriſt foretold his ſufferings before hand, ſo they came exactly to paſs. He ſaid he muſt *ſuffer many things* for his people, and accordingly he did ſo: Let me view his ſufferings before I go to commemorate them at his table.

1. I muſt conſider him that ſuffered many things for us; the Spirit of God requires us to conſider the High-Prieſt, who he is, Heb. iii. 1. Though he calls himſelf in the text the Son of man, as to his human nature; yet he is alſo the Son of God of God as to the divine nature; yea, God equal with the Father, the great God our Saviour: This God man, the WONDERFUL, is our High-Prieſt, that ſuffered many things for us. He is our glorious Immanuel, the innocent and immaculate Lamb of God, that had not the leaſt ſpot or crime of his own to ſuffer for.—He is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, the expreſs image of his Perſon; he is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He that ſuffered is he that went always about doing good to perſons of all ſorts, and deſerved well of thoſe who perſecuted and crucified him. He is the great lover of mankind, and Friend of ſinners, our glorious Benefactor, who remembered us in our low eſtate; one that comes under the moſt endearing characters to us, as that of our Father, our Huſband, our Brother, Maſter, Phyſician, Ranſomer, *&c.* Now will not a ſon be ſenſible of the ſufferings of his father, or a wife of the ſufferings of her huſband? Or one brother be touched with the ſufferings of another? This is the great High-Prieſt that ſuffered *many things* for us.

2. I am to conſider the many things he ſuffered. Ah, they are ſo great, ſo various, and manifold, I cannot recount nor comprehend them! I may ſay, he ſuffered in both natures: Though his Godhead could not properly ſuffer grief or pain, yet it ſuffered an eclipſe for thirty three years, except a ſhort time it ſhone forth on mount Tabor.——He ſuffered many things in his human nature, both in ſoul and body; he was perſecuted, tempted, calumniated, betrayed, bound, mocked, ſpit on, buffeted, ſcourged, wounded, crowned with thorns, and crucified. He ſuffered in all his offices; he was mocked as a Prophet, and bid propheſy who ſmote him; as a Prieſt he was bid ſave himſelf; ſeeing he pretended to ſave others; as a King he was mocked with an old purple robe and thorny crown.—He ſuffered in his honour and reputation, being diſgraced and reproached by men, called a Samaritan, one poſſeſſed of the devil, a blaſphemer, a glutton, a drunkard, a ſeducer, &c. He was even overwhelmed with calumny.—He ſuffered as a blaſphemer againſt God, as a traitor to Cæſar, and an enemy to Moſes law, though he was entirely free of them all.—He was wounded and pierced in all parts of his body, in his head, hands and feet; in his cheeks, back and ſide.—He ſuffered in his outward goods, being ſpoiled of all things, and even ſtript of his clothes to his very ſkin, and nailed to the croſs naked.—He ſuffered in all his five ſenſes; his *ſight*, with the ſpiteful carriage of thoſe that paſſed by wagging their heads; his *hearing*, with their blaſphemous talk; his *ſmell*, with the noiſom ſavour of the ſkulls of the dead; his *taſte*, with vinegar and gall; his *feeling*, with thorns and nails piercing his head, hands and feet. He ſuffered in the moſt tender and ſinewy parts of his body by the tormenting nails, eſpecially being violently ſtretched out, and probably disjointed, to make them reach to the holes; therefore he ſaith, Pſal. xxii. 16. 17. *They have digged my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones, they look*

and ſtare upon me.—He ſuffered moſt of all in his ſoul, and its noble faculties: How great was the agony and travel of his ſoul, when he ſwate blood in the garden through all the pores of his body! O how great was the anguiſh of his mind upon his heavenly Father's deſerting him, which made him ſend forth a dreadful cry to heaven for relief, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Then it was he cried and groaned under the preſſure, but no relief appeared; there was none to anſwer, every door was ſhut againſt him: For at this time his own Sun, his own Heaven, his own Father, his own Godhead, did all hide their faces and conſolations from him! O the many things he ſuffered for us, they cannot be numbered.

3. I am to conſider from whom the Son of Man ſuffered. He ſuffered from all hands, from earth, from hell, from heaven; from men, from devils, from infinite juſtice. He ſuffered from all ſorts of men, from king Herod and his men of war, who mocked him and ſet him at nought; from the Jewiſh prieſts and rulers, who cruelly uſed and proſecuted him to death; from governor Pilate, who ſcourged and condemned him to be crucified: He ſuffered from the Jews and from the Romans, from the clergy and from the lawyers, from ſoldiers and ſervants, from great ones and commons, and even from theſe he had done much good unto.——He ſuffered from theſe whom he came to ſave and waſh by his blood; for there were 3000 of theſe who crucified him, or were active in his ſufferings, that were converted to him by Peter's ſermon, Acts ii. He ſuffered not only from enemies, but from profeſſed friends and diſciples, one of theſe betrayed and ſold him, another of them denied and abjured him, and all the reſt forſook him, and left him alone to ſuffer in the midſt of devils and ruffians inſulting over him.——He ſuffered from the devils, and all the powers of hell; theſe dogs and bulls of Baſhan were all let looſe to tear and gore him in his laſt ſufferings; "for this (he ſaid) was their hour and power of darkneſs."—But, which was worſt of all, he ſuffered alſo from heaven; for he being ſubſtituted in the room of ſinners, a juſt and a holy God acted as an inexorable Judge towards him, he frowned terribly upon him, ſmote him with the ſword of juſtice, and withdrew all the feeling of his loving kindneſs from him, and all theſe divine influences which might any way refreſh his troubled ſoul in the hour of his greateſt need: And thus he fell a ſacrifice to incenſed juſtice for our heinous guilt and provocations. At this time a fearful black cloud was ſpread over the glorious Sun of righteouſneſs, never was there any ſuch eclipſe ſeen or heard of as this! For a candle to be put out is no great matter, but for the ſun to be darkened is very uncommon: But though ſun, moon and ſtars had all been blown out at once, it would be nowiſe ſo amazing as the darkening of the eternal Sun of righteouſneſs upon the croſs! A ſtrange and marvellous ſight! What meant the heat of this great anger! Muſt even the Creator himſelf ſuffer for the creature's ſins! Muſt he ſuffer ſuch a load of wrath as make him cry out to the aſtoniſhment of angels and men!

4. I am to conſider the high prieſt, and for whom it was he ſuffered theſe great and *many things*. He ſuffered not for himſelf, for he never offended either againſt God or man, and deſerved no puniſhment: He ſuffered none for fallen angels, they muſt all ſuffer for themſelves: It was only for men of Adam's race, that were debtors to juſtice, and priſoners of wrath; he ſuffered for creatures moſt undeſerving, for rebels, and for many that were his greateſt enemies; and even for theſe who were his murderers and executioners, for he both prayed and was heard for them, when they were pouring out his blood.

5. Let me conſider with what affection he ſuffered all theſe things for us. It was with ardent love to periſhing ſouls, which many waters could not quench; —with fervent wiſhings and longings for the hour of his paſſion, *I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitned until it be accompliſhed?*—with great liberality: It is not the blood of his finger, or a part of his blood, that he would ſhed for us; no, he would needs pour out all his blood, and even his heart-blood too, and with that he poured out his ſoul alſo, Iſa. liii. Why would he be ſo liberal? that with him there might be *plenteous redemption*, Pſal. cxxx. 7—He ſuffered with great meekneſs, patience, and reſignation; when he ſuffered, he threatened not, but was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, dumb, not opening his mouth: —With great humility and ſelf denial, content to be as *a worm and no man*, to bring glory to his Father:— With a thirſty zeal for the ſalvation of ſouls, and for compleating the work of our redemption? and hence it was, he cried on the croſs, *I thirſt*, and glad when he could ſay, *It is finiſhed*.

O what cauſe have I to obey his dying charge, to go to this memorial feaſt, and to think upon and wonder at the matchleſs love of Chriſt, that made him willing to ſuffer ſo many things for ſuch wretched creatures as I am. He knew well enough before-hand what our ſalvation would coſt him, yet he willingly undertook it, ſaying, upon the firſt motion of it, *Lo I come*. But ſaith God to him, if you will engage in this work, you muſt underly my wrath, and be handled as if you were the ſinner in law: Well, ſaith Chriſt, *I come to do thy will, O God;* I am ſatisfied with the terms: Let the cup be never ſo bitter, I will drink it ere theſe miſerable creatures do it. O loving high Prieſt! how ſhall I think of thy ſufferings without raptures of love and admiration! I had been in hell if thou hadſt not been in an agony here; I had for ever been ſcorched there, if thou hadſt not ſwate here; yea, not only I, but all the poſterity of Adam had periſhed if thou hadſt not ſuffered theſe *many things* for them: Surely the weight of wrath which made thee heavy, and cauſed thee fall to the ground, ſweat, groan and cry, would have ſunk all mankind into hell for ever.——O what ingratitude muſt it be to refuſe Chriſt's offers and terms of ſalvation after what he has ſuffered to purchaſe it! Was he at ſo much pains to obtain redemption for us, and will we be at no pains to get an intereſt in it! Did he ſhed blood, and will not I drop tears? Lord, pity this heart of mine.

MEDITATION XXI.

From John xviii. 4. *Jeſus knowing all things that ſhould come upon him, went forth, &c.*

CHRIST foreknew all his ſufferings, with all their ingredients, before they came upon him, yet he willingly and reſolutely went forth to meet them. He reaches forth his hand to take it. When the people would have forced him to a crown, he hid himſelf from them, John vi. 15. But when they would force him to a croſs, he offered himſelf to them, knowing that his hour was come to fulfil his ſuretyſhip for us, and compleat our redemption. Upon this account he made his ſufferings welcome, and the paſſover that introduced them, Luke xxii. 15. *With deſire have I deſired to eat this paſſover.* He abhorred all counſels that tended to hinder him, and rebuked Peter as ſmartly for diſſuading him from ſuffering, as he would have done ſatan himſelf, Matth. xvi. 23. And though all his diſciples would have diſſuaded him, John xi. 8. he marched with great forwardneſs to Jeruſalem, where he foretold the bloody tragedy was to be acted; he haſtened to the field of battle, and place of ſuffering: Yea, he went ſo faſt to it, that his diſciples were amazed at it, and afraid to follow him, Matth. xx. 18. Mark x. 32. They were behind him, and would have fallen behind altogether, had it not been for ſhame, and let him go alone; they were amazed to ſee a man haſten ſo faſt to a bloody death: But he would not ſtop, though they had all left him, as they did afterwards. And when his time was come to be apprehended, he will neither let Peter defend him, nor angels reſcue him, though there were twelve legions at his call: One angel would have been ſufficient to do it, or one word from his own mouth; but, ſaith he, *The cup my Father hath given me to drink, ſhall I not drink it?*——Wherefore when they accuſed him of blaſphemy againſt God, and of enmity to Cæſar and Moſes's law, and things he was perfectly innocent of, he would make no legal defence to ſave his life before Pilate, but held his peace, in ſo much that Pilate marvelled greatly. He might think it was eaſy for him to anſwer all they ſaid, but he knew not the reaſon of our Lord's ſilence, *viz.* that he would do nothing to hinder the elect's redemption, which he had undertaken.—And, as he was ſilent before Pilate, ſo was he before divine juſtice, and would do nothing to divert the ſtroke: Soon might he have reſcued himſelf when juſtice drew the ſword, by ſaying, *Father, theſe ſins are not mine*: No, he is ſilent, and takes with the charge, as if he had committed them all. On me, ſaith he, be the curſe; I will be the ſacrifice for theſe loſt ſheep. O love, unſpeakable!

The reaſons of my Saviour's willingneſs to ſuffer are obvious; he knew it was his Father's will he ſhould ſuffer, and therefore he ſaid, Pſal. xl. *I delight to do thy will, O my God.* He knew it would greatly diſplay the glory of the divine attributes, that was ſullied by our ſins; it would highly magnify his love to his ſheep, John x. *I lay down my life for the ſheep*: I do it of myſelf, freely, without compulſion: It was neceſſary to make his ſacrifice acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God. The Heathens would not offer a ſacrifice to their gods that came ſtruggling to the altar; ſo every ſacrifice offered to the true God muſt be a free-will-offering, as we would have it of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour unto him. This Chriſt hath taught us by his example, and upon this account God hath twice proclaimed from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.*

O was Chriſt's willingneſs to ſuffer for ſinners ſo well-pleaſing to the Father, and ſhall it not render him moſt amiable and lovely to us? Surely the Mediator's frank and cheerful undertaking to ſuffer ſo much for us, when unrequired by us, is a favour infinitely kind and obliging, and doth command raptures of love and praiſe from us when we celebrate his holy ſupper. What a moving ſight is it to the eye of faith, to behold our glorious Immanuel voluntarily ſtating himſelf in our law-room without the ſolliciting of any creature, and engaging cheerfully to go through ſatan's buffetings, death's pangs, and hell's flames for us! with what elevated thoughts, and raiſed affections, ſhould we admire, love and praiſe a crucified Jeſus, who did all this willingly and unrequired for us! Oh, he never had ſo good will to eat when hungry, as he had to ſuffer and ſatisfy juſtice for us! Hence he ſaid, *My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work*, John vi. 34. Here is food, moſt delicious for faith to feed upon at the Redeemer's table.—Again, from the willingneſs of Chriſt to ſuffer for us, I have good ground to conclude his willingneſs to receive us, when we come to him by faith to partake of the fruits of his ſufferings. O how can any believer, or ſenſible ſinner, queſtion or doubt of Chriſt's willingneſs to help and ſave them, who was ſo willing to offer himſelf a ſacrifice to juſtice for them? Surely he is far more willing to ſave, than any ſinner is to repent or believe. And from this I'll take my encouragement to come to him: Since my loving Jeſus came willingly as a lamb to the ſlaughter for ſinners, I'll venture, with humble confidence, to go to this meek, paſſionate, ſweet-natured Lamb for pity and help in time of my need, truſting he will not reject me, nor any that comes to him upon his call in the goſpel. *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.*

O did Chriſt ſuffer the pains of death and hell ſo willingly for us, and ſhall not we be willing to ſuffer the reproaches and revilings of men, or any other perſecution for him? And when any ſuch injuries are done us, ſhall not we bear them with meekneſs and patience after Chriſt's example, who ſubmitted cheerfully to every thing he knew to be his Father's will? Though he was perfectly innocent, and met with the greateſt provocations from wicked men, yet he patiently bore them; taking all as out of his Father's hand, who had mingled the cup for him. Therefore, when he was reviled, he reviled not again; he could have told Pilate, Caiaphas, and his other perſecutors, what ſort of men they were, yet he opened not his mouth, but went willingly as a lamb to the ſlaughter. O that we could imitate the meekneſs, patience and willingneſs of the Lamb of God in all the ſufferings he calls us to.

O did Chriſt delight to do his Father's will, and go willingly through the moſt hard and difficult taſk of ſweating, bleeding and dying for us; and ſhall we find ſo little delight in doing his will, and performing the duties which lead to communion and fellowſhip with him, as prayer, praiſe, reading, hearing, or communicating? Did Chriſt come ſo cheerfully to die for us, and ſhall we go ſo backwardly and unwillingly to this table, to enjoy fellowſhip with him, when he invites us to it? O what a ſhameful requital is this! may not Chriſt ſay, *Is this thy kindneſs to thy Friend?* When the Father called me to ſuffer, and drink the cup of trembling for thee, how readily did I eccho back, *I* *come, lo I come, to do thy will I take delight*! but when I call thee to pray or communicate, how backward and dead-hearted are you in that work! I did not weary ſo ſoon in the garden, as thou doſt in the church! I did not ſo ſoon weary on the croſs, as thou doſt in thy cloſet! I was longer in my agony wreſtling under the wrath of God for thee, than ever thou waſt in wreſtling in prayer for thy ſoul.

Did Chriſt offer his ſacrifice ſo willingly for us, O then let me go to God my Saviour, with the ſacrifice of myſelf and my duties, and with a ready and a cheerful heart: *God loveth a cheerful giver.* As *Amaziah offered himſelf willingly* unto the Lord, 2 Chron. xvii. 16. and David ſaith, *Accept of the* free-will-offerings, *of my mouth*, Pſal. cxix. 108. O that with like willingneſs I could offer myſelf, my heart, and my ſacrifices of prayer and praiſes unto the Lord: And when I feel any reluctancy and backwardneſs of ſpirit to duty, let me ſtill call to mind how willingly Chriſt offered himſelf a ſacrifice to God for us, and chide my heart for its unwillingneſs.—Surely it is much for the honour of God, and the credit of religion, as it is moſt juſt and reaſonable in itſelf, to ſerve God with joyfulneſs, who has ſo willingly given us the unſpeakable gift of his dear Son to die for us. The wicked and profane are ready to reproach religion as a ſour and melancholy thing, when we ſerve God in a dead-hearted manner; and God himſelf is highly diſpleaſed with us for it, as is evident from that long and terrible chapter, the 28th of Deuteronomy, that is full of curſes and threatened judgments, ver. 47. where the cauſe of all is given, *Becauſe thou ſervedſt not the Lord thy God with joyfulneſs and gladneſs of heart.* Since the ſacrament is called the Euchariſt or thankſgiving, let me go to it with a joyful and thankful heart, bleſſing God for Chriſt. O *thanks be to God for his unſpeakable gift.* Amen.

MEDITATION. XXII.

From John xvi. 7. *It is expedient for you that I go away.*—

NO wonder that ſorrow filled the diſciples hearts at the intimation of Chriſt's departure from them: They had enjoyed a ſweet time with him at the communion-table; his preſence with them was their heaven, and they cannot think of parting with him: They are greatly troubled, that he will neither ſtay ſtill with them, nor take them away with him; *nevertheleſs*, ſaith he, *it is expedient for you that I go away.*——Lord, ſaith the ſoul, how is it expedient for me to be left behind thee in a ſtate of corruption, with indwelling ſin that darkens my mind, deadens my heart, diſorders my affections, and indiſpoſes me for ſpiritual work?——How ſhall I ſtay behind thee, amidſt ſatan's temptations and fiery darts, flying thick about me? Muſt I abide in the place where that enemy hath his circuit, and ſtill rangeth about devouring many thouſands! Could I win away with Chriſt, I would be quite out of the reach of his ſhot. Lord, either ſtay with me, or take me up to thee.——Oh, muſt I ſtay behind thee amidſt the infectious defilements and enſnaring examples of an ungodly world! When I open my eyes here, what will meet them but multitudes wallowing in pride, ſenſuality, covetouſneſs, injuſtice, malice, envy, drunkenneſs, gluttony, uncleanneſs, contempt of God and religion? Muſt I ſtay to ſee this horrible ſight, the whole world lying in wickedneſs! Muſt I ſtay to hear God daily diſhonoured by the tongues of the ungodly! Muſt I ſtay to ſee Chriſt ſlighted, wounded, and crucified afreſh by wicked men? O what danger will I be in of being infected by their examples! But, Lord, if I could win away with thee, I would be quite out of hazard, and out of ſight of the wickedneſs of the world—How ſhall I ſtay behind thee in ſuch an earthly tabernacle, to be burdened with bodily diſtreſſes, ſickneſs, pains, and manifold complaints; and amidſt innumerable loſſes, croſſes and diſappointments from the creature? How ſhall I ſtay to ſee ſuch melancholy diviſions, contentions, debates and ſeparations, as fall out among the people of God in Chriſt's abſence? Muſt I ſtay behind thee to ſuffer injuries, reproaches, cruel mockings, bad uſage and perſecutions, both from the tongues and hands of men? and ſometimes to be torn as with the teeth of wild beaſts? Hence this world is called *a den of lions and mountain of leopards*, Cant. iv. 8. Oh, could I win away to heaven with Chriſt, I would ſee no lion nor leopard there. There is none to hurt or deſtroy in all God's holy mountain above.

Have I ſeen the King in his beauty, and muſt I be left behind him? Hath the communion table been like mount Tabor, where he was transfigured before my eyes, with his countenance ſhining, and his raiment white as light? and muſt I go down from the mount again to a land of darkneſs, of drought, and of perplexing doubts and fears, where I ſhall ſmetimes go mourning without the Sun; yea neither ſun nor ſtars appearing to me for many days? Muſt I be put to walk without the light of God's countenance, and without the food of my ſoul, *communion with my God?* After I have been lifted up, muſt I lay my account with being caſt down again, perhaps into depths like theſe of Aſaph, Pſal. lxxvii. or like theſe of Heman, Pſal. lxxxviii. with fears of ſinking in them, and of falling ſhort of heaven for ever? Could I win away with Chriſt, I would be at once delivered from all theſe fears.——Here my knowledge of God is ſmall, and oft obſcured with darkneſs; my faith is weak, and oft in hazard of being overwhelmed with unbelief: here my love is cold, and oft like to be chilled with froſt-winds, from ſatan and the world; my prayers oft are formal and wandering, my praiſes low and flat; here my beſt wiſhes are attended with many ſhort-comings and defects: But O if I could win to heaven with Chriſt, where grace and holineſs are in perfection, I would praiſe him without wandering, and ſerve him without ſin for ever!—Here ſin ſtill cleaves to my nature, mixes itſelf with my ſervices, and defiles my beſt duties. Here I ſtill carry about with me a deceitful and treacherous heart, whereby I am in hazard of backſliding from God, and miſcarrying for ever, ſhould I be left to it: But O were I with Chriſt, I would be free of all theſe anxious thoughts and fears. Lord, ſtay here with me, or take me up to thee.

But thou ſayeſt, It is expedient for me to ſtay behind for a time. Why Lord? Muſt I ſtay that my travelling graces, my faith, hope and patience, may be tried and exerciſed here below, and thereby gradually ſtrengthned and ripened for the perfect ſtate? Muſt I ſtay that I may be conformed to my Head both in ſerving and ſuffering; and that thy wiſdom, power and mercy may be glorified in conducting and preſerving me thro' all difficulties and dangers of this wilderneſs; *Thy will, Lord, be done*, only leave me not alone; but *for thy name's ſake lead me and guide me.*——Or, is it thy pleaſure to ſuſpend my heaven for a while, that I may promote thy glory on earth, be uſeful to the ſouls of others, and recommend my dear Redeemer to theſe who know him not, which is a work I cannot do in heaven? O fit me for it by thy grace, and fill me with zeal for thy glory. O let thy kingdom come upon earth, that the kingdom of glory may be haſtened.

Thou ſayeſt, it is expedient for thee to go away. Why? Lord; muſt thou thyſelf be thy people's Forerunner to carry tidings to heaven of their compleat redemption, and of their coming after thee in their ſeveral generations! muſt thou go to open the paſſage and pave the way for acceſs to their perſons and duties, and prepare rooms and lodgings for them againſt the time they come home?——Muſt thou go away to be a public agent and interceſſor for thy people under all their trials and toſſings here below, and likewiſe to provide and furniſh a rich and glorious communion table for them in thy Father's houſe above? Lord ſend thy holy Spirit to fit and prepare me and many others for that bleſſed entertainment.——Lord, when thou ſaideſt, *It is expedient for you, that I go away;* thou didſt add, *for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you;* Why! it was ſo agreed in the council of the Trinity, that the ſending of the Spirit in his plentiful effuſion which was to be the purchaſe of Chriſt's death, ſhould be given in an anſwer to his interceſſion, when he entered within the vail, John xiv. 16. And the Spirit was to make uſe of it as an argument for convincing the world of the perfection and acceptableneſs of Chriſt's ſacrifice, that Chriſt was now received and welcomed into heaven. Likewiſe the Spirit was to be given only upon Chriſt's aſcenſion to ſupply the want of his bodily preſence to the church, as being far better for them, ſeeing Chriſt's bodily preſence could be in one place only at once, but the Spirit is in every place to animate and put life in ordinances. May the church have this fruit of Chriſt's aſcenſion ſtill more and more.

Lord, though thou haſt gone away for neceſſary ends, yet thy marriage-contract with thy people and the love-tokens thou giveſt them in the ſacrament, are a ſure pledge of thy returning to pay them a comfortable viſit at laſt, according to that ſweet word, John xiv. 3. *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there you may be alſo.* O that I may be one of theſe to whom Chriſt's viſit at his ſecond coming will be joyful and comfortable. Let me examine myſelf after the ſacrament, if I have the marks of ſuch.——Am I eſpouſed to Chriſt? Have I a high eſteem of the Bridegroom? Have I ſubſcribed the marriage-contract and gone into Chriſt's terms? Do I heartily approve the whole contrivance of redemption, through the ſuretyſhip and righteouſneſs of Chriſt? Have I renounced my own righteouſneſs, my beloved ſins, and all Chriſt's enemies?——Do I mourn for the injures done to Chriſt by myſelf and others, and rejoice when his intereſt and kingdom proſper in the world? Do I mourn for Chriſt's departure and the withdrawing of his Spirit from ordinances, or from my own ſoul? Do I thirſt for more holineſs in heart and life, and for greater conformity and likeneſs to the glorious Bridegroom? Then I may expect his viſit and return will be comfortable to me, and I may rejoice in the view and expectation of it, and anſwer Chriſt when he ſaith, Rev. xxii. 20. *Surely I come quickly; Amen, even ſo come Lord Jeſus.*—Is my Forerunner now gone away? Let me follow him as cloſely and ſpeedily as I can: Let me follow him in the way of faith, in the way of obedience, in the way of ſuffering, in the way of patience, prayer, reſignation, deniedneſs to the world, heavenly-mindedneſs, &c.

MEDITATION XXIII.

From Hoſ. ii. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever.*—

ABigail thought herſelf highly honoured, by David's propoſing to match with her: But much more honoured are we apoſtate ſinners of Adam's family by the eternal Son of God his propoſing to match with us, and courting us ſo earneſtly; when he neglected angels that ſeemed to be a fitter match for him in reſpect of the ſuperior dignity of their nature. Yet all theſe he would paſs by, and match with worms!—O how amazing is this ſtep! that the heavenly Bridegroom, whoſe kingdom is mighty, his riches infinite, and his beauty ſurpaſſing; that he ſhould chuſe a bride naturally polluted, deformed, uncomely and black as hell! and that he ſhould ſeek her through a ſea of blood, through the pains of death, the horrors of the grave, and torments of hell! And after many ſlights and refuſals, that he ſhould follow her in her wanderings through the wilderneſs of ſin, with his charming invitations, and alluring offers in the goſpel, preſenting her with the rings and bracelets of his precious promiſes and Spirit's conſolations; and all to win her heart and gain her conſent to him!—How aſtoniſhing is it to ſee this glorious Perſon coming over all objections from the blackneſs, guilt, poverty, and unworthineſs of the bride, ſaying, though ſhe be black, I'll make her comely thro' my comelineſs put upon her! Though ſhe be mean, I'll make her noble! Though a ſlave, I'll make her free! Though a fool, I'll make her wiſe! Though bankrupt, I'll pay all her debt! Come here law, juſtice, and all her creditors, here full ſatisfaction of all that is due to you, take it, and write her diſcharge! Now, *who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Chriſt's bride!—Behold God diſplaying his free love here to the uttermoſt! He never diſplayed his other attributes to the utmoſt; *infinite wiſdom* could have contrived ten thouſand worlds more beautiful than this, and *infinite power* could have produced them. But here *infinite love* and *mercy* hath gone to the utmoſt; a greater demonſtration of his love Chriſt could not give, than by leaving heaven, aſſuming a body, and giving his life for the bride, nay wading through hell for her, and in face of all diſcouragements courting and betrothing her to himſelf for ever!

After many meetings, treaties, and broken tryſts with ſome, the Bridegroom is come again to court a bride, and has ſent his friends in his name to demand her conſent, ſaying as they did to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 58. *Wilt thou go with this man?* Poor woman, lad, laſs, wilt thou yield to this glorious Immanuel; many former treaties have been broke off by the devil, the world, unbelief, and an ill heart! Oh, will not the long ſpoken of match hold at length! Miniſters, the Bridegroom's friends, are doing their beſt to draw on another meeting between the parties. Chriſt, I ſee, is content to hold another, and it may be the laſt tryſt he will ſet with many. To ſhew his earneſtneſs, he hath conveened his friends, angels, ſaints, and ambaſſadors to witneſs the ſincerity of parties; he hath put on his ſcarlet robes, his garments dipt in blood, to win ſinners hearts; he hath brought the marriage-contract and ſpread it before them, ſaying, "What think ye of its articles and terms? Are ye pleaſed with them? Are ye content to break with ſin and all my enemies? To renounce the world, ſelf-righteouſneſs, and all other lovers? to fall in with the ſelf-denying way of ſalvation through a borrowed righteouſneſs? to accept of me in all my offices? to live wholly upon your Huſband, borrow all of him, and be an eternal debtor to him? to make a ſurrender of your ſoul and body to him, and ſeal a covenant with him at his table? Are you reſolved to be faithful to your Huſband, cleave to him all the days of your life, and be oft looking out for his ſecond coming? And in the mean time to be oft commemorating his ſufferings, conflicts, conqueſts and atchievements, and for that end to be frequently looking on his picture in the ſacrament with a believing, penitent and thankful heart? Now what is your anſwer? Lay your hand to your heart."

Lord, unworthy as I am, I deſire to go foreward through all difficulties, impediments and diſcouragements, and ſay with Rebekah, when called to anſwer, *I will go with the man:* And with Eſther, *I will go in to the king.* Though I be not worthy of him, yet he is worthy to be obeyed that calls me: Tho' he hath no need of me, yet I have great need of him; Though my diſtance be great, he allows me to creep nearer to him: Though I cannot move of myſelf, yet he is able to draw me, be my clogs ever ſo great: Though my motion be ſmall, yet I will not turn back, but keep my face toward him, and fix my eye on him. As a look hath brought healing, ſo a look hath brought ſtrength; yea, though he ſhould ſeem to frown on me, and chide me away from him; yet, like Jonah, *I will look again towards his holy temple:* Though I have no worthineſs in myſelf, yet he hath worthineſs enough for me: Though I be a black aud uncomely bride, my glorious Huſband can beautify me with his perfect comelineſs put upon me. Therefore I do, with all my heart, accept of him as my Lord and Huſband: Lord, I make choice of thee, and all that is thine; for richer, for poorer, for better, for worſe; for well, for woe; for proſperity, for adverſity; I make choice of thee for all times and conditions, to love, honour and obey thee above all. I renounce all other lords or lovers, and will have none but Chriſt: I renounce my own will, and take thy will for my law. I eſteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and will hate every falſe way: I ſubmit to all thy providences and dealings with me, and am content to take up thy croſs and follow thee, whitherſoever thou goeſt: I take thy Spirit for my guide, thy word for my rule, thy glory for my ſcope, thy teſtimonies for my counſellors, thy promiſes for my encouragement, thy ſabbaths for my delight, thy people for my companions: Lord Jeſus, I take thee for my life, holineſs for my way, and heaven for my home.——And as I accept of thee, and all that is thine; ſo I give up myſelf to thee, and all that is mine, ſoul and body, with all my faculties and affections, ſenſes and members, to be thy agents and inſtruments; with all my enjoyments to be employed for thy uſe and ſervice.

I will go with the man, though I ſee him all over wounded, mangled and bleeding, and his viſage marred with the wounds, ſtripes and blows which he got from men and devils. Nay, I ſee him even in this mangled condition, to be fairer than all the ſons of men, and all the ſons of God too; for I ſee him *wounded for my tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for my iniquities, that by his ſtripes I might be healed.* I ſee him a match every way ſuitable for me, that can ſupply all my needs: I am a poor dying worm, but he is a living head that can make me live for ever: I am a needy creature all made up of wants, but in him doth all manner of fulneſs dwell: I want grace, but he hath all fulneſs of grace ſuitable for me: I want grace to believe, but he is the Author of faith: I want grace to repent, but he is a Prince and Saviour exalted to give repentance: I want grace to pray, to hear, to communicate, to mortify ſin, bear the croſs, reſiſt temptation, &c. but my Huſband hath all grace to beſtow. O let me be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

O that I had the true marks of theſe who are divorced from the law, and married to Chriſt as their Huſband, that I could ſay, I look upon all my doings in point of acceptance with God as old rags; I live wholly and freely upon my Huſband, and take all I want from him for nothing: I clothe myſelf with his righteouſneſs and eſſay the performance of every duty in his ſtrength; I deſire to live entirely upon his coſt.—I have a heart-love to my Huſband, and every thing that belongs to him, and a hatred to ſin, and averſion to every thing that is injurious to him: I am deſirous to pleaſe him in all things, and out of regard to his dying command, I go to his table, to remember his dying love, and renew my marriage vows: I delight in my Huſband's company, and preſs for communion with him in all ordinances. His honour is always dear to me, and I am eaſy about my own honour and intereſt in reſpect of his: *Let me decreaſe, but let him increaſe.* And in regard the devil reigns here, ſin abounds, error and corruption prevail; I am well pleaſed with the thoughts of Chriſt's ſecond coming to pull down ſatan's kingdom, and to conſummate the marriage with me, and all that are eſpouſed to him, and ſay, *Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haſte, my beloved, even ſo come Lord Jeſus.* O that all the world would love him, exalt him, and ſubmit to him. Many in different places admire him, and ſee matchleſs charms in him, his name to them is as ointment poured forth, his garments ſmell of aloes, myrrh and caſſia, they have beheld his ſtately goings in the ſanctuary: O that all the world might ſo admire him, and ſubmit to him alſo.

MEDITATION XXIV.

From Iſa. liii. 8.—*For the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtriken.*

OUR ſins and tranſgreſſions are great and various, and therefore our Surety's ſufferings for them were heavy and manifold; he endured many wounds, bruiſes, chaſtiſements and ſtripes, which ſhould ſtill endear him the more unto us; *for he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed*, ver. 5. O who can think on that verſe without ſorrow, or ſpeak of it without tears? He was wounded and bruiſed to death, to ſave us from deadly wounds and bruiſes: And when dying, he left us his portraiture, with the marks of his wounds, that we might look upon it at his table, and mourn for our ſins which gave him theſe wounds. Oh, can I ſee my dear Saviour all wounded and mangled by my ſins, and not be deeply affected for the tranſgreſſions for which my dear Jeſus was ſtricken! Stricken he was many ways, by many hands, by many rods, by many ſtripes: He was ſtricken by the hand of God, by the hand of men, by the hand of devils; ſtricken by the rod of Moſes, the rod of juſtice, the rod of the Jews, &c. O how early was he ſtricken by the ill uſage he met with from men, being thruſt out, to be born in a foul ſtable and laid in a manger; and ſoon after was he ſtricken by the rod of perſecution and baniſhment, being made to flee his native country for ſafety from Herod. All this he ſuffered for us, becauſe we deſerved to be deprived of all earthly accommodations and comforts, and to be baniſh'd from God and heaven for ever.

He was ſtricken by the rod of poverty, and pinching ſtraits. Though he was the King of the univerſe, and poſſeſſed all the riches in it, yet *for our ſakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich,* 2 Cor. viii. 5. He was not born of a rich empreſs, but of a poor virgin; not in his own houſe, but in another man's: He had no houſe nor foot of ground of his own to live or lodge in: Though the *foxes had holes, and the birds neſts*, yet he that created them, *had not where to lay his head.* His diet was oft a-ſeeking, and commonly very mean, barley-bread and ſmall fiſhes. He had no money to pay his tax, but muſt borrow it from a fiſh of the ſea: He travelled ſtill on foot, except once he rode to Jeruſalem to fulfil a prophecy; and then he had neither horſe nor aſs of his own, but muſt borrow another man's aſs: He had no fine mounting, but the clothes of them that followed him: He had no burial-place of his own, but was laid in another man's; and all this he ſubmitted to for our ſakes.—He was alſo ſtricken by the rod of ſore labour and toil, by working at a mechanic trade, until he was thirty years of age; therefore they ſaid, Mark vi. 3. *Is not this the Carpenter?* Man having eaten the forbidden fruit, was doomed to ſore labour, that he ſhould eat his bread with the ſweat of his brow, Gen. iii. 19. and to this doom our Surety ſubmitted for us. Man broke God's covenant by eating of the tree, therefore his Surety muſt die on a tree. Man idolized a tree, and preferred its fruit to God's favour; therefore his Surety muſt labour in cutting and hewing trees moſt of his time.—Man lived a life of ſinning, and therefore Chriſt muſt live a life of labour and ſorrow; he even became a man of ſorrows, Iſa. liii. 3. that we might obtain everlaſting joy and conſolation.

He was ſtricken by mens reproachful tongues, ſcoffs and mockeries, being called a glutton, wine-biber, deceiver, Samaritan, blaſphemer, a devil; and one in compact with Beelzebub, the prince of devils. They derided him in all his offices, as a Prophet, by bidding him propheſy who ſmote him; as a Prieſt, bidding him ſave himſelf, ſince he pretended to ſave others; as a King, by putting on him a purple robe, a crown of thorns, and giving him a mock ſceptre. Yea, he endured the moſt cruel mockings, and that in the midſt of his ſharpeſt ſufferings and ſoul agonies, when he cried out on the bloody croſs, *Eli, Eli,* &c. O, ſay they, this man calls for Elias, playing on the word *Eli.* It was not out of ignorance or miſtake they ſaid ſo, but out of malice and deriſion; for they underſtood the Hebrew language well enough, and knew he called on God, and that *Eli* ſignified, *My God.* But, in their ſpite, they would repreſent him as an idolater; and when dying, that he prayed not to God, but to ſaints for help.—He was ſtricken by the moſt open affronts and indignities from men, by ſpitting in his face, condemning him to die for blaſphemy againſt God, and treaſon againſt Cæſar: By preferring Barabbas, a murderer, before him, and poſting him between two thieves. Thus the King of glory was deſpiſed and rejected of men for us, Iſa. liii. 3.

He was ſtricken by the ſcourges of platted cords on his back, and with the thorns they drove into his head: That thorny crown was deſigned for torture, as well as deriſion; for, if it had been only to mock him, a crown of ſtraw would have ſerved the purpoſe as well as one of thorns.—He was ſtricken by the pincers that pluckt the hair off his cheeks; and by the heavy croſs-tree laid on his bleeding ſhoulders, which he muſt carry to Calvary.—He was ſtricken with four big iron nails through his hands and feet, on which his whole weight muſt hang.—He was ſtricken with a burning heat and thirſt, which the wrath of God, for our ſins, created in him, and dried him up like a potſherd: This made him cry out, *I thirſt*; yet no wine, no fountain, no creature that he made muſt relieve him at this time.—He was ſtricken by a ſpear thruſt into his ſide, to let out his heart-blood, to be ſure, that no life remained. Well, (ſaid our dying Lamb) let my deareſt blood, my heart-blood go for theſe loſt ſinners, that their ſouls may live and ſing for ever.

He was ſtricken by the ungrateful behaviour of his own diſciples to him: By Judas his betraying and ſelling him for a ſmall ſum, the price of a ſlave: By Peter's denying him, and ſwearing he knew him not, at the temptation of a poor damſel: By all of them forſaking him, and leaving him in the midſt of his enemies.—Beſides all this, he was ſtricken in his ſoul, by the terrible glittering ſword of juſtice, by the curſes of the law, by deſertion from God, by the vials of his wrath poured out on him, which made fearful bruiſes, deep wounds, and wide gaſhes in his ſoul. Oh, our dear Surety was ſtricken till he fell to the ground; was overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with blood. With theſe ſtrokes our mighty Redeemer was thrown down, and broken with breach upon breach, till all the ſea billows of divine vengeance went over him. Oh, never was there any ſorrow like my dear Saviour's ſorrow, which he ſuffered when ſtricken for my ſins!

Lord, I am aſhamed of the hardneſs and unconcernedneſs of my heart at this moving ſpectacle! Oh, did the dead earth tremble, the hard rocks rend, the graves open, the heavens turn black at the ſight of a dying Jeſus, ſtricken by the ſword of juſtice? And ſhall not my rocky heart tremble and quake, rend and melt for my ſins, that were the cauſe of it? Shall the hiſtory of Joſeph in the pit move me more than that of Chriſt upon the croſs? Shall the news of the tragical death of a friend, or the ſufferings of an acquaintance among the Turks, move me more than the death and ſufferings of the innocent Son of God on my account? Alas, my heart of ſtone will neither break nor melt, till Chriſt turn and look on me, as he did on backſliding Peter. Lord, one look from thee can turn *the rock into a ſtanding water*, and *the flint into a fountain of water*. One blink of the Sun of righteouſneſs can melt the moſt frozen and icy heart in the world.

O how lovely is my ſtricken and bleeding Jeſus! Even when bleeding and mangled by my ſins, I ſee him to be *white and ruddy*, and *the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.* Every wound and ſtroke he got doth ſtill beautify him the more to me, and make my ſoul to cry, O my loving and lovely Jeſus! O how can I ſee him ſubſtituting himſelf in my room, and making himſelf the butt of the envenomed arrows of juſtice, and not be raviſhed with his love to me, and with the warmeſt affection to him! And at the ſame time, filled with ſorrow for my ſins, which brought on all his ſtrokes and wounds? Oh my ſins were the thorns that pierced his head, the nails that pierced his hands, and the ſpear that pierced his heart. My ſins preſſed him down, and made him ſweat blood in the garden. My ſoul being exceeding ſinful, made his ſoul exceeding ſorrowful. May I always hate ſin, and ſorrow for it.

MEDITATION XXV.

From Gal. ii. 20. *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.*

O How deſirable an attainment is the exerciſe of true faith upon the great Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, with an appropriating perſuaſion, or ſpecial application to a man himſelf, ſo as to ſay, "I believe and admire his "love to the elect in general, and to me in particular; "I truſt him with my ſoul, and my eternal ſalvation; "I embrace him, and put my whole confidence in him, "*who loved me, and gave himſelf for me!*" Surely, this is the faith that every one, that deſires to obey that great commandment, 1 John iii. 23. ſhould aim at, and preſs for, as a thing of the laſt moment, and conſequence: *O Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

Lord, I will not reſt in a general belief and perſuaſion of the mercy of God in Chriſt, and of Chriſt's ability and willingneſs to ſave all that come unto him; but I will apply his blood and righteouſneſs to myſelf in particular, and reſt on him as one that *loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* This appropriating faith is neceſſary to my juſtification; for every juſtified perſon applies Chriſt's righteouſneſs to himſelf, ſaying, as in Iſa. xlv. 24. *Surely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs.* As the church in general calls him, *the Lord our righteouſneſs*, ſo I, in particular, call him *the Lord my righteouſneſs.* I make it my daily practice to wrap up my naked ſoul in this robe, and live by faith upon it. I make perſonal and particular application of the remedy to my ſoul's maladies, and draw virtue from it.—This particular appropriation in the actings of faith, is moſt needful for clearing up a believer's evidences, and for filling the ſoul with joy and peace in believing; for overcoming the fears of death, and giving comfort at a dying hour. And particularly, it contributes greatly to the ſoul's comfortable approach to the holy table of the Lord, when it can ſay, "I receive a crucified Chriſt as my Saviour; I go to him as one *who loved me,* "*and gave himſelf for me;* I take the ſymbols, and feed "upon his body as broken for me, and on his blood "as ſhed for me; and I accept of theſe as an earneſt "and pledge of my living and feaſting with my Saviour for ever."

A crucified Chriſt, with all his purchaſe, is offered to all the hearers of the goſpel: For Chriſt in the word, and by his miniſters in the goſpel-offer, ſpeaks to all and every one of them, yea, ſpeaks to every ſinner, man and woman in particular, as though he called them by name and ſirname. And every man is bound to take the call and offer home to himſelf, as if he were ſo named, and believe that Chriſt ſtands at his door and knocks, ſaying, If you, or any man, will open to me, I will come in. *The promiſe is to you, and to all that are afar off*, even to all the ends of the earth, and to the ſtout-hearted: to all the ſons of men, to every creature, to them that have no money, to the poor, maimed, blind, naked, wretched and miſerable, and to whoſoever will come; *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent.* Chriſt doth beſeech you to be reconciled, and to beware of coming ſhort of the promiſe, by unbelief; ſuch a promiſe as that, *Whoſoever believeth in the Son ſhall not periſh, but have eternal life:* And that, *him that cometh to me, I will in no ways caſt out:* Beſides many others; John iii. 16.—vi. 37. Rev. iii. 17, 18, 20.—xxii. 17. Prov. viii. 4. Iſa. xlv. 22.—xlvi. 12. —lv. 1. Mark xvi. 15. Luke xiv. 21, 22, 23. Acts ii. 39.—iii. 26.—xiii. 26, 47. 2 Cor. v. 20. Heb. iv. 1.

Now, ſeeing the goſpel-call and offer is given to every one, faith, which is the eccho of the goſpel call, muſt needs receive an offered Chriſt, and ſalvation through him, with particular application to the ſoul that believes. As Chriſt offers himſelf, and his purchaſe, to every ſoul in particular; ſo faith appropriates Chriſt to the ſoul itſelf in particular. And indeed, the life and ſweetneſs of faith lies in this appropriation and applicatory act, when the ſoul is helped to ſay, with Thomas, Thou art *my Lord, and my God;* and, with the ſpouſe, *My beloved is mine, and I am his;* and, with David, *Thou art my Rock, and the God of my ſalvation.*—Unbelief would tempt me to put away the goſpel-offer from me, ſaying, It doth not belong to me, I am not elected, nor deſigned to ſhare of Chriſt's purchaſe; he did not love, nor die for me.——But in regard ſecret things belong to God, my ſalvation is at the ſtake, my need of a Saviour is unſpeakable, and the offer is made to me; I have no time to loſe in diſputing with the devil and unbelief, but I will go to Chriſt on the ground I have. He tells me, He came to ſave ſinners, I am ſure that is my name; he loved enemies, that is my name; he received gifts for the rebellious, that is my name; and now I hear the Maſter calling and inviting me in particular: Therefore, in ſpite of the devil and unbelief, and all my guilt, I'll go forward, and accept of Chriſt as *my Saviour and my King;* I'll truſt him with my ſalvation, and believe *he loved me, and gave himſelf for me, vile and guilty as I am.*——This eſſay to believe, Lord, I make in thy ſtrength, and in obedience to thy command; But, Oh, my mints are weak and feckleſs! it is only thy Spirit enlightning my mind, and opening up the goſpel-call and promiſe to me, ſaying, *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent;* that determines me to make particular application of thy love-offer, by an acceptable appropriating faith: Let my help come from thee.

Oh Lord, my ſins are great and numerous; but, ſhould I add to them the ſin of refuſing the Remedy, and putting away Chriſt's love and blood offered to me in the goſpel, this would be greater than all the reſt; for ſo I would bring not only my own blood, but the guilt of the blood of God upon my head. This I dare not do; now my ſoul is at the ſtake, now the Remedy is in my offer, my need of it is great, I cannot delay cloſing with it, yet a little while and my opportunity is gone, and I muſt change my dwelling for ever; and how can I go any where without my Saviour? Chriſt I muſt have to teach me, juſtify and ſanctify me, none elſe can do it, on him all my help is laid. How ſhall I go to a communion table without him? How will I go to death without him? How will I go to a judgment ſeat without him? Lord, my caſe is deſperate without thee; wherefore I accept of thy offer, I believe thy love, I truſt in thy merits, I apply thy blood, I appropriate thy purchaſe, and cry, *My Lord, and my God.* I confide in a ſin-pardoning God, and reſt on his promiſe to me, through Chriſt's blood and merit, for life and ſalvation. And though clouds ariſe, and he ſhould threaten even to ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him, as one *that loved me, and gave himſelf for me.*

Object. But doth not the calling ſinners to ſuch appropriating acts of faith, encourage the preſumptuous confidence of hypocrites to call God their God, like Balaam, Num. xxii. 18. and to continue in ſin? *Anſw.* No; theſe goſpel-calls do encourage ſinners to love God, to repent and leave their ſins; for till we believe, and taſte ſomething of God's love to us, we cannot love him, nor turn to him, 1 John iv. 19. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* And the abuſe or preſumption of hypocrites muſt not hinder the publiſhing of free goſpel-offers, and promiſes. Again, the appropriating faith of believers humbles the creature, deſtroys ſelf confidence, purifies the heart, draws forth the ſoul in love to God, and hatred to ſin; whereas the preſumption of hypocrites hath no ſuch effects.

It is the duty then of every man that hath Chriſt's love-offers tendered to him, to repent and believe the goſpel, to ſee his loſt ſtate in Adam, and his need of Chriſt, to be well-pleaſed with the goſpel device, receive Chriſt in all his offices, to truſt in him as his Saviour, and thereupon believe that his ſins are forgiven through Chriſt's blood; and ſo perſuade and aſſure himſelf that Chriſt is his, that he died for him, and that he ſhall have life and ſalvation through him. This perſuaſion and aſſurance being moſt neceſſary to the ſpiritual life, it is the great duty of every one to preſs forwards, in the acts of faith, until they attain it, faith being ſtill weak and lame without it, But ſeeing many believers have it not always, through prevailing doubts and unbelief, it muſt ſurely belong more to the perfection of faith, than to the eſſence of it: Their caſe is like that of a ſhipwreck'd man that hath got hold of a plank, he believes the plank is ſufficient to bear him up, and keep him from ſinking, but the blowing ſtorm, and his own weakneſs, make him doubt if his grip be faſt enough to hold by it.——Indeed, Lord, if thou didſt not take faſter grips of me than I do of thee, my weak and ſlippery finger'd faith would ſoon let thee go; but I truſt not in my faith, but in thy faithfulneſs; I truſt not in my promiſes to thee, but in thine to me; that thou wilt never leave me, nor forſake me. Lord, do as thou haſt ſaid; be it to me according to thy word.

MEDITATION XXVI.

From 1 John iv. 19. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

NO reaſon can be given why God loved any of Adam's race, but only becauſe he loved us: But good reaſons can be given why we love God, both becauſe he is infinitely lovely in himſelf, and becauſe he firſt loved us, and before we had any thoughts of love to him.—O what is our love, but a ſmall ſtream that flows from and returns again to the ocean of his love! God's love to us is the ſource, the incentive, the motive, and moral cauſe, of our love to him. We can never love God, until ſome rays of his everlaſting love break out to us; for conſciouſneſs of guilt, and fears of wrath, do rather incline us to hate him, and flee from him as an enemy, than to love him, and draw near to him: But the breaking out of the beams of God's ancient and preventing love to us in Jeſus Chriſt, makes way for breaking the enmity of our hearts, and bringing in the heavenly fire of love to him. The ſerious conſideration of God's eternal, free love to us poor, wretched and unlovely creatures, and his loving us at ſuch a rate as to ſeek and court our love at the expence of his Son's blood, is the moſt powerful motive in the world to engage and draw out our love to him; and the more we have of the faith or feeling of this love, the warmer ſtill will our love to him be. God's redeeming love diſplayed to men doth obſcure all the ſeeming glories of this world, as much as the meridian ſun doth darken candles or ſmaller fires; and ſoon convinces us that there is nothing that deſerves our affections but God and Chriſt. No man that ever taſted the ſweetneſs of God's love, but finds his heart warmed with love to him again. A forgiven ſoul cannot read his pardon but with tears of love and joy, and ſtill there is much love where much is forgiven. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

Lord, at thy call I go to thy table to admire and give thanks for God's preventing love vented to man in the council of peace, the covenant of redemption, in the incarnation, the death, the blood and righteouſneſs of our Lord Redeemer, O amazing love! I admire it in the *antiquity* of it; God's love is from all eternity; his thoughts were long ſet upon man before he had a being. I admire the *freeneſs* and undeſervedneſs of this love; there was nothing in man to engage his love; he ſaw nothing in him but poverty, debt, impotency, and deformity; yea, man was ſo far from deſerving any love from God, that he deſerved all hatred, as being lothſome and full of enmity; having razed out the image of God, and got ſatan's ſet up in its room! yet even then, God loved him ſo, as to give his dearly beloved Son to die for him. O, did God love man when utterly unworthy of his love! and ſhall we not love God who infinitely deſerves all our affection, as being in himſelf entirely amiable, and altogether lovely; and likewiſe as affectionate to us, as he is lovely in himſelf!—Lord Jeſus, I admire the ſtrength and ardency of thy love! Many waters of affliction did not quench it; and the floods of wrath, that went over thee, could not drown it! ſtrong was that love that made thee engage, and carried thee thro' in ſuffering the pains both of the firſt and ſecond death in our ſtead! Oh, I am aſhamed and afflicted for my little love to thee!—I marvel at the conſtancy and ſteadfaſtneſs of thy love, that it continues firm to thy people from everlaſting to everlaſting; and that it is never altered by all the unkind returns, provocations, and ingratitude thou meets with from them! I wonder at the fruits and effects of thy love! O how great! how ſweet! how numerous! Who can value or ſet them forth? Such as, "Quenching the fire of juſtice, diſarming the law of its curſes, bruiſing the ſerpent's head, paying believers debt, obtaining for them regeneration, pardon of ſin, peace with God, peace with conſcience, peace with angels, adoption into God's family, juſtification, ſanctification, all the graces of the Spirit, audience of prayer, growth in grace, comfort in affliction, a bleſſing on all providences, perſeverance in holineſs, the miniſtry of angels, victory over death, a happy reſurrection, acquittance at the tribunal, the beatific viſion, and everlaſting life!" Who can declare the loving-kindneſs of the Lord? Who can utter his mighty acts! Who can ſhew forth all his praiſe? I may ſooner fathom the depth of the ſea, the breadth of the earth, or the height of heaven, than meaſure the love of God in Chriſt; for it paſſeth knowledge?

Oh, how little do we love him, that loved us firſt, and loved us at ſuch a rate! Nay, how unthankful are we for all the inſtances and fruits of his matchleſs love! How unkind are the returns we make to him for it? *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid* at the ingratitude of men! How little do we think on redeeming love, and upon the propitiation provided by God for our ſins! How little do we ſpeak of this love, or recommend it to theſe who know it not! How do the ſmall trifles, and little nothings of this world, get more room in our hearts, than Chriſt's glorious purchaſe! How little pains are we at to ſecure an intereſt in the bleſſed fruits of his love! How unwilling are we to go into the terms of redeeming love, to renounce a covenant of works, ſelf-righteouſneſs, darling ſins, beloved idols! &c. How averſe are we to renounce the world, deny ſelf, and to be debtors wholly to free grace! How inclinable are we to ſatisfy conſcience after the commiſſion of ſin, by our own doings, confeſſions, mournings, reſolutions, &c. without going to the propitiation provided by the love of God! How great is the liking we have to ſin that killed the Lamb of God! How can we ſay, we love God that loved us firſt, when we hugg his enemy in our boſom! *O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears*, that I might weep and mourn day and night for the ungrateful requitals of the ſons of men for the preventing love of God in Chriſt, and the amazing inſtances of it!

O that I could ſay on good ground, and from the bottom of my heart, I love him that firſt loved me. Surely a ſincere love to God and Chriſt would be a ſure evidence of God's eternal love to me! O that I had the marks of this love, and could ſay, *My meditations of him are ſweet*: I place my happineſs in his favour, and the comfort of all ordinances in his preſence: I rejoice in the flouriſhing of his kingdom, and abhor every thing that is injurious to him: I eſteem Chriſt the Mediator, and gift of God, as moſt precious, with every thing that belongs to him: I fall heartily in with the device of redeeming love for ſaving ſinners, and ſtudy the life of faith on the Son of God.——I renounce my own righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and deſire always to ſay, *In the Lord Jeſus have I my righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* Were this the language of my heart, I might appeal to himſelf, and ſay, *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee*, and deſire to render thee love for love.

It would be a great ſhame for believers, if they did not love him that firſt loved them, when they were enemies to him! Surely they cannot be believers without love to him. O for greater and warmer love to him that firſt loved us! Love is the great qualification of the ſaints above; the more love we have, the liker heaven we are, and the meeter to dwell in it. Were it poſſible there could be a man in heaven without love, he would reckon the place a hell, and the work a torment to him. It is love that makes ſpiritual and heavenly work delightful; hence love is ſaid to be the fulfilling of the law. If the love of God be in the heart, the law of God is there alſo, and the ſoul is inclined to all holy obedience. O may the love of God in Chriſt conſtrain me to live to him that died for me.—Have I ſeen the aſtoniſhing love of God in parting with his dear Son to ſave me? O let that love conſtrain me to part with all my ſins and idols for him.—Have I ſeen the dear Son's amazing love in bleeding to death on the curſed tree, to ſave me from lying in hell for ever? O let me never again wittingly walk in the road that leads to it.—Have I ſeen him ſtruggling in an agony to open heaven's gates for me? O let me never turn my back on heaven, and tell him thereby he might have ſaved his labour. O let his boundleſs love warm my heart more and more with love to him! May the charms of his love triumph over all the charms of ſin's pleaſures and ſatan's devices, and kindle ſuch a fire of love in my heart, as will burn up all my luſts like ſtubble. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXVII.

From Pſal. cxxvi. 5. *They that ſow in tears, ſhall reap in joy.*

THE ſowing time of God's people is all here, but their reaping time is but partly here, and far more fully hereafter. Here they ſow very much in tears, there is need for it; this ſeed-time is the moſt promiſing of any. Men love a dry ſeed-time, but God loves wet ſeed-times beſt: A wet ſowing time doth promiſe a harveſt of joy, whereas a dry one portends a harveſt of ſorrow. *Wo to them that laugh now, they ſhall weep.* If men do not begin with tears, they ſhall end with them; if they weep not now, they ſhall weep and wail and gnaſh their teeth hereafter.—Godly weeping is a good ſign of ſpiritual life. If a child, when born, was heard cry, it is reckoned a legal proof of its living; but if not, it is accounted ſtill-born or dead. Alas, the number of ſtill-born children in the church is great! few are heard cry, or ſeen weep, in a godly ſort, if compared with theſe who do not.—There be many who pour out tears on worldly occaſions, but few on ſpiritual accounts. If a child die, we can mourn and weep over him, but who mourns for Chriſt as for an only ſon? Who weeps for ſin that pierced him? Oh, how little are we affected with the ſufferings of our dear Redeemer! Our ears are ſo accuſtomed to the hearing of Chriſt's love, his agonies, his wounds, his blood, his death, that they are become words of a common ſound, and make little impreſſion on us, though they be the moſt awful and moving things that ever the world heard of.—Thou, Lord, art preſent at ſacraments, thou obſerveſt our tears, and comeſt with thy bottle to receive and preſerve them; but, Oh, how empty is it of tears, for the moſt part, of goſpel-hearers! and how few are the tears which are dropt into it by communicants themſelves!

Lord, I am aſhamed of the hardneſs and unconcernedneſs of my heart, and the woful dryneſs of my eyes! Shall the rocks about Jeruſalem rend ſooner at Chriſt's ſufferings than my rocky heart? Shall others weep and ſow in tears, when Chriſt's wounds and blood are ſet before them, and I continue ſtupid and hardened? Shall the hiſtory of Joſeph in the pit move my heart more than that of Chriſt upon the croſs! Lord, look upon my ſtony heart with pity, look it into ſtreams of penitential tears, give me ſuch a look as thou gaveſt Peter when he denied thee, a look that may cauſe me weep, and weep bitterly at the remembrance of my ſins that pierced thee. If I have not openly denied my Saviour, ſurely I have ſhamefully forgot him, and forſaken him in my heart: I have had a deep hand in all his ſufferings. When my dear Lord was in the garden ſweating blood, neither Jew nor Gentile, Judas nor Pilate, were there to cauſe it; but Oh my unbelief, my pride, my carnality, my hypocriſy, my ſinful words and actions were there, and with their weight preſſed him to the ground, and brought that fearful agony and ſweat upon him. My diſſimulation was the traitor's kiſs, my ambition the thorny crown, my drinking up iniquity like water the portion of gall and vinegar; my want of tears cauſed him ſhed both tears and blood, my forſaking God made him to be forſaken of God, my ſoul's being exceeding guilty made his ſoul exceeding heavy! Oh, what means then the hardneſs of my heart, and dryneſs of my eyes, when theſe things are ſet before me! Is it that weeping is deſigned for me hereafter, where tears ſhall never be dried up! Lord ſave me, for Chriſt's ſake, from hell's tears, and give grace to prevent them by ſowing in tears now in the proper ſeaſon.

So long as I am in the valley of tears, there are many reaſons for ſowing the ſeed of tears. I ſee many grounds for them, may a glance of them be the means of melting my heart, and filling my eyes with tears.—*Tears* for my woful apoſtaſy from God in Adam, whereby I am baniſhed from God, have loſt his image and countenance, and am fallen under his wrath and curſe.—*Tears* for the woful corruption of my nature, my enmity againſt God, and the manifold plagues of my heart, as *atheiſm, ignorance, pride, unbelief, hardneſs, hypocriſy, formality,* &c.——*Tears* for the ſins of my life, open and ſecret, of omiſſion and commiſſion, of light and ignorance, which are more in number than the hairs of my head, and many of them very heinous becauſe of ſeveral aggravations; of all which I may have an affecting view by reading our larger Catechiſm upon the ten commandments.——*Tears* upon the remembrance of Chriſt's love, in ſuffering and dying in my room, to waſh away my ſins and ſave me from hell. Surely the thoughts of this love may inflame the coldeſt breaſt, melt the hardeſt heart, and make the drieſt conſtitution run down with tears. It was this that made Mary Magdalene's eyes guſh out ſo plentifully with tears of love and joy as were enough to waſh her Saviour's feet.——*Tears* for the abuſe of God's fatherly goodneſs, mercy, and patience towards me a ſinful hell deſerving creature: This conſideration melted the prodigal's heart, and made him cry, *Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon.* David's undeſerved kindneſs made even the hard hearted Saul to lift up his voice and weep, and will not God's kindneſs which is infinitely greater and freer, make me drop ſome ſilent tears at his holy table?—*Tears*, becauſe of the frowns of my heavenly Father, the tokens of his diſpleaſure, his chaſtiſements, and even his chidings and ſhaking the rod at me: Theſe will melt the heart of a child whoſe nature is kindly and ingenuous, while the ſtubborn will ſtand againſt many ſtrokes. David though a man of the greateſt valour againſt his enemies; yet when he ſaw God was angry with him in Abſalom's rebellion, he wept like a child before the enemy while going up Olivet, 2 Sam. xv. 30. and ſeemed to have no courage at all.——Again, I ought to ſow in *tears* for the diſhonours done to God by the ſins of others; and eſpecially when damnable hereſies and blaſphemies are vented againſt God. And likewiſe *tears* for the miſeries and periſhing condition of others. And eſpecially *tears* of ſympathy with God's people in affliction. For I read of Chriſt himſelf, David, Hezekiah, Joſiah, Jeremiah and other ſaints ſowing ſuch tears. Well then may this world be called a valley of tears.

Beſides all theſe, it is well-pleaſing to God when Chriſtians ſow tears of tenderneſs in renewing covenant with him, in prayer, in hearing the word, in communicating and commemorating the death and ſufferings of Chriſt for their ſins. This laſt is a ſpecial ſeaſon for ſowing tears, according to Zech. xii. 10. O ſhall Chriſtians be more ſparing of their tears for Chriſt, than Chriſt was of his blood for them? We cry out againſt the Jews and Romans as hard hearted men for piercing Chriſt, and being unconcerned for his ſufferings. But what ſofter are our hearts if we can ſee how our ſins put him to death, and not be grieved nor weep. Lord, ſend thy Spirit to touch my heart, and then it will melt into a ſtream of tears for ſin, that curſed thing that butcher'd the Lamb of God. O let this be my weeping time, and ſeed time of tears, that hereafter I may reap in joy. Alas, my ſeed time is ſcrimp and inſignificant, O let not my harveſt be proportioned to it.——Lord, though I have not tears enough with Mary to waſh thy feet, yet thou haſt blood enough to waſh my feet, my heart, my hands, my tears, and all my duties, and to make me and them acceptable and ſavoury to God, ſo that I may reap in joy with his people above, and ſtand there as a monument of free grace for ever.

Many after ſowing the precions ſeed of tears at communion ſeaſons have even had their reaping times here below, as an earneſt and firſt-fruits of the full harveſt above. Lord, make me acquaint both with the ſowing and reaping of penitent believers in this world, that I may have good hope through grace, of ſharing with them in the harveſt of glory hereafter, even the full enjoyment of God in heaven, eternal communion with the glorious Trinity, with the ſaints and holy angels. Let me know what it is after a ſeed-time of tears, to reap even in ordinances here below, the clearing of my evidences of grace, and the evidences of my intereſt in Chriſt, and in the well-ordered covenant. Let me reap the lifting up of the light of thy countenance upon me, which will put more joy in my heart than worldlings have when they reap corn and wine in the greateſt plenty. Let me ſee my name written in heaven before I go thither, that my paſſage may be joyful in the midſt of tears.——Let me reap even here new ſupplies of grace, ſtrength to bear croſſes, and reſiſt temptations; give me gracious returns of prayer, and victory over my corruptions, that I may ſing with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. *In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me; and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.*

MEDITATION XXVIII.

From Rev. i. 5. *Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.*

THE love of Chriſt in becoming man, and ſhedding his blood to ranſom and ſave ſinners of mankind will be the eternal ſong of the redeemed above, and why ſhould they not begin this ſong here below?—Never was there ſuch matter for ſongs of praiſe as the unfathomable love of Jeſus, his name is love; and therefore it is to me as ointment poured forth. I'll remember his love more than wine. His nature is love; his words and actions were love; he preached and practiſed love; he lived in love, was ſick of love, and died for love.—O what thoughts ſhould I have of this free and undeſerved love of the glorious Son of God, who was intreated by no man, and even hated by all men; yet in his free love intreats and undertakes for man, ſaying, Though he be my enemy, I'll be both his Surety and Sacrifice, I'll drink the cup of wrath, be made ſin, and a curſe for him, I'll pour out all my blood and die for him.——O how ſhall I ſpeak of this aſtoniſhing love to thy enemies? To have ſpared our lives had been great mercy, but to give thy life for ours is love unſpeakable!——Oh! Lord, thou haſt found me in my enmity, and yet loved me! When my hand was lifted up againſt thee, thy arms were open to embrace me! Nay, thou haſt opened thy loving heart to ſhelter rebels, who trode thee under foot! Thy heart burned with love to them who cruelly pierced it! Thy bowels yearned towards theſe that raked in them with bloody hands! Surely eternity itſelf will be ſhort enough to celebrate the praiſes of our glorious Immanuel, who loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood. Worthy is our ſlain bleeding Lamb of eternal hallelujahs from men and angels. Lord fit my heart for theſe new ſongs.

O never was there ſuch a miracle of condeſcending love to the ſons of men, as this of the eternal Son of God, his becoming man to ſuffer hell for them, and pour out his blood to waſh them from ſin that kindles hell-fire againſt them. Glory to the Lamb for his fire-quenching blood, and for his preventing love that kept me from feeling of this fire! O how would this love have affected me, if juſtice had ſent me to hell, and kept me there one year, or one month, or but one day! Surely, one day in hell would have made me prize and praiſe redeeming love and redeeming blood at another rate than now I do.—Or had I ſeen the damned in their miſery deſpairing and without hope! Or had I ſeen my agonizing Saviour in the garden ſweating blood for me; or ſeen him dying on the croſs pouring it out at five big wounds to the very laſt drop to waſh away ſin! O would not I then have valued the great remedy and ſalvation he now tenders to me!—And is not all this which now I hear in the word, and ſee repreſented in the ſacrament, as true, as real and certain, as if I had ſeen it with my eyes?

And now when I go to behold Chriſt dying and bleeding in this holy repreſentation, even the Lamb of God ſacrificed and ſlaughter'd for my ſins; Lord, touch my heart that it may be ſuitably affected with the ſight, ſo as intenſely to love my bleſſed Saviour, and to hate my curſed ſins.——O how ſhould I, at this occaſion, be covered with ſhame and lothe myſelf, who have both procured the death of Chriſt by ſin, and ſinned againſt his death, by ſlighting his blood and neglecting his great ſalvation.——Oh! I am chargeable both with the guilt of Chriſt's blood, and of murdering my own ſoul.——O pardon and *deliver me from blood guiltineſs, O God, thou God of my ſalvation.*

My ſins have indeed ſhed the blood of Chriſt, but, Lord, impute not the guilt, but the merit of this blood to me.—Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Surely the leaſt drop of thy dear Son's blood is of more value than a ſea of mine. A whole ſea of it cannot waſh away one ſin, but Lord thou calleſt me to look unto the Lamb's blood that takes away the ſins of the world. Oh, is not this blood more powerful to waſh me, than my ſins are to defile me! Is not its virtue as freſh ſtill as when it dropped from his wounds on the tree, or in the day when it cleanſed three thouſand at once? Is not thy Son's blood a ſufficient ſatisfaction for all my ſins, a full price for my redemption!—O my ſoul, thou art now near the bleſſed remedy for thy guilt and pollution, this is the only well of ſalvation and fountain of life! O canſt thou ſee Chriſt's blood running, and not deſire to be bathed in it! Now the cleanſing and healing ſtreams run on both ſides of the table, now let me apply and live, let me bring all my plagues and ſores to the ſtreams, my blind eyes, my deaf ears, my weak hands, my feeble knees, my hard heart, my cold affections, my unbelieving and doubting mind, my leprous and unclean ſoul. Lord, this blood has waſhed away the plagues, ſpots and ſtains of many thouſands, who are now praiſing the Lamb for it; Oh, let me be joined to the number, that I may alſo ſing to him that loved and waſhed me.

O bleeding Lamb, *if thou wilt, thou can'ſt make me clean;* O let that blood which guſhed from thy heart and ſide, but drop on my ſoul, and it will cleanſe me from all ſin.——And when thou art pleaſed to come to me in the ſacrament in ſtreams of blood, O raiſe me up, that I may meet thee with ſtreams of tears, tears of repentance, love and gratitude. O let me not be more ſparing of my tears for Chriſt, than he was of his blood for me. David's kindneſs made even a hard-hearted Saul lift up his voice and weep, and will not Chriſt's kindneſs, which is infinitely greater, make me drop at leaſt ſome ſilent tears?

O how dreadful a thing muſt it be to reject this remedy! Surely juſtice will not ſpare them that trample under foot the blood of the Son of God: If juſtice was inexorable when he himſelf prayed, *If it be poſſible let this cup paſs;* how will he ſpare me, or hear the cry of thoſe who reject his blood and ſacrifice? How is it poſſible that the cup of wrath can paſs from them who do it! No, they muſt drink it for ever themſelves! Lord, ſave me from rejecting this blood. *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.*

MEDITATION XXIX.

From Luke xv. 18, 19. *Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon, make me as one,* &c.

FAther. Ah, I may be aſhamed to call thee ſo, conſidering what a diſobedient and unthankful child I have been. I am a moſt wretched prodigal; I left thy houſe and preſence and went into a far country; far from thee my bliſs and happineſs. But now, Father, behold me deſiring to come back as a poor penitent, mourning, and returning prodigal. I come from a far country indeed, I come from the land of ſin and darkneſs; I come from the frontiers of hell, from the very borders of the burning lake! Ah, fooliſh creature that I am, How have I forſaken thee the Fountain of living waters! How fond have I been of broken ciſterns, and in love with filthy puddles. O the baſeneſs, the diſingenuity, the ingratitude that I have been guilty of! I have reſiſted thy power, deſpiſed thy wiſdom, undervalued thy goodneſs! Father of mercies, I now ſee what an evil thing and bitter it is to forſake the Lord Holy Lord Jeſus, I now ſee what indignities I have done againſt thee! Thy bleſſed body was dreadfully torn with nails upon the croſs, and thy precious blood inhumanely ſpilt by thy crucifiers! But Oh! have not I occaſioned more grief and ſorrow to thee by my manifold ſins againſt light and love? They crucified thee but once, but I have crucified thee day after day! They crucified thee, becauſe they knew thee not; but I have known thee what thou art in thyſelf, the Lord of glory; and what thou art to me, a tender and merciful Father; yet I have continued to crucify thee afreſh.—O holy Spirit, I have reſiſted thy ſtrivings, quenched thy motions, demoliſhed thy work, and put thee away grieved. But, Lord, I condemn my folly, and ſee my miſery. Oh, what have I gained by offending thee? Nothing but ſhame and confuſion, fear, trembling and horror! O what fruit had I in theſe things whereof I am now aſhamed!

But, Father, I have heard of thy compaſſions to the guilty, when they confeſs and forſake and turn to thee: wherefore though I am aſhamed like the publican to lift up my eyes to heaven; yet let me with humble Magdalene come behind thee weeping, and waſh thy feet with my tears, and kiſs them. And let me hear the news of pardon from thy mouth. Thou cameſt, Lord, not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance; and of theſe I am chief.—Lord, I am full of diſeaſes, full of wounds, full of plague-ſores, full of weakneſs and infirmities, full of ſins and pollutions. Here, Lord, is work for thy ſtrong hand, work for thy wonder-working blood, O ſtretch forth thy hand and ſave.—*Father, I am no more worthy to be called thy ſon, make me as one of thy hired ſervants;* and thou knoweſt no hire, no wages will ſatisfy me but thyſelf; Lord, give me thyſelf, be thou my exceeding great reward.

Lord, I am ſo vile a creature, that I may fear to come and preſent a petition to thee upon the knee, and far more to come and ſit down with thee at thy holy table: If John Baptiſt, a ſaint of the firſt magnitude, thought himſelf not worthy to ſtoop down and looſe the latchet of thy ſhoes, ſhall I, who am loaden with ſins, adventure to that holy feaſt, where angels wait as miniſtering ſpirits?—But, Lord, in thy compaſſion receive me, that comes not to excuſe, but to accuſe myſelf, with eyes caſt down, ſmiting on my breaſt with the publican, *Lord, be merciful to me a ſinner.* Thou didſt graciouſly accept of the publican's prayer, of Mary Magdalene's tears, the faith of the thief on the croſs, the repentance of Peter, and of theſe that crucified thee. By theſe inſtances of thy mercy, I am encouraged to draw near to thee; O ſend me not away empty, leſt I faint by the way; but ſatisfy my needy ſoul with the food of thy heavenly banquet, that I may receive ſpiritual ſtrength and nouriſhment to eternal life.

Lord, hear my cry, and hide not thy face from me: When Manaſſeh cried to thee, thou hadſt reſpect to his prayer: When the Ninivites humbled themſelves before thee, thou waſt intreated; yea, thou inviteſt the moſt crimſon and ſcarlet-coloured ſinners, to come and reaſon with thee, and aſſures them, thou wilt caſt out none that come.—Many thouſands, who have experienced the truth of thy word, are, at this hour, ſinging thy praiſes, and exalting thy free grace. Lord, do thou make me alſo a monument of thy free grace to all eternity.

Ah, I may be aſhamed to ſpeak of mercy and grace, who have ſo long abuſed thy grace, and trampled on the blood that ſhould ſave me. O that I could mourn and weep all my life for it. Oh, what ſhall I do with my ſtony heart that will not break and melt for abuſing God's mercy, and trampling Chriſt's blood! Oh, ſhall I mourn and weep for a dead corpſe, or a departed friend, and not mourn for a dead heart, or for God's departing from me! Shall the dear Son of God weep, ſweat, and bleed for us; and we not weep for ourſelves, or for our ſins that pierced his head with thorns, his hands with nails, and his ſide with a ſpear, and his heart with ſorrows. Lord Jeſus I look to thee for a penitent heart, ſeeing thou tells me, thou art exalted for this very end, to give repentance to Iſrael.

Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? And what am I, the unworthieſt of men, that thou ſhouldſt call me to ſit with thy children at thy table, who am unworthy as a dog to creep under it; yea, calleſt me to eat the bread of angels, who am not worthy to eat the bread of men.——Amazing love! that God ſhould court thoſe to obedience, whom he can peremptorily command to it; and in caſe of diſobedience, puniſh inſtantly in hell; that he ſhould take poor ſlaves, condemned to the priſon of hell, and make them crowned kings in heaven; that he ſhould not only be willing to dwell in fleſh, but alſo to give us his fleſh for our food; that he ſhould not only ſave us from hell, but even leave his throne in heaven, and loſe his life on earth, to enthrone us in his kingdom!

theſe are prodigies of love, which ſhould engage us to love our Saviour, and mourn for ſin while we live.—Lord Jeſus, pity a relenting, returning prodigal, take him home, and make him thy ſervant for ever. It is highly juſt, that I ſhould offer up myſelf a living ſacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himſelf a dying Sacrifice for my redemption.

MEDITATION XXX.

From Song i. 4 ——*We will remember thy love*——

I Go, bleſſed Jeſus, at thy call to remember thy love at thy holy table; thy words have an awful ſound in my ear, *Do this in remembrance of me.* I ſee much in them, in obedience to them I'll *do this* in remembrance of thy dwelling in fleſh; in memory of thy love that carried thee to the manger, to the garden, and to the croſs for me; in memory of the infinite price of thy blood which thou didſt ſhed; in memory of the victory obtained by it over the enemies of my ſoul; in memory of the deliverance from wrath, and the immortal glory thou haſt purchaſed by it for me: Tho' thou didſt die and ly in the grave, yet thy love ſhall ever live in my heart. Glory to thee, thou art now alive in heaven; O come and live with me; let never thy love be one moment out of my view. I bleſs thee for this laſting memorial of thy love.

I look on this ſacrament as no real or proper ſacrifice, as many do, but only as a repreſentation or commemoration of the real ſacrifice Chriſt offered on the croſs. I do no more at the Lord's table, than what Chriſt did at it: Since he offered no ſacrifice at the table, neither do I: He only did commemorate that ſacrifice he was going to offer, and the ſame, and no more do I. If any ſhould ſay that Chriſt offered a real ſacrifice when he inſtituted this ſacrament, then the oblation on the croſs would have been ſuperfluous, becauſe ſinners would have been redeemed by that of the ſupper which went before.

Now is the time for a ſolemn commemoration of thy love: Oh, ſhall I be unmindful of thy love at this feaſt, when thou waſt ſo mindful of me at it, made thy teſtament, put me in it, and left me precious legacies to cauſe me remember thee, ſuch as life and light, pardon and peace, righteouſneſs and ſtrength, grace and glory.——O how heroic, how generous and free is thy love to ſinful worms! we had done nothing to oblige thee; nothing ſaweſt thou in us to engage thy love to us; but much didſt thou ſee in us to incenſe thee againſt us. When we were without ſtrength, ungodly, ſinners, and enemies, thou lovedſt us, and diedſt for us. *Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends;* but far greater love hath God-man, who laid down his life for his enemies! O what ſhall I think of this love! it had been wonderful love in an angel to have ſtooped to be united to a lump of earth, and therein ſuffer for us, though it could not have paid our debt. But, O my ſoul, here is one more valuable than all the angels in heaven, that has ſtooped to do it! *The word was made fleſh and dwelt among us!* when I was like Iſaac bound on the altar, he freely offered himſelf to be made a ſacrifice to ſatisfy juſtice for me, *Father,* ſaid he, *lo I come, to do thy will I take delight!*

Remember this love, O my ſoul, the Son of God is become the Son of man for thee, that thou mighteſt be raiſed to the dignity of a ſon of God! he that was infinitely rich, for my ſake became poor, that I, a poor naked creature, might become rich and well clothed. How can I look on the incarnation and birth of my Redeemer, and not remember his love with wonder! Can I behold the manger his bed, and not adore the love that brought him to ly in it? O how low were the circumſtances of the Heir of heaven, when he came to ſojourn on earth, who had neither a houſe to live in, nor an eſtate to live upon, but muſt be ſubſiſted by the hoſpitality of others, and frequently his fare was very mean! Amazing prodigy of divine love! God ſtoops to dwell in fleſh, and gives us his fleſh to feed upon in the ſacrament! He not only pardons our ſins, and ſaves us from hell; but leaves his throne in heaven, loſes his life on earth, and wades through hell, to enthrone us in his kingdom, and make us crowned kings for ever.——Bleſſed be the Lord that gives me a communion-ſabbath to remember this love! what ſhall I render to thee for it? A day of glad-tidings! thou haſt often, on ſuch a day viſited the earth, and watered it, and made it rich with thy ſhowers! may thy grace and Spirit drop on us this day, like rain on the mown graſs.

Lord, I am not worthy to touch the threſhold of thy houſe, and yet thou calleſt me to thy table! not worthy to ſtand among thy ſervants, and yet thou wouldſt have me ſit with my Redeemer! not worthy to ly at thy footſtool, and yet thou wouldſt make my heart thy throne! not worthy to eat the bread of men, and yet thou calleſt me to eat the bread of angels! O love worthy to be remembred to all generations! Lord enlighten my eyes, and give me a clearer view of thy love, than ever I got; and while I am muſing on it, let the fire burn; O make my heart burn within me with love to him that loved us.

O my ſoul, conſider the greatneſs of Chriſt's love in the cup he drank for thee! how legible is it in his tears and prayers, his groans and cries, his agony and ſweat, his wounds and blood, and all for us. O let this matchleſs love beget in me the warmeſt love and affection to him that loved us!——O let the fire of Chriſt's love burn up my luſts and worldly love like ſtubble; and remove the coldneſs of my heart to him! Oh that I could weep bitterly that I cannot bring this vile heart of mine to love the Lord Jeſus more! Oh, ſhall I throw away my affections upon every worthleſs object, and yet have none for the lovelieſt object in the whole creation of God; and yet one that would needs die for me, to become my Ranſom, Sacrifice and Atonement! Is it the character of theſe who are Chriſt's ſpouſe? Is it the character of the whole army of martyrs, and of every believer, to love Chriſt, and ſhall not I love him too?——Oh, the virgins love thee, the upright love thee; and every one of them cry, *O thou whom my ſoul loveth;* and ſhall not I join theſe chaſte lovers?—Or ſhall I be expoſed to the terrible fate of theſe who want love to Chriſt? 1 Cor. xvi. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be an anathema, maranatha.*—O that I could expreſs my love to him in adorations and praiſes, in deſiring his preſence, loving his members, promoting his kingdom on earth, and longing to be with him for ever.

MEDITATION XXXI.

From Iſa. liii. 5. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions.*

HOW amazing is the love of God to fallen man, in taking a body to be pierced and wounded for him! Man did caſt off the image of his Maker, and became a rebel and run-away from God: And, behold, his Maker takes on him man's image to reſtore him again to favour: Yea, aſſumes our nature, when at the loweſt, that ſo he might ſigh, groan, grieve, weep, ſorrow, ſweat, bleed and die for undone man; and he did this, to raiſe him from his miſerable ſtate, to a happier condition than he was in before his fall.—Had not God become man, we could not have enjoyed him ſo nearly, ſo familiarly as we may do now. The enjoyment of God as a Redeemer, a Huſband, a Brother, is another manner of enjoyment of him than of God as a Creator. Though we ruined ourſelves, and fell under wrath, yet God, by the incarnation has recovered us, and made us up far above all we had to loſe. But ere this be done, he muſt not only be man, but he muſt be wounded for and by man's ſins; yea, wounded to death, and crucified, before man could be raiſed up to live with God.

Many, yea innumerable were the wounds my God Redeemer received for me; as, by the thorns that pricked his head, by the pincers that plucked his hair, by the ſcourge that tore and furrowed his back; beſides, the five big wounds made in his hands and feet by the four nails, and in his ſide by the ſpear; and the many wounds given his ſoul by the curſes of the law. Now all theſe wounds are opened as ſo many mouths, to call us to flee into them for ſafety from the ſword of juſtice.——Now theſe wounds were unſpeakably painful, being envenom'd by our ſins. Crucifying, in itſelf, was an exceeding painful death; the four big nails whereon the body hung, pierced the moſt ſinewy and nervous parts of the body, and conſequently moſt ſenſible of pain: And hence the Romans expreſſed torment by a word borrowed from the croſs; and make *cruciate* ſignify to *torment*. Thus was our innocent Saviour wounded on the croſs, cruciate or tormented, and all to ſave us from eternal torments.

Aſtoniſhing ſight! The eternal Son of God whom all the angels worſhip, wounded to death, hung by nails on a croſs, tortured and racked for ſeveral hours; and, in the mean time, loaded with reproach and ſcorn from theſe he died for! Never ſuch a ſight as this! It ſtruck terror in the whole creation. The ſun hid its face, and could not behold it, the vail of the temple rent in twain, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the dead were moved, and their graves opened: And even his enemies were ſtruck with amazement, and made to ſhrink, and ſay, *Truly this was a righteous perſon, this was the Son of God.* O my ſoul, employ all thy faculties, all thy thoughts, to ſtudy, pore, and penetrate into this awful ſubject, it deſerves the profoundeſt regard and cloſeſt attention: Hence the great apoſtle determined to ſtudy and know nothing but it.

This amazing tragedy ought to create in me the greateſt abhorrence of ſin, the cauſe of it. Never can ſin appear more exceeding ſinful, and hateful, than in the wounding and crucifying of the Son of God. Our tranſgreſſions were the nails and ſpear that wounded his ſacred body, and the ſword that pierced his ſoul. Theſe were the Judas that betrayed him, the ſoldiers that bound him, blindfolded and mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, the executioners that nailed him to the curſed tree: It was our ſins that put the ſword in his enemies hands. He became a curſe for us. All the deriſion, mockery, and contempt; all the pain, ſuffering and ſorrow he endured, did proceed from our ſins; theſe brought him to the croſs and to the grave. —Let us then turn our hatred, and diſcharge our fierceſt indignation againſt our ſins, let them be our averſion and dread for ever; let me always look on ſin, that crucified Chriſt, with horror and trembling. Never ſuch an inſtance of the ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of God's juſtice, and of his abhorrence of ſin as here! He would not ſpare his own Son, when he ſtood in the room of ſinners, nor ſpare him one ſtripe or wound, when he cried; but let him bleed, and die, till ſin was fully atoned for! Can I ſee this, and not cry, O curſed ſin! murderer of the Son of God; away with it, away with it; crucify it, crucify it.

Oh my ſoul, ſee the evil of ſin in the glaſs of Chriſt's wounds, and ſufferings in his body and ſoul! Say, O ſin, what haſt thou done? Thou haſt provoked the God of heaven to fiery indignation! Thou haſt killed the Prince of life, turned angels into devils, filled the earth with troubles, and hell with precious ſouls! If any body had killed my father, would I embrace the murderer, or love the dagger that was beſmeared with his blood? But what are all my relations to *my Lord, my love that was crucified!* O that my eyes were fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night for my ſins that ſlew my Saviour! Oh, ſtony heart, for ſhame, become now like wax, and be melted in the midſt of my bowels! Wo's me that I can grieve no more for my ſins. Let me, at leaſt, revenge my Saviour's death upon my ſins, and ſuffer them no longer to live in me.

How dreadful muſt the guilt of theſe be who willingly harbour ſin, and delight in the murder of our Lord! It is no leſs than to kiſs the nails, or to hug the ſpear that pierced him. They make that their joy, which made Chriſt a man of ſorrow! They make light of that which made his ſoul heavy unto death.—Oh, have I ſeen my Saviour bleeding to death by ſin, and ſhall I live any longer in ſin that wounded him: When a temptation to ſin is preſented, ſhall I ever diſpute any more, whether Chriſt or Barabbas ſhall be preferred? My luſts denied, or my Lord crucified; Whether theſe ſins ſhall be forſaken by me, that made Chriſt to be forſaken of God? Whether that ſhall be ſweet to me, that was ſo bitter and deadly to him? Oh, was my lovely Jeſus a man of ſorrows all his life, and ſometimes made to ſay, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful*; and ſhall not I be ſorry for, and abhor theſe ſins that cauſed all his ſorrows?

O may the believing views of Chriſt's wounds and ſufferings which he endured for my ſins, and to ſave me from that wrath which they deſerved; kindle the fire of love in my ſoul to Chriſt.——Lord, thou art the God that wont to anſwer thy people by fire; O pity me, and anſwer my meditations and prayers, by kindling the holy fire of love in my heart, and let that fire put out the impure fire of my luſts and corruptions, and inſpire me with holy zeal and activity in thy ſervice. O did Chriſt freely give himſelf to be a ſin-offering for me; and ſhall not I give myſelf a thank offering to him? Surely, it is highly reaſonable that I ſhould offer up myſelf a living ſacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himſelf a dying ſacrifice for my redemption.

MEDITATION XXXII.

From John vi. 51. *I am the living Bread that came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever.*

CHRIST crucified is our Manna, or heavenly bread that preſerves the life of the ſoul, and it is only by faith it muſt be received and eaten.——Bread is a comprehenſive word, including all things neceſſary for this life; ſo Chriſt, our ſpiritual bread, is a moſt comprehenſive bleſſing, including all we want, ſeeing *he is made of God to us, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption*——Again, bread is the moſt neceſſary thing for our life, and the want of it brings the greateſt miſery; ſo Chriſt is the moſt neceſſary bleſſing to the ſoul, and the want of him makes a man miſerable in time, and through eternity. It is a greater miſery to have no Saviour for the ſoul, than to have no bread for the body. Chriſt alone is the bread that preſerves us from ſoul famine, and nouriſheth us to eternal life; he is the bread of life, the living bread. *Lord, give us evermore this bread.*

Bread is called the ſtaff and ſtay of man's life; ſo Chriſt is the ſtaff and ſtay of our ſpiritual life, he upholds our ſouls in life. He is the ſtaff that faint and weary ſouls muſt lean to, in going up through this wilderneſs: Yea Chriſt, our living bread, is a ſtaff to defend us, and to beat off our enemies, and to put all the helliſh hoſts to flight. That was a ſtrange dream of one of the Midianites, Judg. viii. 13. *Behold a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the hoſt of Midian, and ſmote a tent.* Strange! a piece of bread to overturn a tent! Behold this dream made good in the ſacrament. The bread there which repreſents Chriſt, when received with faith upon him, will tumble into the hoſt of ſatan and his luſts; theſe Midianites who vex us with their wiles, ſtrike down their tents, and put them all to flight.

Chriſt is the bread that came down from heaven, of which the Iſraelites manna that God ſent miraculouſly from heaven was an eminent type. That manna was God's free gift to the murmuring and rebellious Iſraelites, to preſerve them from ſtarving in the deſarts where bread could not be had: This manna was a curious grain, that made fine bread, with which God furniſhed them plentifully every morning from the clouds, ſufficient to ſatisfy ſix hundred thouſand men. But Chriſt, our ſpiritual Manna, doth far excel theirs, though he was reſembled by theirs in ſome things. Manna was firſt grinded and beaten, and baken in ovens, before it was made bread for them; and ſo the grain which makes our ordinary bread muſt be threſhed, and grinded betwixt two milſtones, and baken by the force of fire, before we eat it: So Chriſt, the Antitype, was threſhed and bruiſed, and grinded betwixt the milſtones of divine juſtice and our ſins, and alſo roaſted by the fire of wrath, that he might be fit bread for ſaving the lives of our ſouls, and all this we ſhould call to mind, when we ſee and make uſe of the bread in the holy ſupper.

The Iſraelites manna came down to them with the dew; ſo Chriſt, with the benefits of his purchaſe, comes to us by the dews and influences of the holy Spirit.——Their manna fell round about their tents, and every man was free to gather it; ſo every man is at freedom to gather our heavenly Manna.—The Iſraelites behoved to go out of their tents to gather theirs; ſo God will have us go forth, and be at pains to get our ſpiritual food. God, who rained manna about their tents, could have rained it into their mouths; but he loves not to encourage ſloth in his people, but would have them at all pains to make ſure of Chriſt for their portion. As the Iſraelites gathered daily; ſo we muſt be daily going to Chriſt, and making uſe of him. As they gathered early in the morning; ſo God would have us ſeeking after Chriſt in the morning of our lives.

O how far doth our heavenly Manna excel that of the Iſraelites! Theirs but fed the body, and could not preſerve them from death at laſt; but our Manna feeds the ſoul, and nouriſhes to eternal life, and preſerves all that eat of it from eternal death.——Theirs fell not on the ſabbath day; nor durſt they go to ſeek it on that day; but ours falls every day, and double on the ſabbath; and therefore God calls us to double our diligence, in gathering it on the ſabbath.——Their manna continued only in the wilderneſs, and ceaſed when they came to Canaan; but ours continueth for ever, and our fulleſt enjoyment of it is in the heavenly Canaan; therefore all the true Iſraelites long to be there.

O how lamentable is their folly, who ſpend all their time and thoughts in ſeeking bread to their bodies, and are careleſs and indifferent about the bread of life to their ſouls! all their care is to ſupport the clay houſe, but let the ſoul ſtarve that inhabits it. Oh, it is but ſhort time they can enjoy the bread they are ſo concerned for; the bodies they mind ſo much, muſt ſoon be meat for worms, and the ſoul they neglect a prey for devils!

But, whatever others do, may I be wiſe to provide the living bread for my ſoul, and learn to eat it, and make uſe of it by faith, and eſpecially when I go to the Lord's table; for without faith we can get no nouriſhment, no life, nor ſtrength from this heavenly bread: Faith is the mouth that eats the bread of life, and ſucks honey out of this Rock. Now, the Spirit of God calls faith, or believing, an eating, becauſe, by it, we taſte the ſweetneſs and excellency of Chriſt, and have great ſatisfaction in partaking of Chriſt and his benefits. As by eating, our bodies increaſe in ſtrength and ſtature; ſo by believing, our ſouls grow in grace and ſpiritual ſtrength, to run in God's ways.——As by eating, the bread incorporates and becomes one with us; ſo by our receiving and applying Chriſt's broken body by faith, he is made one with us, and we one with him.——As by eating bread, men live upon it, and get ſupport and ſtrength for working or journeying; ſo believers, by looking to, and truſting wholly in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the merit of his blood, they feed and receive ſpiritual nouriſhment, and ſtrength for their work and warfare, and ſo make progreſs in their journey to Canaan.

O that I had a ſpiritual hunger and ſharp appetite for this bread of life, and were deſiring and longing for it, for the ſupport and nouriſhment of my ſoul, more than a hungry man doth for bread to his body. A hungry man periſhing for want of bread, would pefer a piece of bread, before many bags of gold, if both were ſet before him, and he allowed to make his choice; ſo the awakened ſoul, that ſees his need of Chriſt, prefers him to a whole world; give him never ſo much of the world's comforts, he is ſtill diſſatisfied without Chriſt, and ſays, What will all theſe things avail me, if my ſtarving ſoul periſh without Chriſt the bread of life?

I have many arguments to plead with God for this bread; Lord, do not thy free calls and promiſes bind thee to give it me? Thou haſt ſaid, *The needy ſhall not be forgotten.*—Is not Chriſt, the bread from heaven, the free gift of God to periſhing ſouls? And doſt not thou invite theſe to come and eat of it that have no money or price to give for it?—Lord, thou hadſt compaſſion upon the bodies of men when they had no bread to eat, and didſt provide bread for five thouſand of them by a miracle; and haſt thou not as much compaſſion to ſtarving ſouls that are far more precious?—Lord, thou giveſt natural affections to earthly parents, and makes them pitiful to their children, when they cry for bread, ſo that they cannot ſhut up their bowels againſt them when hungry, nor will they give them a ſtone inſtead of bread: And will my heavenly Father, who is infinitely more compaſſionate than the moſt tender parents, refuſe the bread of life to ſtarving ſouls who cry earneſtly for it? Lord, I truſt in thy mercy, and depend on thy promiſe, I believe thou wilt not let a poor hungry beggar ſtarve at thy door, when there is bread enough in thy houſe, and to ſpare. O cauſe me ſing with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xiii. 5. *But I have truſted in thy mercy, my heart ſhall rejoice in thy ſalvation.*

SACRAMENTAL ADVICES

FROM VARIOUS SCRIPTURE-TEXTS.

ADVICE I.

From Gen. vii. 1. *Come thou and all thine houſe unto the Ark.*

AS God in his mercy called Noah to come into the ark prepared for him and his houſhold, to ſave him from drowning in the great deluge; ſo God by the goſpel calls you, O man, to come into the Ark, Chriſt crucified, which he hath provided for periſhing ſinners, to ſave them from the deluge of wrath that is coming. God hath long forewarned you of it, nay the flood is beginning to riſe, it is time for thee to flee to this Ark; believe it, there is no other way for thy ſafety: The ark of thy prayers, or of thy tears, convictions, or reformations, will not ſave thee from it; nothing will do it but the Ark Chriſt.

As all who were out of Noah's ark periſhed in the flood; ſo will all periſh who are out of Chriſt.—Theſe of the old world, who only came near to the ark, or touched the outſide of it, they periſhed if they did not enter into it; ſo in like manner will theſe periſh, who only come near Chriſt by an outward profeſſion, and are not found in him by a true faith.

As the ark gave a good account of all that entered into it, not one of them was loſt in the flood; ſo will Chriſt give a good account at the laſt day of all that fly to him by faith: None ſhall pluck them out of his hand, not one of them ſhall periſh in the deluge of wrath; Chriſt will preſent them all ſafe to his Father, *Behold here am I, and the children thou haſt given me.*

As Noah's ark was acceſſible, and had a door in it for people to enter; ſo in a crucified Jeſus there is a door of acceſs opened, even a *door of faith*, whereby poor ſinners of the Gentiles may have acceſs to Chriſt, and to God in him, Acts xiv. 27. As Paul and Barnabas rehearſed it as glad tidings to the church, that *God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles*; ſo we Gentile ſinners ſhould gladly receive the news. Glory to God in the higheſt for opening this door of faith, and keeping it ſtill open to periſhing ſinners.

Come then, O Gentile ſinner, enter in by this door to the Ark, and lodge thy ſoul within it, that thou mayſt be ſafe from the flood of wrath that is coming upon the ungodly world. God forbid you be found hovering without the Ark, until the flood come and waſh you off from the very ſides of it. O how diſmal and cutting will the thought be to you through all eternity, that you was ſo near Chriſt, and within a ſtep of the Ark, and ſometimes touching it, and yet never entered it! How ſad will it be to periſh, like the thief upon the croſs, with a Saviour at your ſide! and to ſink into hell betwixt the arms of mercy ſtretched forth to ſave you! Now, poor ſoul, the Ark is near you, flee to it with ſpeed; behold, for your encouragement, there is a window opened in the ſide of the Ark, and mercy's hand is put forth to take in ſhelterleſs doves who come to it. Now is the time to beſtir yourſelf, to come into the Ark without delay, and ſo prevent your periſhing in the flood for ever.

Q. What ſhall I do to get into the Ark, to wit, a crucified Jeſus?

A. 1. Be like Noah's dove which he ſent forth, ſee that you find no reſt for the ſole of your foot any where elſe; turn your back upon all other arks of mens deviſing, they are all inſufficient to ſave you from the flood: Make not an ark of the abſolute mercy of God out of Chriſt, ſeeing he declares a crucified Jeſus to be the only channel of his mercy.—Make not an ark of church-privileges, as your good education, admiſſion to ſealing ordinances, *&c.* for the ark did not ſave Shiloh, nor the altar's horns ſave Joab, nor the temple ſave Jeruſalem.—Make not an ark of your gifts, knowledge, prayers, duties, moral honeſty, or ſelf-righteouſneſs, for the flood, when it comes, will daſh all theſe in pieces. Suppoſe theſe of the old world had built other ſhips as like the ark as poſſible, or had fled to high towers of their own contriving, the deluge would have deſtroyed them all; there was no ſafety for them but in Noah's ark alone. So whatever arks you deviſe to ſave you from wrath, if a crucified Chriſt, the Ark of God's building, be ſlighted, the flood will ſweep away all your own arks, as the *refuge of lies*, Iſa. xxviii. 17.

2*dly*, Labour to be thoroughly convinced of your miſery while out of the Ark; and, in a deep ſenſe of your neceſſity of getting into it, break preſently over all the bars and hinderances which the devil caſts in your way to ſtop your entry into the Ark, as unbelief, ſinful pleaſures, worldly cares, preſumptuous hopes, carnal company, diverſions, *&c.* break reſolutely through all theſe to the Ark, as David's three mighty men brake through the hoſt of the Philiſtines to the well of Bethlehem; ſurely your arguments for doing it are far ſtronger than theirs.

3*dly*, Approve heartily the whole contrivance of God's Ark in all its rooms and ſtories: Approve Chriſt crucified in his Perſon, natures, offices and relations, in his ſtates of humiliation and exaltation: Accept of him in them all, ſubſcribe to the whole new-covenant-ſcheme, as a device worthy of God, and of infinite wiſdom; conſent to the great end and deſign of it, namely, that *ſelf* be debaſed, and *free grace* eternally magnified.

4*thly*, Be frequently eſſaying faith's flight unto the Ark, and to the window in the ſide of it; make earneſt mints like Noah's reſtleſs dove to get in; ſay oft like David, Pſal. lv. 6. *O that I had wings like a dove, for then I would fly away and be at reſt.* I would haſten my eſcape from the flood, and lodge my ſoul this minute in one of the rooms of the Ark. Believing is a work you ſhould be often eſſaying, and though you cannot believe with ſaving faith, yet believe as you can, looking to God for more ſtrength. You cannot pray, praiſe, or ſanctify the ſabbath aright, yet you aim at theſe duties as you can; ſo in like manner make honeſt mints at believing and flying to Chriſt; and aim in his ſtrength to apply his blood, every man to his own ſoul in particular, by an appropriating faith (correſponding to the goſpel offer) and taking home the remedy as his own; depending ſtill upon the Spirit's grace, who will not fail theſe who truſt in him, but aſſiſt them in making ſaving application.

5*thly*, Be willing to part with every thing that would compete with God's ark, however ſpecious or plauſible a ſhew it may have. Renounce the old covenant, and all lurking places about mout Sinai, for in none of theſe you can find ſafety. Abhor your own righteouſneſs for an Ark, whatever ſhape it appear in; and embrace him alone for it, who is *the Lord our righteouſneſs*. His righteouſneſs only is ſpotleſs, perfect and law-biding.

6*thly*, Make a ſurrender of yourſelf, and all you have, to Jeſus Chriſt, to be diſpoſed of by him as he pleaſeth: Be willing to ſuffer the loſs of all things for him, yea, count all things loſs and dung that you may win to the Ark, and be found therein when the flood cometh.

ADVICE II.

From Rev. iii. 20. *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock.*—

LOST ſinner, I bring you good tidings; the eternal Son of God hath undertaken a long journey, and endured great ſufferings to purchaſe ſalvation for thee! A dear purchaſe it is, dear hath it coſt him to obtain it! and now he hath brought it the length of thy door, and there, O man, Chriſt is ſtanding, knocking, and ſaying, *This day ſalvation is come to this houſe door*, open and take it in.—Now can you refuſe, O ſinner, to take in Chriſt's purchaſed ſalvation, when Chriſt hath come with it to thy very door, even the door of thy heart. Behold he ſtands at it, and knocks for entrance! Open, open, *&c.*

The arguments for your opening are ſtrong and many;

1. Conſider at whoſe door Chriſt doth ſtand, even at the door of a creature infinitely below him.—Oh! it is at a beggar's door, that hath nothing to entertain Chriſt with when he enters! yet ſaith he, Open to me, and I will bring in proviſion with me, and make thee a rich feaſt.——It is at the door of a poor Lazarus, that is all full of ulcers and ſores; yet, ſaith Chriſt, Open, and I will bring in the balm of Gilead, a plaiſter of my blood for healing all your ſores, and for as coſtly as it is, it ſhall coſt you nothing.——It is even at the door of an enemy, a mortal enemy, that Chriſt ſtands; you have ſpoke ill of him, thought ill of him, and done ill to him; you have affronted him, wounded him, and lodged his traitors and murderers; yet, ſaith Chriſt, Open, and hearken to the offers and terms of reconciliation which I have purchaſed for you with my blood; they are moſt ſurpriſing and ſafe, eaſy and honourable.—It is at the door of ſatan's ſlaves that Chriſt ſtands, theſe who have been long drudging at his work and feeding upon his huſks; yet, ſaith Chriſt, Open to me, and I will ſet you at liberty, and make you God's freemen and children. Why then will you not open and receive him joyfully? O ſinner, ſtand amazed at Chriſt's condeſcending goodneſs, in ſtanding at the door of ſuch a ſmoaky cottage, ſo ill ſwept, and out of order! Good reaſon have you to cry out, *Lord, I am not worthy thou ſhouldſt come under my roof;* but ſeeing thou humbleſt thyſelf to viſit the unworthy in ſuch a manner, come in, and but ſpeak the word, and the houſe ſhall be cleanſed, diſeaſes healed, grievances redreſſed, and the ſoul made happy. It is highly your intereſt then to open the door, and welcome in your Saviour, who ſtands and knocks for acceſs.

2. Again, conſider who it is that ſtands at your door:—It is even the *King of glory*, a King of infinite power and majeſty! And will you not lift up the gates of your ſouls to this King? Were it but an earthly king that knocked at your door, you would ſoon open and receive him; yea, count it a great honour that you had ſuch a perſon in your houſe: But what are clay kings to *the King of glory? To the Prince of the kings of the earth? To our great Immanuel, the glorious Plant of renown*, the *Head* of the elect world? Who then would not caſt the gates wide open to ſuch a glorious King!—Again, he is *the everlaſting Father*, and the Father of all believers that ſtands and knocks! A Father full of pity, that follows after his prodigal children, and invites them to return to him! And will not a child open the door to his father? Can you find in your heart to keep your compaſſionate Father ſtanding at your door?—Nay, further, it is your Huſband that knocks, a loving Huſband, that hath ſuffered much for your cauſe: And will not an affectionate ſpouſe

open and let in her huſband?——Moreover, it is your Phyſician that knocks, who brings healing medicines for all your diſeaſes, by which he hath cured many thouſands before now! And will not a ſick and dying man let in ſuch a Phyſician! Open, O ſinner, why will you die?

III. Conſider *Chriſt's patience* and long ſuffering at your door, he doth not knock and then go away as one indifferent whether you open or not; no, he knocks and ſtands ſtill; he ſtands and knocks again, and that after many repulſes! No beggar wanting an alms would ſtand ſo long at our doors, as Chriſt ſtands at a beggar's door, not ſeeking to take from him, but wanting to give unto him——O wonder at his goodneſs and long patience! Behold he that hath a throne of glory to ſit on, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand to bow before him, is willing, O ſinner, to ſtand at thy door! Yea, he ſtands whilſt thou doſt ly in the boſom of thy luſts.——He ſtands without, whilſt his enemies are let in and allowed to poſſeſs the beſt ſeats!——He ſtands at the door while ſatan is let in, and gets the eaſy chair! O wonderful patience! that Chriſt after ſo many affronts and repulſes, and after ſeeing enemies preferred before him, ſhould continue to ſtand at your door and knock! But, O ſinner, do not try his patience too much, nor provoke him too long; for, obſerve the text, he now ſtands, he is on his feet ready to go away; the knock will be given that will prove the laſt, and thou knoweſt not but the preſent knock may be it, do not then delay to open one moment longer.

IV. Conſider *Chriſt's earneſt deſire* to be let into your heart, he not only ſtands at the door, but he knocks; yea, knocks loud and knocks often, to convince you of his earneſtneſs. Many a loud knock doth he give, by his *calls* and *invitations* in his word, *Come unto me, open unto me, look unto me.* Many a knock gives he by his *promiſes* to you, I will come in, I will ſup with you, I will eaſe you, heal you, enlighten you, manifeſt myſelf to you, *&c.*——Many a knock gives he by his *threatenings* of wrath and vengeance againſt theſe who ſhut their doors againſt him. Many a knock gives he by your own *conſcience* and by his own Spirit raiſing convictions, inclinations, deſires and purpoſes within your heart to bring you to a Saviour——And many a rap and knock doth he give at your door on ſacrament occaſions. Then it is he knocks aloud with his nailed hands and pierced feet, and ſtands at your door with his wounds open, his blood ſtreaming, and his garments dyed with blood: And all this to ſhew his earneſtneſs to be let into your heart.——Open then to Chriſt, O ſinner, while he is knocking, be aſſured he will not knock always, this may poſſibly be the laſt day of the Spirit's knocks and ſtrivings with thee; ſo that if you refuſe to open at this preſent knock, God may ſtrike you dead and ſenſeleſs all your life, clap a ſeal on the door that it ſhall never open; you may hear miniſters knock after this, but never hear God's Spirit knock again; and *wo unto you if he depart from you.*——Remember, O man, for as many knocks God gives at your door, he keeps an exact account of them all, and will reckon them all up to you at the judgment-ſeat. And can you think he will open heaven to you then, who will not open your heart to him now! No, no; his ear will be as deaf to you hereafter, as yours is to him now. Read and believe that terrible word, Prov. i. 24. *&c.*

ADVICE III.

From Rev. iii. 20. *If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him.*

GReat and precious are the promiſes which Chriſt makes to them who hearken to his voice in the goſpel-offers, and open their hearts to receive him as offered to them in all his offices; I will come in, and bring all the benefits of my purchaſe with me to entertain and feaſt that ſoul, even pardon, peace, light, life, grace and glory.

I. Obſerve, the duty called for, is to hear Chriſt's voice and open the door to him, that is, to accept and embrace the free goſpel-offers, and heartily to acquieſce in the goſpel-method of a ſinner's reconciliation and ſanctification through the righteouſneſs of our glorious Immanuel, and willingly receive and ſubmit to him as our Prophet, Prieſt, and King. What is the preaching of the goſpel, but Chriſt's charming voice calling loſt ſinners home to himſelf?—What is it, but Chriſt's following them with invitations and intreaties to come to him and live? This is Chriſt's voice which he would have ſinners to hear, come and live; though they generally refuſe to do it! Oh what condemned malefactor would refuſe to hear the voice of his ſovereign offering him his life, as condemned ſinners do? John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.* Yet behold, after many refuſals, he follows his offers with arguments, ſtrong arguments to prevail with ſinners, and after the greateſt obſtinacy he is loth to break off his treaty with them, Hoſ. xi. 8. *How ſhall I give thee up Ephraim? Why will ye die?* What reaſon can you give *for refuſing life? or for chuſing death?*

II. Obſerve, who it is that Chriſt calls to hear his voice, and open their doors to him, it is not this or that man only, or any particular ſort of men, it is *only man*, every man that ſits under the goſpel. *If any man hear my voice and open the door*, ſaith Chriſt, *I will come in. If any man will open*, be he old man, or young man, *I will come in.* If the greateſt ſinner, the moſt crimſon coloured ſinner will open, I will come in. *Any man*, if the ſwearer will open, if the ſabbath-breaker, if the murderer, if the drunkard, if the unclean, if the thief, if the cheat, if the liar, if the mocker, if the prayerleſs man, if the man that hates God and godlineſs will open to me, *I will come in and ſup with him.* O what encouragement doth this word, *If any man*, give to every ſinner to flee to Chriſt? If any man, whoever he be, whatever he hath done, if he will welcome me, receive me in the goſpel-offers, I will come in to him.

III. Obſerve, Chriſt requires ſinners to open the door that he may come in, to teach them; however unable they be, this is their duty, they muſt mint, and uſe all means to do it, and look up to him for ſtrength. He will have the ſinner's conſent, and the ſoul made willing to receive him. O then caſt open the door, open it wide, receive Chriſt wholly, receive him without reſerve, open before him the *two leaved gates*, not the wicket, or one leaf only, but both leaves of the door. Let Chriſt have the full and free conſent of the ſoul, an abundant entrance into it. There are ſome reſolving to open the door to Chriſt, others perhaps are beginning to open it, O let them not halt in doing it. With ſome the door is half open, and there they ſtop. They are almoſt, but not altogether Chriſtians. O almoſt Chriſtian, why do you halt? Why would you loſe all the pains you have been at? A little more would caſt the door wide open, and make you an altogether Chriſtian. Go then a little further, O ſinner, to ſave your ſoul. Open to Chriſt all the powers and faculties of your ſoul. Open to him fully here, as you would have him to open freely to you hereafter. Oh, what mean you to open to Chriſt by halves? Alas, the half open door will be ready to go to again, and if ſo, it may never open for the future. Let it be your concern then to go a little further than the almoſt Chriſtian, and reſt not in fair beginnings.

IV. Obſerve, how great the advantage is of opening the door to Chriſt; Why? I will come in to the houſe, ſaith he, even the friend of ſinners, the King of glory will come in, the beſt gueſt that ever came into a poor man's houſe: How honourable, how profitable, how happy and bleſſed muſt ſuch a viſit be!—— *Q.* For what end will Chriſt come in? *A.* He will come in to enlighten the houſe; for the ſoul is a dark dungeon while Chriſt is ſhut out: He will come in to adorn and enrich the ſoul with the ornaments and treaſures of his grace: He will come in to reign in the ſoul, and pull down the tyrant that hath long oppreſt you: As in the text, he will come in and ſup with you, and cauſe you to ſup with him: And becauſe you have no fitting proviſion in the houſe, he will bring it with him. And O how rare are Chriſt's dainties, his hidden manna, the fruits of the tree of life, the grapes of Canaan, the bread that comes down from heaven! How excellent is the water of life! One drop of it would be an everlaſting ſpring in thy ſoul, that would keep thee from thirſting after the creature any more. What a rich feaſt are the graces of the Spirit quickened to a lively exerciſe! What a bleſt feaſt is pardon of ſin, peace with juſtice, peace with the law, an intereſt in Chriſt's purchaſe, intimations of Chriſt's love, goſpel-promiſes applied, communion with God, views of eternal life, well grounded hopes of immortal glory, *&c!* O how precious and delicate are theſe goſpel-rarities which are ſet before you on the communion-table, and freely tendered to every one that opens the door to Chriſt! Who would not welcome ſuch a Gueſt that brings ſuch glorious proviſion with him? Had poor ſinners ſpiritual appetites ſharpened for Chriſt's feaſt, there would not be ſo many ſhut doors againſt him.

V. Obſerve, how ſolemnly Chriſt offers theſe goſpel-bleſſings to you, with a *behold I ſtand,* &c. Chriſt takes witneſſes upon it, witneſſes againſt the refuſers: Behold ye angels, and witneſs for me how kind and bountiful my offers are to Adam's rebellious children! Behold ye miniſters, and witneſs againſt thoſe who ſhut me out! Behold ye ſtones and timber of the houſe, ye elements and communion-tables, bear witneſs for me and againſt them! Behold ye fellow communicants and hearers, bear witneſs one againſt another, that I knocked, I called, I knocked loud, I knocked long, but ye kept your doors bolted againſt me.——It is a melancholly thought for theſe who are miniſters to entertain, that they will one day be brought in as witneſſes againſt thoſe who ſhut out their Saviour; but when called they muſt witneſs againſt ſuch, though never ſo dear to them now, that Chriſt called, but they refuſed; he made kind and large offers, but they regarded them not. O then let every ſoul ſet about ſweeping and waſhing all the rooms, and caſt open all the doors, as wide as they can, to the King of glory, and receive him with acclamation and praiſe. Take the crown off the head of ſelf, and put it on the head of Chriſt, aſcribing all the glory of our ſalvation to him, and nothing to free will, or your own doings.

ADVICE IV.

From Prov. ix. 5. *Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine,* &c.

CHRIST is the *Wiſdom of God,* who hath made rich proviſion for entertaining his people, and hath ſet it before them in the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper; even Chriſt crucified with all the fruits of his purchaſe. *His fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.* The fruits we feaſt upon are *pardon and peace, righteouſneſs and grace, the aſſurance of God's love, the conſolations of his Spirit, the promiſes of the goſpel,* and all the earneſts and pledges of eternal life. To this feaſt ſtarving ſouls are invited, to feed by faith upon theſe promiſes Chriſt hath prepared for them, applying them to themſelves, and taking the comfort of them.

Bread and wine are choſen as fit reſemblances of his ſpiritual feaſt. As bread and wine ſerve to preſerve our natural life, and to ſtrengthen and chear us when weak or fainting; ſo Chriſt crucified, apprehended by faith, preſerves our ſpiritual life, and procures eternal life, ſtrengthens the weak believers, and chears drooping ſouls.—As bread and wine incorporate with our bodies; ſo Chriſt by his Spirit dwells in us, and we by faith and love dwell in him.——As bread and wine ſatisfy our hunger and thirſt; ſo theſe, who by faith lay hold and partake of Chriſt's fleſh and blood, ſhall no more hunger or thirſt after earthly things.—Bread is the moſt neceſſary thing in the world, hence called the *ſtaff of bread,* it upholds our lives; ſo Chriſt is the mercy of mercies, the moſt uſeful and neceſſary bleſſing to preſerve our ſtarving ſouls.——Chriſt is the *Staff of bread* indeed to believing communicants, a Staff that ſupports you, a Staff that defends you, a Staff that will beat off all your enemies: If you take hold of this Staff by faith, it will rout and put all your foes to flight. There is no bread like this! *I am the Bread of life,* ſaith Chriſt.

We read, Judges vii. 13. of a dream of one of the Midianitiſh hoſt, he dreamed when Gideon was coming upon them, that a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the hoſt of Midian, and ſmote a tent that it fell to the ground. Strange! a piece of bread overturn a tent! Behold the interpretation of that dream, in the holy ſacrament! Here a piece of bread, if eaten by faith, that will invade the Midianitiſh hoſt of the devil, and the luſts of the fleſh, ſtrike down all their tents, and put them to flight. Come then, eat of this bread believingly, and take faith's view of Chriſt's body repreſented by it, as bruiſed and broken by your ſins; this will weaken their power, and turn your heart againſt them, and make you reſolve that theſe enemies of Chriſt ſhall not live in your ſoul. If the ſight of Cæſar's bloody robe incenſed the Romans againſt the murderers who ſlew him; much more a ſight of

Chriſt's wounds and bruiſes in the ſacrament, ſhould excite you to hate and kill ſin, and revenge Chriſt's death upon this cruel murderer.

Again, would you have ſtrength for your wilderneſs journey, and for the temptations and trials you meet with, before you have occaſion of another ſacrament? Come eat of this bread that ſtrengtheneth the hearts of men.——Here is food more ſubſtantial, durable and nouriſhing, than Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and the cruſe of water provided for him by the angel; and yet it is ſaid, he *went in the ſtrength of that meat forty days and forty nights, until he came to Horeb the mount of God*, 1 Kings xix. 7. 8. There we find Elijah twice wakened by the angel, that he might take a double meal, *Ariſe and eat for thy journey is long*: So God may be ſaying to thee, O Chriſtian-traveller, Ariſe and eat, awake O faith, awake O ſpiritual appetite, thy journey may be long; take a good meal, you know not what hills you have to climb, what winds and ſtorms may blow in thy face, before another occaſion of this ſort: Satan's ſtorm may blow, and death's ſtorms may blow, ſo that you may not ſee another table like this, till you come to the mount of God above.—This is the ſame bread the glorified ſaints do feed on in heaven. Chriſt is the Manna that came down from heaven to feed periſhing ſouls. The Iſraelites manna was a type of Chriſt, and hence called *ſpiritual bread*, 1 Cor. x. 4.

The manna was freely given to them, and fell every morning round their tents, and all of them were at freedom to gather it, and there was enough for the whole camp; ſo Chriſt is God's free gift, and in him is a fulneſs of grace for the whole believing world, and every goſpel-hearer is free to gather it, though indeed the morning of our lives is the moſt proper gathering time. There was a memorial of this manna preſerved in the ark; ſo is there of Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper, as the food of our ſouls.——Manna was ground in a mill, or beaten in a mortar, and baken in an oven, before it was fit for food; ſo Chriſt was bruiſed and ground by his ſufferings, and ſcorched in the fiery oven of his Father's wrath, that he might become a fit Saviour, and fit food for our ſouls.

But Chriſt crucified infinitely excells the Iſraelites manna: Theirs was peculiar to themſelves; but Chriſt is free to both Jews and Gentiles: Theirs ceaſed when they came to Canaan; but ours continues for ever, and is enjoyed moſt fully in the Canaan above: Theirs only preſerved a natural life; but ours gives a ſpiritual and eternal life.—O come then, eat of this heavenly Bread, when ſet before you in plenty, with hunger and deſire, bleſſing God for it, ſaying, *Lord, evermore give us this Bread:* Come with ſpiritual appetites and purified hearts. The Iſraelites manna was laid up in the ark, and kept in a pure golden pot, to teach you to cleanſe your hearts from ſin and corruption, that they may be fit to lodge Jeſus Chriſt our heavenly Manna. If the veſſels which contain the ſacramental bread, were foul or polluted, you would cenſure it as moſt indecent; but much more unbecoming is it, to receive Chriſt into a foul heart.

Come to this table with humility, and a deep ſenſe of your ill deſervings, acknowledging, that the leaſt crumb of this Bread will be a great mercy to ſuch an unworthy creature! *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*, vile and polluted, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the childrens table! May I plead for a crumb for thy free mercies ſake.—Oh, I am unworthy of the common bread that is ſet upon my own table, much more of the heavenly Bread that is ſet upon thine! Inſtead of bread thou mayſt give me a ſtone; inſtead of a ſmile, a frown; inſtead of the cup of the New Teſtament, thou mayſt put a cup of wrath and trembling in my hand: But thy free grace, and large offers, encourage me to wait and hope, that *the needy ſhall not be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh.*

Come with a lively faith to receive and eat, not only of the bread of life, but alſo to receive the Bread, the Lord, your Immanuel in perſon, and make uſe of him in all his offices.—Come eat with love and thankfulneſs, to him that was willing to be beaten, bruiſed, ground and ſcorched, that he might be Bread for nouriſhing of ſtarving ſouls. Receive this Bread of heaven thankfully as a diſtinguiſhing bleſſing, which is not granted to all indifferently; for as God rained down manna from heaven upon the Iſraelites; ſo he rained down fire and brimſtone on Sodom and Gomorrah.

ADVICE V.

From Gen. xlv. 4.—*Come near to me, I am Joſeph your brother, whom you ſold.*—

JOSEPH was an eminent type of Chriſt: though he was hated, ſold, and cruelly uſed by his brethren; yet he ſtill loved them, forgave them, and laid out himſelf for their preſervation and happineſs.—Though Chriſt be Lord of heaven and earth; yet, O believing communicants, he owns himſelf as your brother, *Bone of your bone, and fleſh of your fleſh*; nay, he is not aſhamed to call you brethren, *Go tell my brethren*, ſaid he to Mary, Matth. xxviii. 10. Though you be mean and low, and Chriſt highly raiſed, yet his exaltation doth not cauſe him forget his poor friends below; he ſtill owns them as his brethren. He is indeed the elder Brother, and Heir of all things; yet he is pleaſed to adopt his younger brethren into his right, and make them joint heirs with him of the inheritance above. As Joſeph was moſt condeſcending to his poor brethren, though he was lord over all the land; ſo is Chriſt. As they did not know Joſeph, until he told them *I am Joſeph your brother*; ſo neither do we know Chriſt, untill he diſcover himſelf to us. As Joſeph ſeemed to deal roughly with his brethren at firſt, to make them remember the injuries they did him; yet in the mean time he loved them, gave them food, and afterwards ſpoke kindly to them: So Chriſt at firſt takes ways to humble his people, and make them ſenſible of their ſin; yet at the ſame time he ſecretly ſupports them, and at length brings in conſolation to them, ſaying, *I am Jeſus your brother, it is I, be not afraid. Come near to me*, ſaid Joſeph in a kind and familiar way to his brethren; ſo Chriſt ſaith to you, draw near to me with a ſincere heart, and I will manifeſt myſelf unto you, as a loving Brother.

But if you would have the gracious intimations of his favour, you muſt firſt be humbled for the wrongs you have done him. You have dealt treacherouſly and inhumanly with Chriſt, as Jacob's ſons did with their brother Joſeph: Theſe ſold their brother for twenty pieces of ſilver; but ah! have not ſome of you ſold Jeſus, your brother, for leſs, even for ſome vile luſt or filthy pleaſure? Nay, have you not murdered him by your ſins? As Cain ſlew his innocent brother openly in the field; ſo your ſins have openly nailed Jeſus to the croſs, in the fields without Jeruſalem, and ſhed his blood like water on the ground. O how can you anſwer for ſuch horrid cruelty to your innocent Brother? How can you look him in the face, after all you have done againſt him? What feeling have you of the injuries you have done him? Are you deeply humbled, and heartily grieved for them? Then I have good news to tell you, you have to do with a moſt loving and forgiving Brother; tho' you have betrayed him, ſold him, wounded him, murdered him; yet he is willing to forget and forgive all to the humble penitent: *Come near to me*, ſaith he, *I am Joſeph your brother*, ſtand not at a diſtance, but come near me by faith and prayer, embrace me in the ſacrament, and I will give you a ſealed pardon of all your crimes; I will give you all the good things of the land, far excelling the richeſt fruits of Egypt, even my own body and blood, with all the ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings purchaſed thereby.

Object. But alas, I have dealt ſo baſely and treacherouſly with my Brother Joſeph, I have no confidence to go and meet him, I am afraid he frown on me. *Anſw.* He has indeed good ground to do it, but he is full of bowels, tenderneſs and pity to penitents, and moſt ready to forgive. Let me adviſe you to imitate Jacob when going to meet his brother Eſau, whoſe wrath he very much dreaded: He carried preſents alongſt with him to his brother. In like manner do you take preſents with you, ſuch as, 1. A broken, contrite and humbled heart, *a broken heart he will not deſpiſe*.—2. Take faith with you, and the ſtronger it is, it will be the more agreeable preſent to Chriſt; put a firm truſt and confidence in his blood and bowels, bode and threap kindneſs on him like the woman of Canaan, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*, but dog as I am, I may plead for a crumb, ſeeing thy faithful word warrants me to do it. This preſent from that poor creature was ſo acceptable to Chriſt, that he immediately anſwered, *O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, Mat. xv. 28. 3. Take with you a firm purpoſe and reſolution, in the ſtrength of your Brother, not to betray or wound him any more, and ſeal a covenant with him upon theſe terms. 4. Take with you a ſincere heart and purpoſe of imitating your Brother, and ſtudying conformity to him. *Learn of me*, ſaith he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Theſe preſents would be moſt acceptable to your grieved and offended Brother. But ſeeing you have nothing of your own, cry, Lord, give them firſt to me, and I'll offer them unto thee.

What condeſcenſion is this, that Chriſt, the King of kings, ſhould ſay to all believers, Ye are my brethren and ſiſters! Who would not deſire to ſtand in this honourable relation to an earthly king, and far more to the King of glory! Would we have him then for our Brother to own us, ſuccour and ſympathize with us in all our troubles; let us forthwith embrace and cloſe with him by faith, as he is tendered to us in the rich, large and free offers of the goſpel, and then the relation is preſently made up. O how inviting and alluring is that word, I am Jeſus your Brother! It ſhould conquer the moſt ſtubborn will, and make every unbelieving heart to receive him like Thomas and ſay, *My Lord, and my God.*

Let every believer in diſtreſs come like the bee, and ſuck honey from this Flower, I am Jeſus your Brother, *Be not afraid, it is I.* Do not miſtake me for an enemy in any of my dealings with you. It is I your Brother that means you no harm. It is I that loves you, and laid down my life for you. It is I who by my blood purchaſed ſanctified afflictions to you, to work for your good. It is I that doth all things well, and have infinite wiſdom and love to order and direct every diſpenſation for your intereſt and benefit. It was I that ſwate blood for you in the garden, was ſpit on and buffeted in the high prieſt's hall, and nailed for you to the croſs, and all to purchaſe eternal happineſs and glory for my afflicted brethren. I am Jeſus your Brother, *behold my hands and my feet.* It is I that died and roſe again for you, and have aſcended to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God; and have gone up to prepare a place for you. It is I that ſit at the helm, and all power given to me. It is I that am faithful and true, and I have the ſame tender heart and yearning bowels for you I had on earth. It is I that never failed any that truſted in me. It is Jeſus your Brother who am ſtill the ſame yeſterday to day and for ever. Be not afraid in trouble, it is I your dear Friend and Brother; come near to me in the daily exerciſe of faith. Come near and cloſe to me at my table, and take a narrow look to my five big wounds, and draw conſolation from them. Behold the two wounds in my hands, and the two wounds in my feet, which were made to bring you back from hell to heaven. Behold a fifth wound in my ſide, and look into my heart and ſee it panting with love, and do not queſtion your Brother's love to you any more.

ADVICE. VI.

From Matth. xxii. 2. *A certain king made a marriage for his ſon.*

THE goſpel covenant, or covenant of grace, is a marriage-covenant betwixt Chriſt and believers; a ſurprizing marriage this is, and yet a marriage of God's making. Wonderful! the great God is content to give his dear Son in marriage to fallen Adam's daughter, that was become a ſlave to the devil! Yea, he hath drawn up the contract, and all the articles of it. Chriſt the Bridegroom hath cheerfully ſubſcribed the contract, he dipt the pen in his own blood on the croſs, and put his hand to it in the view of God, angels, and all the world. Now the Bridegroom wants your conſent to the marriage contract, and he hath long been courting you to ſubſcribe it: Some of you have often been purpoſed to do it, yea, taken the pen in your hand, but, upon ſome ſmall temptation, have ſtopt and thrown by the pen. This day Chriſt hath ſet a tryſt with you to conclude the bargain, and his ambaſſadors are come, in his name, to ſpread the contract before you with all its articles. Well then, *Will you go with this man?* Will you put your hand to the contract?

O ſinners, you have no reaſon to be ſhy in this matter, you have nothing to be vain of, you are mean born, of low extract; you are lothſome lepers, you are deformed, black, and have no beauty; you are cripples, cannot walk, unleſs Chriſt lift you; you are drowned in debt, many old ſcores hath Chriſt to clear for you, if he match with you. O who would make love to ſuch a wretched creature! Yet, behold, here is one that is fairer than the ſons of men, of the blood-royal of heaven, the Heir of all things, courting you! Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this match! One infinitely rich with a beggar, the Heir of heaven with the heir of hell, the Beauty of heaven and earth with a deformed negro! But if the Bridegroom be content, why ſhould you ſtick? Can you give any reaſon for your refuſal or delay? Now the God of heaven is ſetting tryſt with you to conclude this bleſſed bargain with you at his table, and calling you there to ſign and ſeal a marriage-contract with his Son, and that before all the Perſons of the glorious Trinity, before the elect angels, before Chriſt's ambaſſadors, and before all the congregation, witneſſes thereto. There have been many meetings heretofore, about this grand affair, to no effect; The world, ſatan, and the fleſh have formerly broke off the treaty; forbid it, Lord, that they do it this day. O that the long ſpoke of match betwixt a crucified Jeſus and loſt ſouls may hold at laſt. This may be the laſt tryſt, the laſt offer Chriſt will make; it may be now or never with you. Lay your hand to your heart then, and conſider well before you refuſe.

Come take another view of this beautiful Bridegroom that is in your offer. Behold how delicate his complexion is, *He is white and ruddy; white* in regard of his innocence, and *ruddy* in his bloody paſſion. O how peerleſs is his Perſon! how raviſhing his beauty! how charming his voice! how ſtately his goings! how fragrant are his garments! They ſmell of aloes, myrrh and caſſia! Search all the world, you cannot find his equal. One glimpſe of him is enough to raviſh men and angels; *His locks are black and buſhy as the raven, his lips are like lillies dropping ſweet ſmelling myrrh, his legs as pillars of marble ſet upon ſockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; yea, he is altogether lovely!* Now, can you refuſe ſuch a lovely Perſon, eſpecially when you think how he loved you, ſo as to ſuffer a cruel and bloody death for you, and to ſend his portraiture with the marks of his wounds to be put in your hands at his holy table, and all to win your heart? Come view and remember the many wounds he received for you, by the thorns which pierced his head, by the pincers that plucked his hair, by the ſcourges that tore his back, by the nails that pierced his hands and feet, and by the ſpear that opened his ſide! Surely theſe wounds do not mar his beauty to the eye of faith; nay, though he be all over wounded, mangled and bleeding, yet to a believer he is ſtill *white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſands, fairer than all the ſons of men,* nay, and all the ſons of God too.

Certainly the Bridegroom muſt be in earneſt, when he comes in his marriage robes to win backward hearts, when he puts on his dyed garments, and is red in his apparel; when he diſplays his glory, brings the marriage-contract in his hand, ſpreads it on the communion-table, and calls all who love him to ſign it. O that many were made willing, in a day of his power, to go in to all the articles of this marriage-covenant, ſaying, My heart is now content to go with the man Chriſt, that wonderful man; I conſent to all his terms, he is *my Lord and my God,* my glorious Immanuel; *my Beloved is mine, and I am his.* Queſt. I would know particularly what he requires on my part of the contract, that I may diſtinctly cloſe with him? Anſ. He would have you, 1. Convinced of your ſinking and periſhing ſtate, while you ſtand upon the old bottom of a covenant of works; and willing to leave it, and leap from it, and cleave to a covenant of grace, aud a borrowed righteouſneſs for all the ground of your hope.—2. He would have you humbled and grieved for your long ſlighting his kind offers by your unbelief, and for your preferring ſatan's drudgery to his ſervice.—3. Give up with all other lovers, and theſe that would rival it with Chriſt, ſuch as ſin, the world, or the law, ſelf-righteouſneſs muſt be reuounced and parted with; you muſt break league with all Chriſt's enemies.—4. Accept of Jeſus Chriſt as your Huſband, receive him in all his offices, reſt and depend on him alone for righteouſneſs, ſtrength, and ſalvation.—5. Give away yourſelves, ſoul and body to Chriſt; reſign your will to his will, and ſurrender all you have to his diſpoſal.—6. Reſolve and vow, in Chriſt's ſtrength, to crucify ſin, and walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.—7 Engage to be true and faithful to your Huſband, and never to retract.—8. Keep up the remembrance of your Huſband's coming at the laſt day to ſolemnize the marriage, and take you home to himſelf, and be always in readineſs to go forth to meet him. The Bridegroom is ready long ſince, and will ſoon rend theſe clouds to meet you in the air, and ſend his angels to bring you up to him; *Therefore be ye alſo ready.*

O why doth he delay his coming? What ſtops the wheels of his chariot? Surely it is not becauſe he is unready, but becauſe you are not ready. All the elect are not yet brought in to him, and he is determined not to want one of them. O then be providing for the marriage-day all proper furniture, robes, jewels, rings and ornaments, againſt the time that Chriſt and you take up houſe together in heaven. Be ſure to go to Chriſt for every bit of your pleniſhing, for righteouſneſs, and for all the graces of the Spirit.—In the mean time, take home with you the marriage-contract, the precious promiſes which Chriſt hath ſubſcribed with his blood. Be often looking into it, and viewing your Bridegroom's hand-writ and engagement. His writing is fair and beautiful; let not ſatan or unbelief caſt blots on it to deface it; keep it fair and legible, and draw all your comforts from it; your Huſband is faithful, and will keep his word.

ADVICE VII.

From Lam. i. 12. *Behold and ſee, the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*

WITH far better ground may Chriſt make uſe of theſe words of his church, and call us to behold his ſufferings for us under the fierce anger of God, in the day when *it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and put him to grief* in our ſtead, Iſa. liii. 10. Many things did he ſuffer from men and devils; but his afflictions and bruiſes from the immediate hand of God taking vengeance for the elects ſins, were far more heavy. His ſoul-ſufferings were the moſt afflicting of all others. Let every communicant behold, ſee, and conſider theſe with ſuitable affections.

Behold not only the buffetings, ſcourgings, woundings, and cruel mockings your lovely Jeſus endured from men, the inſtruments of God's juſtice; but eſpecially what he ſuffered in his ſoul by the deſertion or dereliction of God the Father, whereby the gracious influences and comforts from the divine to the human nature of Chriſt were ſuſpended for a time, and a black cloud of wrath overwhelmed him; ſo that no light appeared to him; which made him cry out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*—Nay, at this time he had a torrent of wrath flowing in upon his ſoul, and the moſt dreadful impreſſions of his Father's anger, and the law's curſe, which fell upon him for man's ſin, when he was made a curſe for us, that it caſt him into a fit of ſore amazement, conſternation and terrible agony, and into a ſweat of blood. The fire of wrath raging in his ſoul affected his body ſo, that it dryed up his ſtrength and moiſture as a potſherd, and made his tongue cleave to his jaws. He held his peace under all his ſufferings from men, and opened not his mouth; but when God's immediate wrath fell heavily on him, then he cried out: It is ſaid, *He put up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears,* Heb. v. 7. Yet God would not ſpare him, nor abate him one ſtripe or farthing of the debt; let him cry never ſo loud, juſtice was inexorable; he muſt ſatisfy to the full.

O can you ſee the great Immanuel ſubſtitute in your room and ſtead; God acting againſt him as an inexorable Judge; Jehovah running upon him as a giant, not only withdrawing his countenance, and all feeling of his loving-kindneſs from him, but making him the butt of his envenomed arrows; and not be filled with admiration at Chriſt's love, and ſorrow for your ſins, which brought ſuch a ſtorm of wrath upon him!—O how ſad were the bruiſes! how deep were the wounds! how wide the gaſhes! and how heavy the blows he got from the ſword of juſtice for our ſins! The ſword was not dull nor ſleepy, but furbiſhed and awakened by juſtice to the execution.——O how heavy were the blows our Surety got from this awakened ſword in the garden of Gethſemane, which made his *ſoul exceeding ſorrowful,* and put him in a dreadful agony and bloody ſweat!——Behold and ſee how patiently he drank the bitter cup of God's wrath for you, *the poiſon whereof drank up his ſpirits,* and made his blood to boil in his veins, and burſt through his body, clothes and all! He ſwate without any outward fire or heat, and bled without any external wound.——Behold his garments dyed red, and the ground and graſs where he lay all bedewed with his precious blood!——Behold him broken with breach upon breach, till all the ſea billows of divine vengeance went over him; ſo that he fell to the ground, was covered with blood, and overwhelmed with wrath! Behold and ſee, if there be any ſorrow like his ſorrows!

It is ſaid Mark xiv. 33. *He began to be ſore amazed and very heavy!* which ſhews what a load and preſſure of wrath his ſoul lay under, that put him in an agony that ſtill increaſed more and more, like the waters in Ezekiel's viſion ſtill deeper and deeper, from the ankles to the knees, till they became waters to ſwim in, yea ſwelled into an ocean that would have overwhelmed the whole elect world. Into this ocean our bleſſed Jonah was willing to be thrown for our ſake, and in it he continued to ſwim, until he brought every elect ſoul ſafe aſhore.——It is recorded of Abraham when offering his ſacrifice, Gen. xv. 12. *That in the evening lo an horror of great darkneſs fell upon him.* This was verified much more of Chriſt in the evening before his paſſion, in the garden. There, a terrible horror of great darkneſs fell upon Chriſt's ſoul, which made him exceeding heavy, and ſore amazed, at the proſpect of the ſea of wrath that was coming rolling upon him; while the Father was hiding his face from him. O how great was the anguiſh of Chriſt's mind at this time, when he found himſelf preſſed and bruiſed betwixt the milſtone of God's juſtice and our ſins! which preſſure made him ſweat without heat, and bleed without wound! Ah! the fire, the heat, the wounds were inward, even in his ſoul! O communicants, behold and ſee Chriſt's ſorrows for you, nothing can be more acceptable to Chriſt than often to meditate thereon with admiration and love. If any of you had loſt a hand, or even a finger in defending or reſcuing your friend from an enemy, you would expect he would be ever mindful of the favour, and never forget you. But O what is that, to the ſufferings of the Son of God for you! He hath loſt not a hand but his heart-blood, yea, the favour and countenance of God for you for a time. He left his glorious throne in heaven, and ſtooped to become a man, a poor man, a man of ſorrows, a deſerted man, and a dead man for you. Nay, he was willing to be made a curſe for you, and to take on a dreadful load of wrath upon his innocent ſoul, yea infinitely more than any damned ſoul in hell can bear; and to ſwim long in a ſea of wrath to ſave you from periſhing in it. Let the ſurprizing love of Chriſt fill your ſoul with wonder, and kindle a flame of love in your ſoul to him.

Again, meditate on Chriſt's ſorrows, with deep ſorrow for ſin the cauſe thereof, believe that amazing word, Iſa. liii. 6. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities.* Let the ſound of it never go out of your ears, ſay, Oh! my ſins were the thorns which pierced his head, the nails which pierced his hands, and the ſpear that pierced his ſide. My curſed ſins put the Lord of life to a cruel death, they wounded him more than all his other enemies. When my dear Lord was in the garden, no Judas, no Pilate, no Jew, nor Gentile was there, to cauſe his amazing horror of ſoul, and his fearful ſweat of blood; but, Oh, my unbelief, my pride, my carnality, my hypocriſy and other ſins were there, and with their weight preſſed him to the ground, and brought that agony and ſweat upon him. Oh, that my head were waters, that I might weep a flood of tears for my ſins!

Laſtly, Abhor ſin as the greateſt evil, and never have ſlight thoughts of it any more; can you behold your agonizing Saviour under a burden of wrath, and hear him complaining of the burning heat and thirſt which the fire of juſtice created within him! Can you ſee the great drops of blood ſtanding above his garments! Can you hear his cries and roarings under the bruiſes and anguiſh of his ſoul, and not be convinced of the evil and demerit of ſin! Can that ſit light upon your ſoul which ſat ſo heavy upon Chriſt's ſoul! O what deſperate malignity muſt there be in that, which could not be expiated without ſuch a coſtly ſacrifice! Look on them as fools who make a ſport of ſin, which coſt the Son of God ſo much ſoul-travail and inward horror: Never yield any more to the temptations of ſin, which coſt ſo dear before it could be forgiven.

ADVICE VIII.

From Matth. xxvi. 22. *They were exceeding ſorrowful, and began every one to ſay, Lord, is it I?*

IT was a commendable exerciſe of Chriſt's diſciples, before partaking of the holy ſupper, to be ſearching themſelves, and looking inward with a holy ſuſpicion upon their own hearts, eſpecially when Chriſt had told them, there was a traitor among them, and at the ſame time looking up to him that is omniſcient to aſſiſt them in the ſearch, ſaying, Lord, is it I? Am I the traitor? Will I betray my dear Lord and Saviour? Ah! every one of us have within us traiterous hearts to Jeſus Chriſt, and have reaſon to ſuſpect ourſelves as they did, and acknowledge we have many enemies of Chriſt lodged in our boſoms, ſuch as *unbelief, hypocriſy, pride, malice, envy, ambition, worldlineſs, atheiſm, wanderings from God, backwardneſs to duty,* &c. by which we have betrayed Jeſus Chriſt.——And as the diſciples when ſearching themſelves *were exceeding ſorrowful;* ſo ought we before we partake: And good reaſon have we for it, when we reflect upon our former guilt and treacherous dealing with God, and when we conſider the preſent deceitfulneſs and deſperate wickedneſs of our hearts, and that they are as ready to betray Chriſt as ever; yea, that there is hypocriſy and treachery in our hearts againſt Chriſt which we have not yet diſcovered. Upon all which accounts we have ground with the diſciples to be *exceeding ſorrowful.*

Now is the time, O communicants, to ſearch and examine yourſelves, and to be exceeding ſorrowful for the many traiterous wounds you have given Chriſt, by breaking both tables of the law, and every command thereof; by ſinning againſt light and conſcience, againſt mercies and judgments, warnings and reproofs, confeſſions and prayers. By unthankfulneſs for redeeming love, neglecting goſpel-offers, not loving and reſting upon a crucified Jeſus, not accounting all things loſs and dung for him; not delighting in attending his ordinances, and in remembering his love in the holy ſupſuper.——O how treacherous have your hearts been to Chriſt! how blood-thirſty have your ſins been againſt him, in preſſing him down in the garden, in nailing him to the curſed tree! How are you able to look to Gethſemane or Golgotha with unconcerned hearts or dry eyes! Were not your ſins the principal actors in that horrid tragedy? Theſe, to be ſure, were the traitors, which by the hands of Judas, delivered up Jeſus to be crucified: What were Pilate, the Jews or Romans, but the executioners of your ſins? Who put the ſword in juſtice hands? Who raiſed the tempeſt of wrath againſt your Surety? Oh! it was your ſins. Blame none ſo much as them; they were the Judas that betrayed him, the Herod that mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, and the ſoldier that pierced him; will you not then be *exceeding ſorrowful* for your traiterous hearts and bloody ſins? Could they ever been guilty of a more horrid crime than murdering the Lord of glory! O ſhall the rocks about Jeruſalem rend aſunder, the earth tremble and ſhake, the ſun vail its face, and the whole heavens put on a mourning habit, when Chriſt ſuffered for your ſins? And ſhall you the criminals, who deſerved all this puniſhment, ſtand unaffected? O what ſtupid hearts muſt you have, if they do not mourn for your ſins which brought on ſuch agonies upon the Son of God, before they could be expiated. Had you, in your paſſion, given a deadly wound to any poor innocent man, your hearts would have bled for it all your days; and will not your hearts much more relent for the ſlaughtering the innocent Lamb of God! One that never wronged you, but was always interpoſing for you, and doing you good!

Remember what David ſaid to the Lord, when he ſaw the people deſtroyed for his ſin, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. *Lo I have ſinned, and done wickedly; but as for theſe ſheep, what have they done?* In like manner ſay you, Lord, I have ſinned, I have done wickedly; but as for this ſpotleſs Lamb, what hath he done? I have *eaten the ſour grapes,* but his *teeth were ſet on edge.* O when will your heart melt, and your eyes weep, if not now? Never was there ſuch a moving ſight ſet before your eyes, as the Lord of glory pierced and ſlain by your ſins. Now it is that *deep calleth unto deep,* deep ſufferings in Chriſt for deep ſorrow in thee.

O ſaith one, I deſire to be grieved for my hypocriſy and treacherous dealing with Chriſt, and for ſin that crucified him, but how ſhall I know if my ſorrow be of the right ſort? *Anſ.* Examine it by ſuch marks as theſe, 1. Godly-ſorrow, is accompanied with ſome view of the mercy of God in Chriſt, which ſupports the ſoul, and keeps it from deſpair. Judas ſorrow, however deep it was, wanted this neceſſary ingredient.——2. If true, it will be univerſal, both for your own ſins, and the ſins of others; for the ſins of the place where you live, and for theſe of the whole land.——3. If it be right ſorrow, it will bring you to conſider the aggravation and heinous circumſtances of your ſins, as being againſt light, againſt love, and againſt ſolemn engagements and profeſſions of friendſhip; ſo as to mourn and cry, How traiterous hath my heart been to ſo kind a Maſter?——4. It will produce theſe ſeven happy effects mentioned, 2 Cor. vii. 11. There it is ſaid, Godly ſorrow for ſins works, 1. *Carefulneſs,* that is a care to recover peace with God for what is paſt, and to pleaſe God for the time to come, by amending what is amiſs, and avoiding all temptations and occaſions that lead to ſin.—2. *Clearing of yourſelves,* by mourning over the ſins of other men, diſſenting from them, and ſhewing your deteſtation of them.—3. *Indignation* againſt ſin, as the abominable thing which God hates. The heart of a true penitent riſes, ſwells, and boils, againſt ſin. Then it is you are angry and ſin not, when you are angry at ſin, and at yourſelves for ſin.—4. *Fear,* the true penitent fears to offend God as he hath done, and that he may not do it, he nouriſheth a holy fear and awful impreſſion of the holineſs of God; and alſo a fear of holy *jealouſy* and *watchfulneſs* over himſelf, leſt ſin ſurprize him at any time.—5. *Vehement deſire,* to wit, after reconciliation with God through Chriſt, and after reformation of every thing amiſs, and to be entirely rid of all ſin.—6. *Godly ſorrow* produceth *zeal,* which is an affection or grace compounded of love and anger, to wit, love to God and duty, and anger againſt ſin and every thing oppoſite to God.—7. *Revenge,* by ſeeking the utter extirpation of ſin, by faſting, mortifying the fleſh, and denying yourſelves in ſome things lawful for a time. A good way to execute this revenge againſt ſin, is for penitents to take frequent views of the deep and bloody wounds which ſin hath given to your dear Redeemer. It is written of the emperor Julius Cæſar, that after he was murdered in the ſenate, they brought forth his robe all beſmeared with his blood to the market-place, and expoſed it to open view, in order to awaken his friends to take revenge on his enemies. This is ſurely one deſign of the holy ſacrament to waken your zeal againſt ſin which murdered the Lord of glory.—*Laſtly, godly-ſorrow* for ſin, will drive you to Chriſt for help againſt ſin; it will make you flee to Chriſt for deliverance from an ill heart, as well as from the wrath that ſin deſerveth; hence the apoſtle cried, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* Rom. vii. 24.

ADVICE IX.

From Heb. vi. 18.——*Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us.*

WE have here a two-fold deſcription of true believers, which come to one; 1. They are ſuch as have fled to Chriſt as the true city of refuge, to ſhelter them from avenging juſtice.—2. They are ſuch as have by faith laid hold on Chriſt ſet before them in the goſpel-promiſe, as their only hope of ſalvation.

Chriſt is our refuge city from the curſes of the law which hang over us, from the avenger of blood, divine juſtice that purſues us, and from the devils which ly in wait for us. The cities of refuge under the law were ſix, but under the goſpel we have one better than them all. Theirs only protected the body from the wrath of man; but ours doth protect both ſoul and body from the wrath of an angry God. The way to it is made plain and patent, pillars are ſet up, Chriſt's miniſters to direct ſinners in the way to it. In this bleſſed city there is protection, inſtruction, proviſion and fulneſs for all that flee to it. Here is all our hope of ſalvation, and it is in vain to hope for ſafety any where elſe. Now, communicants, this bleſſed hope is ſet before you, come lay hold of it, and cleave faſt to it. Now the city is ſet on a hill, the way to it prepared, and the gates open: The goſpel trumpet is ſounded, and proclamation made, whoſoever flees to the city, be his caſe what it will, ſhall in no wiſe be caſt out.

Under the law, he that ſaw his danger, and fled to the city of refuge, did firmly believe there was ſafety and ſecurity for him by public authority in that privileged place, if he could but get into it in time before the avenger of blood did overtake him: Therefore he earneſtly deſired to be once within the gates of it, and for that end put forth his utmoſt vigour in running. He did not linger, halt, nor ſit down by the way; nor would he turn aſide to any crooked by-path that might lead him about, but keep the ſtraight and neareſt way to the city, as the pillars ſet up directed him. No perſuaſion of any man could make him look or flee to any other city, caſtle, or hiding place for ſafety, but to the city authorized by law. In like manner let every convinced ſinner, learn from this to flee to Jeſus Chriſt our ſafety from wrath, as the only Refuge appointed by God for him. Look, deſire and pant earneſtly to be within the gates. O ſinner, run with ſpeed, now the gates are wide open in the word and in the ſacrament. Put forth your utmoſt vigour, and eſcape for your life. Do not linger nor delay, but flee as one that ſees juſtice cloſe at your heels. Avoid all other ſhelters and by-ways for relief; away with carnal company, ſinful pleaſures, worldly mirth or diverſion; nay, take no ſhelter in your own duties and performances; believe that none of theſe can ſkreen or protect you from the ſword of juſtice, and that none elſe can, but he who is the *Lord our righteouſneſs*.

Of old, nothing could ſtop the man when flying to the city of refuge; had his wife and children hung about him, or his own heart ſuggeſted to him, will you leave your houſe, your garden, lands, relations, and many accommodations, and go to a ſtrange city and ſpend your days? He would have flung them all from him, and taken flight, ſaying to wife and children, Better part with all things, than part with my life, if you will not follow me, I muſt leave you all behind.——So let awakened ſouls flee with ſpeed and reſolution to Jeſus Chriſt; ſay to the world's profits, ſins, pleaſures, ſatan's allurements, and whatever would tempt you to ſtay behind, *Get you hence;* away with every thing that would hinder me from Chriſt. My Saviour and my ſoul are more precious to me than all the world; take all things from me, and give me Chriſt.——How great was Jerom one of the ancient fathers, his love to Chriſt? How ſtrong was his reſolution, when he ſaid, "If my father were weeping on his knees before me, my mother hanging about my neck behind me, my brethren, ſiſters and kinsfolk howling on every ſide to retain me from Chriſt, I would caſt my mother to the ground, run over my father, and deſpiſe all my kindred, tread all under my feet, and run to Chriſt."

O awakened ſoul, behold how Chriſt diſplays his love to thee in the ſacrament, he opens his wounds to be a refuge and hiding-place to thee, and calls aloud to thee to come and flee in thither, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* To whom will ye flee for help, when the avenger of blood is at your heels, if you flee not to Chriſt the only refuge from wrath? Hills and mountains, ſeas and depths, heaven and earth cannot hide thee from the ſtorm, if Chriſt do it not. Now you have a noble opportunity, while the clefts of Chriſt's wounds ſtand open, and the *bleſſed hope is ſet before you* in the ſacrament, and Chriſt ſtretching out his hand, and waiting to ſee who will riſe and flee to him! O to ſee ſouls riſing in flocks, and flying as doves to their windows! What a pleaſant ſight would this be!

O, ſaith one, I can't riſe, my wings are clipt, my ſoul clogged I can't mount up. *Anſw.* If you can't mount up as with eagels wings, ſee if you can run to Chriſt, and kneel before him, like that young man, Mark x. 17.——*Object.* I find myſelf ſo burdened and heavy laden, that I cannot run. *Anſw.* Then ſhew a willingneſs to run to Chriſt; and cry, *Draw me, and I will run after thee;* even a deſire to run will be accepted, as of thoſe in Neh. i. 11.——*Object.* But, ſaith one, My heart is ſo dead and ſluggiſh, I have neither ſtrength nor will to run to Chriſt. *Anſw.* If you cannot run, then ſee if you can but *go* towards him; for we read in Jer. ii. 2. Theſe *who went after him in the wilderneſs*, were accepted of him.——*Object.* Alas, ſaith one, I am ſo weak and feeble, I cannot go. *Anſw.* Then endeavour to *creep* and move towards him as you can.——*Object.* But I am ſo lame and impotent both in hands and feet, that I can't creep nor move. *Anſw.* If you cannot move to Chriſt, then *look to him* as the Iſraelites did when ſtung with fiery ſerpents.

calls every feeble ſoul to do it, Iſ. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth*: and would you have Chriſt come any lower than a look? O look up to Jeſus as lifted up upon the pole of the croſs, for all nations to behold him.—*Object.* My eyes are dim, the croſs far off; Jeruſalem, where it was ſet up, is out of ſight. *Anſw.* The pole of the goſpel and of the ſacrament, on which Chriſt is now lifted up, is near hand; look up to him thereon, and be ſaved.——*Object.* Saith one, I am ſo burdened with guilt, I cannot lift up mine eyes. *Anſw.* Then ly low before him like the humble publican, who was ſo burdened that he was aſhamed to lift up his eyes to heaven, and under a deep ſenſe of his vileneſs cried, *God be merciful to me a ſinner,* and ſo doing was accepted: In like manner humble yourſelf before a merciful Redeemer, and plead his promiſe, Mat. xi. 28. Truſt his word for eaſe and reſt to your burdened ſoul.

ADVICE X.

From John iii. 14.—*Even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up.*

THE lifting up of the *brazen ſerpent* upon a pole, to heal ſerpent-ſtung Iſraelites, was a type of the lifting up of Chriſt on the croſs, to heal convinced ſinners of their wounds by ſin.——As there was but one brazen ſerpent for healing the whole camp of Iſrael; ſo Chriſt crucified is the only Remedy and Saviour for a loſt world.—*He muſt be lifted up*; his dying on the croſs was neceſſary to fulfil his engagements from eternity to be our Surety; he muſt be offered up as a Sacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice for the ſins of men, ſeeing nothing elſe could do it. Though Chriſt's engagement to ſuffer for us was entirely voluntary at firſt; yet having once undertaken, it became neceſſary for him to be lifted up. And glory to him that would not go back from his word, however great his ſufferings were.

Come then, O communicants, behold and conſider, with ſuitable thoughts and affections, your *lifted up Jeſus* dying on the croſs. After he had borne the heavy croſs on his bleeding ſhoulders up mount Calvary, this croſs muſt next bear him upon the top of the mount, being firſt nailed to it, and lifted up with it.——Come ſee how this was done; behold the croſs-tree laid down upon the ground, and the Lord Jeſus ſtript naked, laid on his back, with hands and feet ſtretched out upon the tree, that they might take the meaſure of his body, and mark the holes for the nails! and lo, they take the meaſure longer than the truth, that they might both crucify and rack him at once, till his bones ſhould go out of joint: So the croſs was a rack as well as a death.—Our firſt parents ſtretched forth their guilty hands to take the forbidden fruit from the tree; therefore our glorious Saviour did willingly ſtretch forth his innocent hands to be nailed to the tree, to ſatisfy for their guilt.——Come ſee four big nails driven into his hands and feet, the moſt ſinewy and ſenſible parts of his body, and faſtened to the tree; apply your ear, and hear the hideous ſound of the hammers knocking in theſe nails! Oh, your ſins were the hammers that did it, mourn for them.

Come next and ſee the Lord of glory, when nailed faſt to the tree, lift up with it on high, and made to ſtand upright to the view of all the world! and then the foot of the tree let fall down with violence into the deep hole they had digged to faſten it, which fall did unſpeakably increaſe his torments, and rend the four wounds made by the nails. Thus his own weight became his torture, ſtill widening the wounds more and more, till all his precious blood ſtreamed out at them.——Behold your great Immanuel lift up on a croſs betwixt heaven and earth, as if he had been unworthy of a place in either, hanging betwixt two thieves, as if he had been the greateſt malefactor of the three! O what a ſpectacle was your Redeemer to both heaven and earth when thus lifted up! an aſtoniſhment to angels! a deriſion to the wicked! compunction to believers! but a Sacrifice acceptable to the juſtice of his eternal Father.—Look on this moving ſpectacle with deep ſorrow for ſin that faſtened him to the tree, and made him hang on theſe tormenting nails for ſeveral hours without comfort inward or outward! No way could he turn for eaſe, being fixed to the tree; if he ſtirred his bleſſed body at all, he was tormented afreſh by the wounds of his hands and feet, on which the whole weight of his body did hang: If he moved his head, which had the crown of thorns on it, the thorns would but pierce into it the deeper; yet for all this he complained not; no groan or ſigh was heard from him, but what he offered up to God for your ſins!

When the Son of man was thus lifted up, obſerve how the ſtreams of his precious blood run down to the ground, and ſtood in a little pool at the foot of the croſs, until the earth drank it up. Let this ſight affect your hearts, and open all the ſprings of ſorrow for ſin that pierced him. Sit down at the foot of the croſs, and receive this ſacred blood, as it falls, upon your hard hearts; let it drop on them, until it make them as ſoft as the ground it fell on. Let it drop on all the ſores and wounds of your ſouls, for it is the balm that muſt heal them.——Obſerve alſo the great extent of Chriſt's ſufferings at this time, they reached to all the parts of his body, and to all the powers of his ſoul: He ſuffered in all his ſenſes; his *ſeeing*, with the ſcornful geſtures of enemies; his *hearing*, with their ſcoffs and blaſphemies; his *ſmell*, with the noiſome ſtench of Golgotha; his *taſte*, with gall and vinegar; his *feeling*, with the piercing nails and thorns. Behold his *hands* that were ſtill beſtowing bleſſings, now fixed with nails; his *feet* that walked in God's ways, now digged through; his *bowels* that yearned for ſinners, now ſhrunk and dried up; his *lips*, that ſpoke as never man ſpoke, now ſwollen with blows. Now he ſuffered on the croſs till *his ſtrength was dried up like a potſherd, and his tongue cleaved to his jaws*; the fire of God's wrath ſcorched him inwardly, which made him cry out, *I thirſt*. His enemies mingled, at this time, a cup of vinegar and gall to him, which he refuſed; but glory to him, he refuſed not the cup which his Father mingled to him, though filled with wrath and curſes: This he drank for us, though it filled his whole ſoul with anguiſh, and made him roar and complain of his Father's deſerting him: "The arrows of the Almighty "were within him, the poiſon whereof drank up his "Spirit." Amidſt theſe fearful ſufferings, our lifted up Jeſus expired, willingly offering up himſelf, on the croſs, a propitiatory Sacrifice for us.

O believers, did Chriſt lift up himſelf as a willing

Sacrifice for you on the croſs; ſee then to lift up the gates of your ſouls to receive in this Saviour; let him have a joyful welcome into your ſouls, and give him the beſt entertainment, the beſt affections, and the beſt ſervice.—Did he willingly ſtretch out his arms to be nailed to the croſs for you? Then be not unwilling to ſtretch out the arms of faith to embrace him; but ſee to embrace him wholly in all his *offices*, of Prophet, Prieſt and King: Be willing to be taught, ſaved, and ruled by him.

Was Chriſt lifted up on the croſs (as the brazen ſerpent was lift up in the wilderneſs) for healing all the ſtings and wounds given us by ſin and Satan? O then look up to him with the eye of faith for healing. This is the great remedy of God's contriving and providing, put ſtrong confidence in it, and look to it with hope and expectation: Never diſtruſt the virtue of God's Remedy, nor deſpair of healing from it, however deep your ſtings, or large your wounds be: For Chriſt was lifted up to be a remedy for the chief of ſinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. and none ever periſhed that looked to him. —Was Chriſt willing to be lift up to ſuffer for you? Then let your hearts be lift up to ſerve and obey him, like king Jehoſhaphat, whoſe *heart was lift up in the ways of the Lord*, 2 Chron. xvii. 6. Lift up your hearts with your voice in his praiſe; ſpeak of the glorious honour of his Majeſty, and make known his mighty acts: Obey his commands, and particularly his dying command; to remember him at his table with activity and delight: Go with lift up hearts to a communion-table to remember him, that went ſo willingly to be lift up on a bloody croſs for you. The ancient exhortation to communicants was, SURSUM CORDA, *Lift up your hearts to meet with a lift up Jeſus.*

ADVICE XI.

From Exod. xiv. 15.——*Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that they go forward.*——

THIS is the anſwer of Moſes's prayer for Iſrael, when in a great ſtrait at the Red-Sea. It is ſaid, he cried to God; yet we read not of one word he ſpake: He only lift up his heart to God, who well underſtands the language of the heart. Moſes's ſilent prayers of faith, prevailed more with God, than Iſrael's loud outcries of fear. A believing communicant may, in a ſtrait, cry to God, in prayer, without ſpeaking a word, ſo did Moſes for fainting Iſrael. When they came out of the land of bondage, and fled from Pharaoh's tyranny, the Lord ordered them to march toward the ſea; but now when they are near to it, and ſee Pharaoh's mighty army purſuing, and cloſe at their heels, they are in a great ſtrait what courſe to take; they think certainly they muſt turn either to the right or left hand to make their eſcape from Pharaoh: No, ſaith God, ſpeak to them to *go ſtill forward*, as ſtraight towards the ſea, as if they ſaw a fleet of tranſport ſhips there waiting to take them in. O might they think, 'This is a hard command, *Go forward*, when we ſee nothing but the deep devouring ſea before us; as good go back to the Egyptians, or ſtand ſtill until they come up and put us to the ſword, as go forward into the ſea and be drowned: Will the deep ſea have any more mercy on us, than the cruel Egyptians?'—But ſaith the Lord, make no objections, aſk no queſtions, let the people *go forward*, obey my command, and truſt me with their lives.

Obſerve here, O timorous communicant, O doubting believer, when you are in fears and ſtraits with reſpect to the management or ſucceſs of your duty, you are to ſet yourſelves to obey God's command, *go forward* in the uſe of means, with a ſincere heart, and leave the event to God. You may poſſibly, at this time, be brought to the ſtraitning caſe of the children of Iſrael, when at the Red-Sea, and their hearts in great perplexity, ready to ſink within them for fear. Some may be ſaying within themſelves, how ſhall ſuch a vile, black unworthy creature *go forward* to the red-ſea of Chriſt's blood, who have both ſpilt it and deſpiſed it? How ſhall I, after all, venture to *go forward*, to waſh or bath my unclean ſoul in it? Well it is God's plain command to you to *go forward* to it, however heavy loaden you be with guilt, ſee 1 John iii. 23. Matth. xi. 28. John i. 29. others as vile and black have obeyed his command, have gone forward to this red-ſea, and been waſhed in it, ſee 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10, 11. yea we read, Acts ii. 36. of three thouſand of theſe who actually imbrued their hands in this blood, who were waſhed by it. How wonderful is its virtue! it is able to take away the ſins of a whole world, and much more the ſins of a few; therefore do not, O ſinner, rebel againſt God's command any longer.

Again, conſider what is God's ſpecial command to thee at this time, namely, *Do this in remembrance of me;* his precept is plain and expreſs to keep up the memory of his love to loſt men. Can you think to look on his face with comfort at the laſt day, if you have no pleaſure to remember him now: Surely his preſence will be terrible then to thoſe, to whom his memory is not delightful now. But you may have ſtraits and difficulties about this duty, O ſaith one, 'My ſtrait is great, I know not what to do; whether to ſtay back from God's holy table, or go forward: If I ſtay back, I diſobey my dying Saviour's command to ſhew forth his death in this manner: If I go forward unworthily, I contract the guilt of his body and blood, and eat and drink my own damnation. Alas, what ſhall I do? my need of Chriſt and his blood is ſo great, I cannot think of ſtaying back; and yet my preparation is ſo little, I know not how to go forward.——Ah! my unworthineſs is great, how ſhall I go to the table of ſo great a King in the ſtate and caſe I am in, ſo vile, ſo ſinful, ſo indiſpoſed, ſo hard-hearted? If the woman, that had the bloody iſſue, feared ſo much to come and touch the hem of Chriſt's garment; how much more may I, who am full of the running iſſues of ſin, fear to go forward to touch the ſacred ſymbols of his body and blood, and put my hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails?' Come then, unworthy as you are, obey Chriſt's command, and venture your ſoul in his hand: Go forward with all the preparation you can attain to, deeply ſenſible of your own vileneſs, and humbled for your ſhort-comings, truſting in the worthineſs of the Lamb that was ſlain to anſwer for your unworthineſs, in his blood to waſh away your pollution, and in his ſtrength to help your weakneſs. Venture forward, ſaying like Jehoſhaphat, 'Lord, I have no ability, no might for this great ordinance, neither know I what to do; but my eyes are unto thee, it is in thy name, in thy ſtrength, and at thy command, 'that I go forward to remember a dying Jeſus at his 'holy table. Lord, put on me the wedding-garment, 'prepare, receive, and welcome me.'

Object. Some may ſay, They are only the children of Iſrael, who, in the text, are bid *go forward*; and we are afraid we are none of theſe.—*Anſw.* All are bidden, without exception, come to Chriſt, yea, even the ſtout-hearted are called to go to him. Now, if you come to Chriſt, it will be a ſure proof of your being Iſrael's children, and among theſe who are bid go forward. Miniſters indeed have a ſpecial commiſſion to ſpeak to the children of Iſrael, that they go forward to this table; whoever ſtay back, they ought not.

Queſt. Who are theſe that may be numbered among Iſrael's children, or the ſeed of Jacob? *Anſw.* The children of Jacob or Iſrael, if they be of the true kind, will be like their father, particularly in theſe things, 1. Jacob was a great wreſtler with God in prayer, and hence he got the name of Iſrael, he wept and made ſupplication at Bethel, and prevailed as a prince with God, which is the meaning of the name Iſrael. Now if you be wreſtlers with God, you are Iſrael's children, and called to go forward.—2. Jacob was a plain man; ſo he is called, Gen. xxv. 27. that is a ſingle-hearted man: It was by this character that Chriſt deſcribes a true Iſraelite, John i. 47. *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile.* Now if you ſtudy godly ſincerity, and plain dealing in your behaviour both to God and man, you are Iſrael's children, and called to go forward.—3. Jacob had faith in Chriſt, and believing views of him as the glorious Shiloh; he waited for his coming, drew his comfort from it, and rejoiced in the gathering of the people to him: If it be ſo with you, then we bid you go forward. ——4. Iſrael and his children were God's covenanted people; they chuſed God for their God, and gave themſelves up to him: If it be ſo with you, you are Iſrael's children, go forward.——5. Jacob was zealous for reformation, both with reſpect to himſelf and his family, and cauſed them put away all their idols, cleanſe themſelves, and change their garments, when going to renew covenant with God, Gen. xxxv. 2. Now if you ſtudy ſincerely to follow his example, you are among the children of Iſrael, to whom God warrands miniſters to ſpeak, and bid them go forward to his table. Now, if you have any of the foreſaid five characters, in Chrriſt's name we can promiſe you welcome to his table. Go forward to it then with hearts burning with love to Chriſt and to his people; go with thankfulneſs and praiſe to God for providing ſuch a Saviour, and ſpiritual feaſt for you; and go with hunger and thirſt to partake of it. Go forward with humility and ſelf-denial, renouncing all confidence in your preparations and performances and depending only upon Chriſt's mediation for acceptance with God.

ADVICE XII.

From John xii. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

AS the ſacrifices under the law were heaved and lifted up before the Lord; ſo Chriſt the Antitype muſt be lifted up on the croſs as the atoning Sacrifice for our ſins. The Jews were not more willing to lift him up, than he was to lift himſelf; he readily undertook to be lift up, *Lo I come*, ſaid he; he willingly carried his croſs to the place, that he might be lift up on it. He diſſuades the women to weep for him. Why? Becauſe I am going to be lift up a Sacrifice to juſtice for your ſins, and to draw your ſouls unto me.

Queſt. But how doth he draw all men, when ſatan keeps many ſtill faſt in his grips? *Anſw.* Chriſt was lifted up to obtain drawing offers and invitations to all men without exception, and accordingly gives drawing calls to all men in his word; and if they be not drawn to him it is their own fault. But though many be called, and multitudes flock to the word; yet there are none effectually drawn to Chriſt but the elect; and theſe may be called all men, as they are gathered out of all nations, kindreds and languages, ages, ſexes and qualities. All men, Gentiles as well as Jews: All ſorts of men, ſinners of all ſizes, greater as well as leſſer. *Queſt.* But how doth the lifting up of Chriſt draw ſinners effectually to him? *Anſw.* By the merit of his lift up ſacrifice he obtained the removal of all hinderances of their coming to him, ſuch as the guilt of their ſins, the enmity of their natures, the power of their corruptions, their unbelief, hardneſs, blindneſs and diſcouraging fears. And likewiſe by it he purchaſed all the means requiſite for drawing men to him, ſuch as the preaching of the goſpel, ſanctified rods, the grace of faith, and, above all, the powerful influences of the Spirit. As Chriſt was *lifted up* on the croſs; ſo he muſt alſo be *lift up* on the pole of the goſpel, for drawing ſinners to him. Thus the brazen ſerpent was lift up in the wilderneſs, for drawing the ſtung Iſraelites about it, and it proved moſt effectual for that end; ſo a crucified Jeſus held out and evidently ſet forth in the goſpel, as he was lifted up on a bloody croſs, with his pierced hands ſtretched out to embrace loſt ſinners, is ſurely the moſt attractive and drawing ſight in the world. This wonderful Loadſtone hath drawn thouſands of hard *iron hearts* to it at once. A natural loadſtone, though it draw iron to it; yet it may be drawn away from it again: But a crucified Chriſt draws the heart ſo powerfully and cloſely to him, that they can never be ſeparated again. Never was there ſuch a drawing engine in the world as this! A lift up ſtandard or enſign draws numbers of ſcattered ſoldiers unto it, but it is ſeen by few: But a crucified Jeſus lift up in the goſpel is an enſign to draw great multitudes in different nations under the banner of love, Iſa. xi. 10. The firſt experiment that was made of its virtue in Jeruſalem by the Apoſtle Peter, three thouſand ſouls were drawn to Chriſt at once, and after that many nations that knew him not, did run unto him. Come then, O ſinners, admire and experience the power of this lift up Enſign; let your iron hearts be drawn by this Loadſtone; it hath loſt nothing of its virtue to this day. Thouſands of hearts in other places do ſtill feel its power; we are ſometimes refreſhed with the welcome news of their being drawn off from the vanities of time, and the love of ſin, to glorious Chriſt: Why then don't your hearts alſo yield to the power of this bleſſed Loadſtone, Chriſt crucified lift up in the word and ſacrament? It hath the ſame virtue here as elſewhere, were but the eyes of faith opened to behold it, according to that alluring call, Iſa. xlv. 22.

When Chriſt was lift up on the croſs, his face was turned to the Gentiles, for the Jews out of malice (as ſeveral write) would have him crucified with his face toward the weſt, as reckoning him unworthy to look to the temple and holy city that ſtood on the eaſt ſide of mount Calvary; but Chriſt had a loving deſign in it to us Gentiles, and to accompliſh that word, Pſal. lxvi. 7. *His eyes behold the nations*. Behold, O ſinners, Chriſt turned his face to you on the croſs to draw you unto him; there he bowed his head toward you to draw you; there he opened a cleft in his ſide to draw you; there blood and water flowed from his heart to draw you to him! And now he hath ſent his word and Spirit to draw you: now he diſplays his blood and wounds in the ſacrament to draw you; now he is caſting his cords of love about your hearts to draw you to him; now the devil is holding, and Chriſt drawing; Chriſt and the devil are now ſtruggling for your hearts; the eyes of many are on you, the eyes of the glorious Trinity, the eyes of angels, the eyes of miniſters and ſaints are on you, to ſee what the iſſue of the combat ſhall be, which of them ſhall gain the prize. Satan indeed is the ſtrong man, but, glory to God, Chriſt is ſtronger than he. O that he may prevail, the heart is his by right, ſurrender it to him without delay. He will not enter without your conſent; his people muſt all be *made willing in the day of his power*. Oh, if the will were once conquered, the day were Chriſt's, and the field were won for ever.

Would you then have ſatan defeat, your biaſſed will overcome, and your ſouls ſavingly brought to Chriſt, O look up and cry for a draught of Chriſt's power. You have neither ſtrength nor will to come to a crucified Chriſt, unleſs he draw you. Ordinances or providences cannot draw you, the word or ſacraments cannot draw you, judgments or mercies cannot do it; yea neither miniſters nor angels can draw your dead and heavy hearts. O then look beyond them all to a lift-up Immanuel, *Draw me, Lord, and I will run after thee*. The ordinance you have in view can never be a drawing ordinance, if Chriſt put not forth his virtue with it; the ſacrament will be lifeleſs, and the adminiſtrators lifeleſs, if Chriſt draw you not. The moſt powerful ſermons, the moſt alluring calls will all be loſt, if he draw not. You will ſit ſtill in the Sodom of a natural and wrathful ſtate, if he draw not; you will die in your ſins, if he draw not; you will be eternally damned, if Chriſt draw you not to him. You can never overcome the ſtrong and ſubtile temptations ſatan caſts in your way; you can never deny ſelf, forſake beloved luſts, renounce juſtification by works, quite all confidence in your own doings, go naked and empty to Chriſt, be content to live wholly upon his righteouſneſs, and receive grace, life, ſtrength and glory as a free gift from Chriſt, without the drawing virtue of a lift-up Saviour. Oh, if you were once acquainted with this drawing power, you might go with comfort to his table, and feed upon his purchaſe.

Queſt. How ſhall I know, if I have yet been drawn effectually to a lift up Jeſus?

Anſw. Try it by theſe marks, Have you diſcovered his matchleſs excellency ſo as to draw off your heart from ſin and the periſhing things of the world? Have you felt the cords of his love about your heart and will, conſtraining you to yield yourſelf wholly to him? Is your hearts drawn out in love and affection to a crucified Chriſt above all things, ſo that the deſire of your ſoul is to him and the remembrance of his name?——Are you growing ſtill liker to him, more holy, more humble, meek, and heavenly minded? Nearneſs will breed likeneſs.—Are you troubled for diſtance from Chriſt, when at any time you are drawn off him by ſin, ſatan, or the world's allurements?——Are you drawn to duty with a view of the enjoying his preſence therein? In the mean time are you drawn off from reſting on duties, or putting any attainments in Chriſt's room? Then you may conclude your heart is effectually drawn by a lift-up Saviour; and ſo may, with holy confidence and joy, draw near to him in the ſacramental tryſting place, and hold communion with him there.

ADVICE XIII.

From John i. 36.—xix. 5. *Behold the Lamb of God.——Behold the Man.*

O Communicants, both John and Pilate call you to behold Chriſt ſuffering and ſacrificed for you, and which is more, the Spirit of God calls you to this duty alſo. Let each one of you then ſay with Moſes, Exod. iii. 3. *I will now turn aſide, and ſee this great ſight*. A great ſight indeed! For though he be called a Lamb, and a Man, he is alſo God, God in human nature ſuffering, bleeding and dying, a great and wonderful ſight! All the Perſons of the glorious Trinity call you to behold it, Iſa. xlii. 1.——xlv. 22. John i. 29. Draw then as near as poſſible, that you may get a good view of it; ſtand not at a diſtance like theſe who followed him from Galilee to the croſs, of whom it is ſaid Luke xxiii. 49. *They ſtood afar off beholding theſe things*. Do not now ſtand afar off, nor take a far off look of a crucified Chriſt, but come cloſe to him by faith, and take a near and ſaving look of him, as he calls you, Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ſaved; I am God, and there is no Saviour beſide me*. O then turn not your back or ſhoulder to him, look not aſquint to him, look not by him to other things; but look with a broad, ſtraight and ſteady look unto him. The Man Chriſt Jeſus is the Lamb of God, appointed by him to be ſacrificed to make atonement for our ſins, and to purchaſe pardon, life and ſalvation to us: And looking to him by faith is the great mean of ſecuring and applying the bleſſings of his purchaſe to us. And in a ſpecial manner he calls us to look unto him in his ſufferings for us, *Behold me, behold me!*

Behold the ſuffering Man, a Man of ſorrow indeed! And particularly behold him entering upon that fearful ſcene in the garden of Gethſemane, when he began to fear, turn ſorrowful, and very heavy: When he was ſore amazed, fell into an agony, and cried out, “My “ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful even unto death!” O what was it that made your Saviour ſo heavy, but the dead weight of the elect's ſins, with the law's heavy curſes annexed to them? Oh, your ſouls were exceeding guilty, which made his ſoul exceeding heavy. Behold and ſee your ſorrowful Redeemer falling into a fearful agony, and, while in it, falling down ſometimes on his knees, and ſometimes on his face, praying once, praying again, and praying the third time, until he is quite overwhelmed with wrath and covered with his own blood! Behold the ſorrowful Man with the great drops of blood ſtanding above his garment for your ſins and bedewing the ground! See Jehovah now acting againſt him, as an inexorable Judge, running on him as a giant, and making him the butt of his envenom'd arrows!—Behold him in this agony making his moan to his diſciples, who could make no help to him; for neither they nor the angels in heaven durſt touch his load, nor taſte his cup: Yea, he got not ſo much as ſympathy from his diſciples, they fell aſleep when he was at the worſt, and left him in his agony to ſtruggle and tread out the wine-preſs alone! O be not idle ſpectators of your Saviour's agony, but let your ſouls be exceedingly affected with Chriſt's ſoul-ſuffering for your ſouls ſins.

Behold the man Chriſt betrayed and ſold for a little money, apprehended and bound with cords like a thief, and bound faſt, as Judas bade, yea, ſo faſt, (as ſome ſay) that the blood burſt out of his tender hands! O can your heart or eyes hold to ſee thoſe hands that made the heavens, wrung together and bruiſed with hard cords! To ſee him bound as a priſoner that came to ſet the priſoners free! But had not the cords of your Redeemer's love held him faſter than the cords of his enemies, though they had been cables or chains, they could not have kept him; but his love to you made him a willing priſoner! Behold the Man blindfolded, mocked, buffeted and abuſed for you! Behold him ſtript naked and ſcourged! Behold him that clothes the lillies of the field, that made coats of ſkin to clothe our firſt parents, now ſtript and uncloathed himſelf! He is ſtript naked, that you might not be found naked at God's bar! He is ſtript of his robes, that he might provide a robe of righteouſneſs to cover your nakedneſs!—Behold the Man ſcourged by Pilate, and that above meaſure, thinking thereby to ſave his life; but as the Jews were not ſatiſfied therewith, ſo neither was infinite juſtice ſatiſfied; ſo that his life muſt go, and the Man Chriſt is willing it ſhould: Willingly did he give his back to the ſmiters, that you might be freed from the everlaſting laſhes of God's wrath in hell! Behold every part of his bleſſed body torn and wounded by ſcourgings, becauſe every part of you was wounded by ſin; and his ſtripes were the only cure for your wounds.

Behold the Man with a platted crown of thorns on his bleſſed head, with the ſharp points turned inward, and theſe beat into his head with a ſtaff, till all his head is but as one wound, from whence a new ſhower of blood ran down his neck for you! You may be ready to cry, Fy on the Jews, or fy on the ſoldiers that uſed our Saviour ſo; but rather cry, Fy on your ſins that did worſe to him, theſe platted the crown of thorns and crucified him too. Behold the Lamb of God now willingly caught in the thickets, like the ram, to be ſacrificed in your room, when you were bound like Iſaac for that end. Behold him willing to wear a crown of pain and ignominy, that you might wear a crown of glory and renown: Willing to be diſgraced and affronted, that you might be honoured and exalted: Willing to let a Barabbas, the vileſt malefactor in all Jeruſalem, be preferred before him, that you might be preferred to a room among God's children.——Behold the Man, after all theſe ſufferings, put to bear the heavy croſs on his ſore wounded ſhoulders, a heavy load indeed with the elect's ſins and law's curſes faſtened to it; yet he bears without complaint till his ſtrength is ſpent, and he is ready to faint under the burden, ſo that another muſt help! Oh! it was not the weight of the tree that made him faint, he had a greater burden to bear than ten thouſand worlds, even the infinite wrath of God due to the elect's ſins? O can you behold this ſight with dry eyes!

Behold the Man brought to Golgotha, nailed to the tree, lifted up, and drinking out the bitter dregs of the cup of wrath thereon, till at length he yielded himſelf priſoner to death, by bowing his head, giving death his orders to execute his commiſſion, and carry him off the ſtage! Behold and wonder at the ſight, the Lord of life, death's taken priſoner!——O man, can'ſt thou ſtand and ſee the Lamb of God ſlain in thy room, and for thy ſins, and not be affected! Write that man a beaſt, a ſtone, a lump of earth, that can be ſenſeleſs ſtupid and unconcerned at ſuch a ſight! O bluſh and be aſhamed, O man, at thy ſtupidity, when the dead earth and rocks about Jeruſalem quaked and rent at the ſufferings you now behold repreſented in the ſacrament. O curſed ſin (which many make light of) that could not be expiated by any other ſacrifice, than that of our Immanuel, the Lamb of God, the Man Chriſt Jeſus? O behold the Man, and tremble at ſin, the accurſed thing that murdered the Son of God, the Man that is God's Fellow, the Man that is infinitely preferable to a million of world's full of men and angels too. O that men would always look on ſin in the glaſs of the agonies and ſufferings of the Man Chriſt, that they might be filled with horror at it, as at hell itſelf! Nay, in ſeveral reſpects ſin is a greater evil than hell.

Let every communicant, every Chriſtian come and behold the glorious Son of God, with the greateſt love and admiration, who for our ſakes was willing to become a Man, and God's Lamb to be ſacrificed for the ſins of men. O let his name Jeſus be always to you as precious ointment poured forth, and let the remembrance of his love inflame your ſouls with a vehement indignation againſt ſin, and a burning affection to the Lamb of God, the Man Chriſt, that was willing to ſtruggle in bloody agonies, and bleed to death on the curſed tree to deliver you from lying in hell for ever! O what can we render to him for his free love, amazing and unſpeakable love! O that we could ſpend our whole lives in admiring his love, and contemplating his beauty, and were thereby made meet in ſome meaſure for the excerciſe of the redeemed above. *Amen.*

ADVICE XIV.

From Job xxxvii. 14. *Stand ſtill and conſider the wondrous works of God.*

THE works of God, being wondrous, do well deſerve our moſt ſerious conſideration; but ſo wavering are our minds, we cannot conſider them aright, unleſs we ſtand ſtill and compoſe ourſelves for that end. This advice doth Elihu give to Job in the text, and Moſes gives to the children of Iſrael, Exod. xiv. 13.—All God's works are wondrous and highly worthy of our obſervation, as his works of creation and providence; and more eſpecially his works of redemption and of grace, as they are made known to us in the goſpel-diſpenſation, and particularly in the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper.—Here God calls you to ſtand ſtill, and conſider his wonderous works of redeeming wiſdom and mercy, in ſaving fallen ſinners.—The work of creation is indeed moſt wonderful and ſtupenduous; but his work of redemption is far more coſtly and ſurprizing: The one coſt him but a word of his power, but the other coſt him the death of his Son: The one is but the work of his fingers, Pſal. viii. 3. the other is the work of his arm, Luke i. 51. Much of the divine wiſdom and power is diſplayed in making us men, but much more in making us ſaints; by the one we have but a ſhort mortal life, but by the other an eternal and immortal life. God's works of redemption and of grace will be the admiration of ſaints and angels to all eternity, Rev. v. 12.—xv. 3.

Come then, and behold theſe works of the Lord, as they are ſet forth before you in the word and ſacrament! Come and ſee God from all eternity paſſing by angels, and pitching his love upon poor ruined ſinners of Adam's family, and contriving their redemption by the incarnation and death of his dear Son, while he paſſed by the angels that fell.——Come and ſee the glorious Son of God undertaking, in the council of peace, to become Surety to pay our debt, and ſatisfy juſtice for the injury our ſins did to God's glory!—Behold and conſider the device of infinite wiſdom for reconciling juſtice and mercy about guilty men, and ſatisfying the demands of them both, by puniſhing ſin ſeverely, and yet pardoning the perſons guilty!—*Stand ſtill and ſee the wondrous work* of making the Word fleſh to dwell among us; of the Creator's leaving his throne of glory to lodge in a virgin's womb, and a beaſt's manger; of the *Ancient of days* becoming *a child of a day old*, learning to ſpeak and go, and ſubjecting himſelf to his own law in the room of rebel-ſinners!——*Behold God's wondrous work* in ſetting up a court and throne of grace among the priſoners of juſtice, and cauſing grace ſit as a queen on the throne, with a ſcepter of mercy in her hand, and thence to iſſue forth proclamations of grace to poor, wretched, blind, miſerable and naked ſinners; proclaiming pardon to the condemned, liberty to the captives, and life to the dead; yea, ſee grace laying ſiege to the hearts of rebels, ſummoning them by the goſpel-trumpet to ſurrender, and uſing the moſt prevailing arguments with them to do it, taken from the mediation, ſufferings, blood, righteouſneſs and ſatisfaction of the Son of God.

Behold and conſider the wondrous work of God in furniſhing and fitting the Mediator for our miſerable circumſtances, joining the divine and human natures in one perſon for our relief! Obſerve how well he ſuits our exigences; he is Man, that he might die for us; and God, that he might overcome death! Man, that he might combat the devil; and God, that he might vanquiſh him! Man, that he might take on our guilt and puniſhment; and God, that he might ſupport under it! Man, that he might offer a ſacrifice for us; and God, to make it infinitely meritorious! Man, that he might ſympathize with us in trouble; and God, that he might deliver us! a wondrous work indeed! —Again, obſerve the Mediator's fulneſs, how exactly it ſuits our miſeries and wants! In our wonderful Immanuel, there is life for our deadneſs, light for our darkneſs, beauty for our deformity, ſtrength for our weakneſs, health for our ſickneſs, balm for our wounds, raiment for our nakedneſs, riches for our poverty, merit for our guiltineſs, righteouſneſs for our juſtification, a fountain for our pollution, grace for our ſanctification, bread for our hunger, water for our thirſt, and deep mercies for our deep miſeries! a wonderful work, to make one depth ſo exactly to anſwer another depth! *This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.*

Stand ſtill, and ſee God's wondrous works, in ſending our *Immanuel, the Prince of the kings of the earth*, to go up and down the wilderneſs ſeeking after the loſt ſheep, calling and inviting them in the moſt tender manner to come unto him for life and ſalvation, willingly ſubmitting to be buffeted by ſatan, contradicted by ſinners, to ſuffer all manner of indignities, a curſed death, and the wrath of God, and all that he might be a ſacrifice to ſatisfy juſtice for our ſins: And after he had ſubmitted to death and the grave for a time, he conquered them and roſe again; and gave commiſſion to his ambaſſadors to go thro' all the earth, and call periſhing ſinners to come unto him, and offer them ſalvation in his name; and having done ſo, he aſcended into heaven to interceed for them. Now, it is incumbent upon all communicants to remember theſe amazing works of God, at his holy table, with wonder, thankfulneſs and praiſe.

Come here, and ſee the *fountain of the great depths* of infinite love broken up, and the ſtreams of the water of life running freely therefrom to the ſons of men. —Come, ſee Jacob's ladder ſet up, that reaches from earth to heaven, and God the Father at the top of it, calling you to climb to heaven by the ſteps of it, viz. *Chriſt's wounds, offices and promiſes!*—Come, ſee the manna coming down in plentiful ſhowers, and falling about your tents, and every man invited to gather.— Come, ſee the Rock broach'd in the wilderneſs, to ſupply the neceſſities of your ſouls; ſee the Rock ſmitten by the rod of Moſes and bearing the curſes of the law for you!——Come, ſee the City of refuge opened for poor manſlayers, that ſinners, who have ſlain their ſouls by ſin, may flee to it for ſhelter. O then flee for your lives, and do not linger by the way!—Come, ſee God bringing his righteouſneſs near you who are guilty criminals, and bidding you put it on for your ſafety in judgment, it is a robe that will fit every one of you.— Come, ſee the fruits and leaves of the Tree of life ſhaken and ſcattered among ſtarving wounded ſouls: Gather and feed on the fruits of his purchaſe for your nouriſhment; apply the leaves of his promiſes for your healing.——Come, ſee the Well of ſalvation opened, bring the chain and bucket of faith and draw water. The great medicine well is here, come with all your diſeaſes and ailements to it, come with your *hard hearts, blind eyes, weak hands, feeble knees, lame feet and cold affections* to get them healed.—Come, ſee Chriſt's teſtament opened, and every man allowed to put in for a ſhare of the legacies therein contained: This you are to do by believing, claiming, laying hold and embracing the promiſes!—Come, ſee ſtraying prodigals returning to their Father's houſe, and ſee the Father embracing them, and the whole family rejoicing at their return: See their filthy rags taken off, and the white robe of the Son of God put on them, and the fatted calf killed for them.——Come, ſee the King of glory entering in at the everlaſting gates of mens ſouls, dethroning ſin and ſelf, taking poſſeſſion of their hearts, and ſetting up his throne and kingdom in them.—Come, ſee King Solomon both crown'd and married in one day!

An aſtoniſhing match concluded between the Prince of life and the heir of hell! All the daughters of Zion are called forth to behold this ſight, Cant. iv. 11 —All theſe are great and wondrous works of God to be ſeen in the word and ſacrament, which all communicants ought to ſtand ſtill and conſider.

Conſider theſe marvellous works ſo as to be ſuitably affected with them, make them the ſubject of your meditation; entertain high and admiring thoughts of God, and of his infinite love and wiſdom manifeſted in them. Give firm credit to the record and teſtimony God hath given us of theſe wondrous works, and glorify the great Author of them with your hearts, tongues and lives. Embrace the goſpel-offer, and be afraid of offending that God who has humbled himſelf ſo low for our ſakes, and has wrought ſuch great and wondrous works for us. Be careful to ſerve him and pleaſe him in all things, and abhor ſin his grand enemy.

ADVICE XV.

From Rev. xxii. 2. *In the midſt of the ſtreet was the tree of life.*——

IT was a ſad day to mankind, when God baniſhed Adam from the earthly paradiſe, and from the tree of life that grew therein, and alſo ſhut the entry to it! But behold God, in his free mercy, is now opening an entry and inviting Adam's baniſhed poſterity back again to a better *paradiſe*, where there are purer delights, and neither ſin nor ſatan can enter; and where there is a *Tree of life, Jeſus Chriſt*, infinitely preferable to that in Adam's paradiſe. This Tree of life far excels that in its leaves, ſhadow, fruit, and virtues; it animates, yea, reſtores, and preſerves life for ever, neither is there any flaming ſword to hinder our acceſs to it. Adam's tree endured but a ſhort time; but ours laſts for ever: Other trees fade and wither; but *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever*. O come then, ſit down under the ſhadow of this Tree, eat of its fruit and live for ever. Though the Tree be now planted in the heavenly paradiſe, yet its branches, ſhadow and fruit extend to every believer on earth, as well as to the ſaints above. Thouſands of communicants at the lower table have *ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and found his fruit ſweet to their taſte*. Chriſt is a Tree that bears fruit at all times, every month and even in the ſharpeſt winter months of ſickneſs and death.

There are ſome very uſeful trees in the world, that afford all neceſſaries to men, ſuch as meat, drink, phyſic and clothing. Behold, God hath provided ſuch a tree for us. Jeſus Chriſt affords us all theſe. 1. *Meat:* He tells us, *That his fleſh is meat indeed;* that is, his fleſh, wounded and dying, yields ſtrengthening food for the ſoul, in reſpect of its fruits and effects. It is food well prepared; the Holy Trinity ſpent a whole eternity in preparing it. It is meat well ſeaſoned; it is *ſeaſoned* with the love of God, *ſauced* with the blood of Chriſt, and *ſpiced* with the graces of the Spirit.——2. *Drink:* Chriſt's *blood is* alſo *drink indeed* to the ſoul, in reſpect of its comfortable effects; ſuch as, pardon, peace, light, life, ſtrength, *&c.* Theſe ſtreams from the Rock are moſt refreſhing, cordial and ſavoury drink; ſavoury to God, ſavoury to angels, and moſt ſavoury to every ſoul that hath taſted it. It is a ſweet cup that is to be put into your hand, if you have faith; but it is poiſonous to an unworthy communicant that wants faith: But, if you be worthy, the drink will poiſon ſin, quicken grace, and refreſh the ſoul. Fear not, O believer, to take a good draught, faith will make the cup medicinal and reſtorative to thy ſoul, and it will only kill and deſtroy thy luſts.——3. *Phyſic:* The leaves of this Tree are for the *healing of the nations:* Chriſt hath many healing promiſes, which, when applied by faith, are moſt uſeful to purge out ſin and corruption, and to heal all the ſoul's wounds and diſeaſes.——4. This Tree affords *clothing* alſo. Poor fallen Adam, when naked, went to the fig tree for its leaves to cover him; but, O let his poſterity go to the Tree of life, where they ſhall get infinitely better clothing, even Chriſt's perfect *righteouſneſs*, which is ſpotleſs and law-biding, Behold *a rich robe*, ſet with the pearls and diamonds of heaven.—*A large robe*, ſo broad as to cover a whole elect world. It alſo covers all the ſpots and infirmities of believers; ſo that not one of them is to be ſeen. This robe is as broad as the law, which we are told is exceeding broad. And it is juſt as beautiful as broad; for it makes every elect ſoul amiable and acceptable to God —Never then was there ſuch a Tree, either in the earthly or heavenly paradiſe, as our glorious Tree of life, Jeſus Chriſt. O hungry ſouls, here is *meat!* O thirſty ſouls, here is *drink!* O diſeaſed ſouls, here is *medicine!* O naked ſouls, here is *clothing!* O come then to this Tree of life, and you have all things neceſſary for you.

O communicants, you are called to take a view of this bleſſed Tree, as it was hewen, mangled, and cut down by the ax of juſtice, when he died upon the croſs for you. Even in this his mangled condition, he is a moſt beautiful and engaging ſight to the eye of faith! O believer, behold your princely Jeſus lifted up on a bloody croſs, on the top of mount Calvary, for all nations to ſee him, and gather to him for food and healing. Since that mount was firſt created, it never produced ſuch a Tree, or ſuch precious fruit, as the Lord of glory hanging on the tree of the croſs, that was planted there ſome hours: Chriſt's hanging on it changed its nature from a curſed to a bleſſed tree, a Tree of life and ſalvation. This Tree of life made mount Calvary a ſweet and lovely paradiſe that day (notwithſtanding of all the malefactors bones that lay ſcattered upon it) and the fruit growing on it that day hath enriched both heaven and earth, and will fill heaven with eternal ſongs of praiſe.

You are likewiſe called, at this time, to draw near a crucified Chriſt, the Tree of life, that is always loaden with fruit: Come as near as poſſible you can win, ſhake the Tree by faith, and gather as much fruit as you can; eat, and lay up for after times; yea, gather, and lay up for eternity.—The fruits of this tree are durable and laſting, plentiful and enriching, ſweet and ſatisfying, manifold and various, Rev. xxii. *twelve manner of fruits every month*, which is an hundred and forty four crops in the year. Likewiſe they are moſt ſuitable to the wants and neceſſities of your ſouls. What can be more ſuitable to the guilty than pardon? to the dead than life? to the hungry than bread? to the thirſty than drink? to the wounded than balm? to the blind than eye-ſalve? to the naked than clothing? to the impotent than ſtrength? to the weary than reſt?

to the captive than liberty? to the diſturbed than peace? to the bewildered than light? to the warrior than victory? All theſe, and innumerable more, are the ſweet and ſuitable fruits of the Tree of life.

O then, give all diligence to ſecure and clear up your intereſt in this bleſſed Tree of life and its fruits, which are now offered to you freely without money or price. Abandon and reject the ſour and unſavoury fruits of ſin, the world, and your own righteouſneſs; and embrace the Tree of life in the arms of faith, and all its fruits are yours. Come *ſit down under his ſhadow*, at his table, and believingly receive and feed on theſe delicious fruits. O how delightful and refreſhing is the ſhadow and ſhelter of *Chriſt's righteouſneſs* to the ſoul that hath been ſcorched with a ſenſe of divine diſpleaſure for ſin? This *ſhadow* ſkreens and protects him from the heat of God's wrath, from the curſes of a fiery law, and from the ſlaviſh fears of death, and wrath-like diſpenſations.——Then let every weary and ſcorched ſoul come at Chriſt's call, and ſit down under his ſhadow: Give firm credit to the goſpel report concerning Chriſt's ſuretyſhip, his ſufficient righteouſneſs, and free offers: Acquieſce heartily in this bleſſed contrivance of ſhelter and ſafety, and put all your truſt and confidence in his righteouſneſs alone; and abide contentedly under its ſhadow without wandering from it, or going from tree to tree, as many do, ſeeking reſt or ſhelter. Surely all who leave Chriſt, and wander after the ſhadow of creature comforts, or their own doings, for relief, will diſquiet themſelves in vain; for there is no reſt or ſhelter anywhere, but under the ſhadow of the Tree of life. Here only you will find protection and proviſion: This made the ſpouſe ſay, Cant. ii. 3. *I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſte.*

Let all theſe, who have experienced the ſafety and ſweetneſs of Chriſt's ſhadow and fruit, bleſs God that gave them counſel, and drew them to this happineſs. See that you abide cloſe under this ſhadow and make it your continual reſort. Chriſt ſpeaks to you, as David to Abiathar, when he fled to him from Saul's cruelty. *Abide thou with me, fear not, for he that ſeeketh my life, ſeeketh thy life, but with me thou ſhalt be in ſafeguard.*——Likewiſe pity and pray for them who ſlight the Tree of life, and are going through all the trees of the wood for reſt and ſatisfaction, but cannot find it. O commend this bleſſed Tree to them, and invite them to come and ſit down under the ſhadow of it, where they will find all things. Say to them as Philip to Nathaniel, *Come and ſee.*—Be alſo looking out, and longing for the full enjoyment of the Tree of life in the *paradiſe* above, where you ſhall eternally ſing among the branches of it, meet with all your friends, and eat the fruits with a far better appetite and reliſh than ever any did here below.

ADVICE XVI.

From Iſa. xxxii. 2. *A man ſhall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt.*

WHatever ſtorms or tempeſts believers are expoſed to here, Chriſt is an excellent ſhelter and hiding-place from them. Before Adam's fall, that ſin entered into the world, all was calm and ſerene; but ſince that, the world is become a weary wilderneſs, full of tempeſts; and aſſoon as one is laid, another is ready to blow. There are ſtorms of outward afflictions, ſickneſs, loſſes, and diſappointments, and many wrath-like diſpenſations of providence; there are ſtorms of temptations from ſatan, challenges from conſcience, thunderings from mount Sinai, deſertions from God, reproaches and perſecutions from the world: And yet all theſe ſtorms here, are but like drops before the ſhower, if compared with the terrible ſtorm of wrath to come, which is abiding the ungodly and unbelieving. But glory to infinite wiſdom and free love, for finding out a proper Hiding-place for loſt ſinners amidſt theſe ſtorms, to which we are called to turn, Zech. ix. 12. *Turn ye to the ſtrong-hold, ye priſoners of hope.* The *Man Chriſt* is an excellent Strong hold and Hiding place againſt all ſtorms whatſoever; in him there is ſufficient room and accomodation for us, his *wounds* are wide, his *mercy* large, his *merits* infinite, his *offers* free, his *calls* moſt gracious and extenſive, Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look to me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth.* The acceſs is declared free, and the way patent, to all who turn to the Strong-hold for ſhelter, and never was any excluded that turned to it.

A crucified Jeſus, O communicants, repreſented to you in the ſacrament, is the Strong-hold and Hiding-place, to which your are called to turn by faith for ſhelter and ſafety, from the ſword of juſtice. In him there are excellent *clefts* for ſhelter, Cant. ii. 14. and which you ought to be well acquainted with. There are the clefts of his *wounds* and merits, which all *Chriſt's doves* flee to when ſtorms ariſe. There is alſo the cleft of his *power*, the cleft of his *wiſdom*, the cleft of his *love*, and the cleft of his *faithfulneſs*; many a ſtorm have they eſcaped in theſe clefts.——In this Hiding place there are alſo *chambers* of ſafety, to which you may retire when the tempeſts blow, Iſa. xxvi. 20. There are the *chambers* of Chriſt's *offices* and ſweet *relations*, which he hath aſſumed for the ſafety and comfort of believers; in each of theſe many of them have found ſhelter when ſtorms have blown. There is alſo the pleaſant *chamber* of his *covenant*, with the cloſets of its *promiſes* which afford ſweet retiring places in tempeſtuous times. O ſtudy to be acquainted with them. David was well acquainted with the well-ordered covenant and its promiſes, and had his recourſe thereto in troublous times, and particularly when he was threatened with the ſtorm of death, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure; this is all my ſalvation.* And he pleads the promiſes of this covenant for his ſafety, Pſal. cxix. 49. *Remember the word to thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* Come then by the exerciſe of faith, and ſhut yourſelves up in theſe ſweet chambers at the Lord's table, and take complacency in viewing and walking through them.

Chriſt crucified is a Covert and *Hiding-place* to belivers, and to every thing that belongs to them: He is even a Covert to their *bodies* in time of danger, ſo was he to his diſciples when the ſtorm was breaking upon himſelf John xviii. 8. *If ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way.* But more eſpecially he is a Covert to their *ſouls*, theſe he accounts precious as his *jewels*; he hides them in his wounds, and *keeps them by his power, through faith unto ſalvation.* He is alſo a Covert to their *graces*, and keeps them in life when ready to die, and ſaves them from being overwhelmed in the day of tempeſt. What had become of David and of Peter's grace, under violent ſtorms of temptation, if he had not been a Covert to them. Many a time hath he preſerved the *ſmoking flax* and the *bruiſed reed*, under the moſt dangerous ſtorms ——Likewiſe Chriſt is a Covert to their evidences and marks of grace; he preſerves them, and keeps them legible, after many blots which ſin and ſatan do caſt upon them: He hath the bleſſed art of recovering and clearing up their evidences, when they are frequently given up for loſt in times of backſliding.

Let all conſider how miſerable they are who have no intereſt in this Hiding-place; you, that are out of Chriſt, have no covert from the tempeſt, you can neither have ſafety nor comfort in times of trouble. Nay, when any ſtorm blows from without againſt you, a guilty conſcience will be ready to raiſe the ſtorm within; and alſo ſhew you a more terrible ſtorm gathering againſt you, even the wrath that is to come; wrath ſtill coming, but never all come; a ſtorm that will ſtill be blowing, but never will blow over.——O what will become of you, if death come upon you in this ſhelterleſs ſtate, while out of Chriſt the only hiding place! to be ſure then *hell will follow the pale horſe*. To whom then will ye flee for help or ſhelter? The rocks or hills will not be a hiding-place to you, if Chriſt do not hide you: No creature will ſkreen or pity you, if Chriſt do it not: All the creatures will take part with their Creator againſt you, and inſtead of hiding you, they will be ready to divulge and accuſe you to the purſuer, the juſtice of God.——If you cry to the heavens, O cannot the vaſt expanded heavens afford me a hiding-place from the tempeſt? No, will they ſay, there is no refuge, no entrance here for the ſlighters of Chriſt, we will open only to rain fire and brimſtone, and furious ſtorms upon their heads.——If you look to the air, and ſay, Is there no hiding place through the vaſt regions of the air for me? No, the air is tranſparent, and will diſcover the criminal, and will raiſe a whirlwind of wrath to blow you into hell.——If you cry to the ſea, Is there no hiding place in all the depths of the ſpacious ſea to ſhelter me from the Lamb's wrath? No, the ſea will give up her dead to be judged, and will rage furiouſly againſt you.——If you look to the earth, Is there no cave nor pit in all the earth to hide me from the dreadful ſtorm? No, the earth inſtead of hiding you, will open its mouth and let you go quick down to hell, for ſlighting the wounds of Chriſt, that were opened to ſhelter you.

O let every ſinner then flee now, while it is time, to theſe bleſſed wounds of Jeſus for ſafety; "Be of good comfort, O ſinner, riſe, he calleth thee;" riſe and come, for there is yet room; forſake all falſe ſhelters and lying refuges. Abſolute mercy, a blameleſs walk, convictions, reſolutions, prayers, tears, ordinances, miniſters, will not be a hiding-place to you, if Chriſt be neglected. Nothing can ſatisfy juſtice, nor ſkreen from wrath, but the wounds and blood of the Redeemer; therefore ſee to make theſe only your covert and hiding-place.

It concerns all to try if they have got into this hiding-place, and if they be among Chriſt's *hidden ones*; ſo believers are called, Pſal. lxxxiii. 3. If you be among theſe hidden ones, you will have a hidden life, and be acquainted with a life of ſecret prayer and correſpondence with heaven, and a life of faith and leaning upon the Son of God;—you will have hidden food, meat the world knows not of, the hid manna of communion with God.—You will have hidden clothing, and be acquaint with putting off your own rags, and putting on the hidden garment of Chriſt's righteouſneſs.—You will have hidden ſtrength, and be acquaint with borrowing ſtrength from Chriſt both for work and warfare.——You will live upon hidden ſupports in dark and calamitous times, and draw comfort from the promiſes, and make theſe the ground of your hope.—If you be in Chriſt as your hiding place, you will be among Chriſt's poor and needy ones, for it is to ſuch he is a refuge, Iſa. xxv. 4. Do you ſee your own emptineſs, ill deſervings, and inſufficiency, and depend upon free mercy for every crumb? Are you ſtill begging at a throne of grace, and inclining to exalt free grace? ſaying, *Not unto us, but unto Chriſt be the glory;* he is *all our ſalvation and all our deſire.* Happy are they who can lay claim to theſe marks.

ADVICE XVII.

From 1 Kings xix. 9. *The Lord ſaid unto him, What doſt thou here, Elijah?*

IT is the concern of every man, to be always in caſe to give account to God of his errand and deſign in every piece of work he is employed in; and ſo ought communicants at the Lord's table; when God or his miniſters aſk them, as the Lord did Elijah, *What doſt thou here, communicant?* What is your buſineſs and errand at this table?—Can you ſay, I have many errands here; I come upon my Saviour's call, to celebrate the memorial of his dying love, that his name may be remembred to all generations? And *worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain* to be admired, adored, and praiſed for ever.—I come alſo to ſubſcribe and ſeal a marriage-contract with him in the moſt ſolemn manner, before all the Perſons of the glorious Trinity, before the elect angels, and before all the congregation. Seeing Chriſt doth once more call me to it, after many a broken tryſt, and hath put on his marriage-robes, his dyed garments, to win and engage my heart, I come to join hands with him before God, angels, and men, and take them all witneſſes to the bargain. Surely this is a good errand: O that the long ſpoken of match may now hold.

Can you ſay, I am come to a rich and liberal Saviour, to ſupply my needs out of his fulneſs. I come on a good day, when he uſes to deal bountifully to the poor and needy, and to ſay to them, as the king to *Eſther, What is thy petition? and what is thy requeſt?*—Well, is thy petition ready? Doſt thou come with the publican's petition, *God be merciful to me a ſinner?* Or with David's petition, *Lord, be merciful to me; heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee?* Or with that petition, "Purge me with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean; waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than the ſnow?" Or with that, "Let my ſoul live, and it ſhall praiſe thee?" Or, do you come with the ſpouſe's petitions and requeſts, "Draw me, and we will run after thee. Awake, O north-wind; and come, thou ſouth; blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out?" Surely theſe petitions are agreeable to your Redeemer; ſee that you inſiſt upon them, and preſs for an anſwer.

Study to have a lively feeling at this time of all your wants. Would you have them all ſupplied at once? Then come and embrace a crucified Jeſus in the arms of faith, and he will fully anſwer them all. Would you have all your five ſenſes ſatisfied at once? Behold Chriſt invites you to come to him to get it done.——Would you have the ſenſe of ſeeing ſatisfied? Then he ſays to you, " Look to me, and be ye ſaved.—— " Behold me, behold me! Behold king Solomon " with the crown on his head!" Would you have the ſenſe of hearing ſatisfied? Then, ſaith he " Incline " thine ear; hearken to me; give ear to my voice."—Would you have the ſenſe of taſting ſatisfied? He ſaith, *O taſte and ſee that God is good.*——Would you have the ſenſe of touching ſatisfied? He ſaith, *Reach hither thy hand, thruſt it into my ſide*; feel the wounds made by the ſpear and the nails.——Would you have the ſenſe of ſmelling ſatisfied? Come then to Chriſt, whoſe *name is as ointment poured forth*; and whoſe *garments ſmell of aloes, myrrh, and caſſia.*——Come here and get all your ſpiritual ſenſes ſatisfied at Chriſt's full feaſt.

Object. But I am afraid I am not among theſe invited gueſts that Chriſt will make welcome. *Anſw.* Have you any of the ſcripture-characters of theſe that Chriſt invites? Are you among his friends? Do you wiſh well to his cauſe and intereſt? Then Chriſt ſaith to you, *Eat, O friends,* Cant. v. 1. Is your heart open to Chriſt's offers, and willing to accept him in all his offices? Then he ſaith to ſuch, he *will come and ſup with them,* Rev. iii. 20.—Doth your heart love him? Then he ſaith, He *will manifeſt himſelf* to ſuch, John xiv. 21.—Are you poor and needy? Then he ſaith, *The needy ſhall not be forgotten,* Pſal. ix. 18.—Do you ſee yourſelf a loſt ſinner? Then he ſaith, He is *come to ſeek and call ſuch,* Luke xix. 10. Mat. ix. 13.—Do you feel ſin to be a heavy burden? Then he bids the *heavy laden come to him,* Mat. ix. 28.——Are you ſick, and much diſtreſſed? Then Chriſt chuſes to entertain and converſe with ſuch, Matth. ix. 12.——Do you hunger and thirſt for Chriſt? He ſaith, *He fills the hungry with good things,* Luke i. 53.—Are you ſenſible of backſlidings? He invites ſuch to come to him, Jer. iii. 14. Are you deſirous to put on the wedding garment of imputed righteouſneſs? Then, to be ſure, you ſhall neither be excluded, nor neglected.—Do you earneſtly ſeek for his holy Spirit? He aſſures you he is more willing to give the Spirit to them that aſk it, than loving parents are to give bread to their hungry children. What is mens compaſſion to their children in compariſon of Chriſt to his? Well then, you may reſt on Chriſt's word; for he is not more free in making promiſes, than faithful in making them good. He is a God that keeps covenant to a thouſand generations. Venture then upon his word, and come to his table with hope and expectation to get all your wants ſupplied.

Let me again aſk you, as God did Elijah, What doſt thou here, communicant! Can you ſay, that you are come to get a heart-affecting ſight of the blood and wounds of the glorious Redeemer, ſo as you may love Chriſt, and hate ſin more than ever! That is a good errand, and what God will ſurely approve. Come then, draw near, as it were, to the foot of the croſs, and take a narrow and cloſe view of his wounds, and of the blood that ſtreams from them. Obſerve how faſt the blood runs down from his hands to the ground, faſter than ever tears ran down from your eyes for ſin, that cauſed the ſhedding of his blood! Chriſt is not ſparing of his blood for you, however ſparing you be of your tears for him.——Draw yet nearer, and lay your ear to his wounds, eſpecially his five big wounds in his hands, feet, and ſide; which, like ſo many mouths, are wide opened to ſpeak to believing communicants. Liſten and hear what they ſay; What is the language of the two wounds in his hands? " Come to me, and caſt your " guilty ſoul into my bleeding out-ſtretched arms," and I'll ſave you from the ſword of juſtice.—Lay your ear to the two wounds in his feet, and hear what they ſay, " Run to me, and caſt yourſelf down at my feet," and I'll protect you from the avenger of blood.——Hearken to the deep wound in his ſide, ſaying, " Flee " to me, O trembling dove, and I'll ſhelter thee in this " cleft of the Rock." Thou haſt now free acceſs to the Ark, behold the window opened in the ſide of it; look in at it, and ſee my heart burning with love: Yea, " thruſt in thy hand to my ſide (unbelieving Thomas) " and feel my bleeding heart, how warm it is to you, " and be no more faithleſs, but believing."

O communicant, can you come to the foot of Chriſt's croſs, and ſee his wounds, and hear ſuch language, and your heart not be affected with love to Chriſt, and hatred to ſin? Can you behold Chriſt thus cruelly uſed, nailed to the tree, bleeding and dying in your room! Can you ſee the heavens turning black, the ſun drawing in its head, the earth quaking, and the rocks rending at the ſufferings of the Son of God, and your heart not quake for ſin, that awakened the ſword of juſtice againſt him as our Surety.——O what cauſe have you to be aſhamed of the hardneſs and unconcernedneſs of your heart at ſuch a ſight, and to cry to God that the heart of ſtone may be changed into an heart of fleſh, and that the fire of Chriſt's love may deſcend, and kindle ſuch a flame in your ſoul, as may melt your frozen affections, and conſume the ſtubble of your luſts and corruptions. Of old the Lord uſed to anſwer his peoples prayers and ſacrifices by fire from heaven: Pray that he may anſwer your's in like manner, by kindling a holy fire in your ſoul, as he did in the hearts of the two diſciples going to Emmaus; even a twofold fire, to wit, a fire of love to Chriſt, and a fire of indignation againſt ſin. O love the Lord Jeſus as your treaſure and portion; let your thoughts be mainly upon him, and your ſouls breathing after him. Be much concerned for his intereſt and cauſe, and for the ſpreading of his kingdom and glory in the world. And be looking out, and longing for the full and perfect enjoyment of him.—Likewiſe keep up a ſtrong averſion to ſin, and to what is oppoſite to Chriſt, and injurious to his intereſt and kingdom; look always upon ſin as the grand enemy and murderer of Chriſt; and therefore do not ſpare it.

ADVICE XVIII.

From John v. 6. *Jeſus ſaith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?*

THIS miraculous healing pool of Betheſda, at which the impotent man had lien thirty-eight years, was a type of the Meſſiah, and the fountain of his blood opened and ſet forth in goſpel-ordinances, for healing all our ſpiritual diſeaſes. And Chriſt's method of healing this man teaches us, that if we would be healed, we muſt be willing to wait at the pool of ordinances, till the Spirit come to ſtir the waters, apply the blood, and effect the cure. And, in the mean time, we muſt be ſenſible of our diſeaſe, and look up to Chriſt, our great Phyſician, with earneſt deſires for healing. This is imported in Chriſt's queſtion, *Wilt thou be made whole?*

O communicants, you are diſeaſed by ſin, and the plagues of your hearts; theſe have blaſted the primitive beauty of the ſoul, and brought on it a ghaſtly deformity, with much pain and weakneſs. Your diſeaſes are manifold: Atheiſtical thoughts, miſbelief, and ignorance of God's truths, are woful plagues; hardneſs of heart, and earthly-mindedneſs, formality, and heart-wanderings in duty, truſting to your own righteouſneſs, ingratitude, and backſlidings from God; theſe are diſeaſes you ought all to be ſenſible of. God would have *every man to know the plague of his own heart,* 1 Kings viii. 38. in order to his being made whole. Theſe are the ſick that Chriſt is ready to come to heal, Matth. ix. 12. Chriſt firſt makes men ſick and ſenſible before he makes them whole. Have you then any acquaintance with this healthful, preparatory ſickneſs? Have you been made ſenſible of the dangerous nature of your diſeaſe, and thoughtful and ſollicitous about the iſſue of it? Have you been made to groan and moan under the burden of your diſeaſe, ſaying, "I am troubled and bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long?" Have you ſeen there is no healing in yourſelves, or in your *convictions, prayers, tears or reformations?* and that it is only in Chriſt, who hath an infinite fulneſs of merit and Spirit to ſuit your deſperate malady? Are you willing to ſubmit to the Phyſician's preſcriptions for healing? Be the pill or potion never ſo bitter, you will ſwallow it: Is it your cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" Theſe are tokens of a right preparatory ſickneſs. May the holy Spirit work them in you.

The great meritorious means of your healing is the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, which is ſet before you in the ſacrament, for you to look to and apply by faith. As the Iſraelites were made ſenſible of their ſtings before they looked to the brazen ſerpent for healing; ſo muſt ye in order to your prizing of Chriſt, and looking to his blood for healing your ſpiritual plagues. Now the fountain is open, and the healing ſtreams run freely on both ſides of the table: Come then, with a feeling of your diſeaſes, and bathe in them for curing your *hard hearts, your blind eyes, your weak hands, your feeble knees, your lame feet, and cold affections.*——O impotent man, are you lying at the ſide of the pool while the waters are ſtirring? Have you no ſtrength to move foreward, and is there none to put you in! O then look up to Chriſt, that healed the impotent man after many years waiting; look to him by faith, as he calls you, Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all all the ends of the earth.* As I offer myſelf to every diſeaſed ſoul in particular, as well as to all in general; ſo let every ſoul embrace me as his Saviour, and apply my blood to his particular diſeaſes. *Faith* is a healing grace, not only its *touches*, but its very *looks* are healing; hence Chriſt ſaid to ſeverals who where healed, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." O ſee then if you have got this healing faith.

Queſt. How may I know if my faith be of this kind?

Anſw. A *healing faith* will make the ſoul heartily approve the goſpel method of ſalvation, embrace God's teſtimony, and cloſe with his goſpel offer in all reſpects. And it hath in it, an *appropriating truſt and confidence* in the merit and virtue of Chriſt's blood, offered to the ſinner in particular for his pardon and healing; which makes him reſt upon Chriſt as his Saviour, and venture his ſoul and ſalvation upon his merits and promiſe. In this healing faith of a diſeaſed ſinner, there is a *particular acceptance* of, and *confidence in a crucified Chriſt, correſponding* to that free goſpel-offer which he makes of himſelf to the diſtreſſed ſoul.——This faith brings him to a fixed reſolution to ly at the Phyſician's door, and depend upon him alone for healing. And it makes him caſt open all the doors and rooms of his ſoul to receive and entertain his Phyſician. Now, O poor impotent ſoul, if there be ſuch a faith as this wrought in thee, then thy faith in Chriſt makes thee whole. The healing balm is applied, the cure begun, and ſhall ſhortly be perfected. *Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee; Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole.*

It concerns you alſo, to try if the happy fruits and effects of this healing faith appear in you, whereby you may conclude, that the ſtrength of your diſeaſe is broken, by virtue of the blood of Chriſt; and that you have got it applied for curing your heart-atheiſm, hardneſs, unbelief, pride, carnality, and particularly your weakneſs of hands, and feebleneſs of knees: So that, though formerly they were ſo weak and feeble, that you could not lift up the one, nor bow down the other in prayer with any fervency and livelineſs; yet now it is otherwiſe: Then this is a good token the ſtrength of the diſeaſe is broken, Chriſt has taken you into his hoſpital, and has you under cure, by the daily application of his blood and Spirit, and you are on the way of recovery.—Can you ſay further, that your *drought* is greatly abated, your *thirſt* after ſin and the world; and that your *appetite* for ſoul food, *communion with Chriſt* in ordinances, is happily increaſed? Can you bear the light better than before? Do you love ſearching-ſermons? All theſe are good ſigns.——Have you a high eſteem of your Phyſician, and do you entertain him kindly when he viſits you? Have you recovered more ſtrength and willingneſs to ſerve him in the way of commanded duties? And have you a holy fear and jealouſy of every thing that might bring on a relapſe into your old diſtempers? Then there is *good hope, through grace,* that your faith is a healing faith, the work of healing is begun, and ſo far carried on. Chriſt is our Rock, and his work is perfect.

O then ſtudy to be thankful to your great Phyſician, ſaying, "What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, healeth all thy diſeaſes, and redeemeth thy ſoul from deſtruction; who reneweth thy youth like the eagles, maketh thee run and not weary, walk and not faint.—Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us." Then the cure ſhall be fully perfected, and we ſhall dwell always beſide our Phyſician, and enjoy perfect and uninterrupted health for ever and ever.——Expreſs your thankfulneſs while you are here, by being witneſſes for Chriſt, ſhining as lights before others, commending Chriſt and his ways to them, hating all ſin, abſtaining from it; reproving ſin in others, and teſtifying againſt it. Be meek and lowly in your carriage; deal uprightly with all men; love all that bear Chriſt's image; be zealous for family religion, for ſanctifying the ſabbath, and attending God's ordinances. Pray earneſtly for the coming of Chriſt's kingdom upon the earth, and do all you can to promote it.

Watch and pray againſt backſlidings and relapſes into old diſtempers, and for that end be humble and ſelf diffident, be denied to your own ſtrength and conduct, and be always jealous of your corrupt and deceitful hearts. *Live by faith upon the Son of God,* looking to him both for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. And becauſe you are invironed with enemies, *put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil.* It is not the armour of your own reſolutions, it is the armour of God, even the graces of his Spirit. It is not ſome graces or parts of that armour, it is the whole armour, all the Chriſtian graces. It is not enough to have the armour in the houſe, or grace in the habit; no, it muſt be put on, daily worn, and exerciſed. God hath provided different pieces of armour for you, the ſword of the Spirit, the ſhield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breaſtplate of righteouſneſs; but there is nothing for the back, for God diſowns runaways, Heb. x. 38. *If any man draw back,* &c.

ADVICE XIX.

From Exod. xii. 14. *And this day ſhall be unto you for a memorial.*

AS the paſſover-feaſt was a memorial both of the deliverance from Egypt, and the redemption by Chriſt; ſo a *communion-ſabbath is a memorial* of ſundry remarkable things, and ought to be held as a moſt memorable day by every believer; as it brings to our remembrance the greateſt events and bleſſings.

1. A *communion-ſabbath* is a lively *memorial of Chriſt's death,* for the ſacrament adminiſtered that day by breaking of bread and pouring out of wine, is a viſible repreſentation of Chriſt's death, by the breaking of Chriſt's body, and pouring forth his blood on the croſs; an event which God will have remembered to the end of the world, and through all eternity. Why? becauſe by it God's perfections are highly glorified, and the elect world redeemed from hell. Chriſt did inſtitute the ordinance to be a ſtanding monument of his death while the world ſtands, 1 Cor. xi. 26. *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.* And a monument of the wonderful love of God in giving his Son, and of the Son in giving himſelf to be a ſacrifice for our ſins, who were utterly unworthy of his love. By this memorial God would teach us the ineſtimable value of Chriſt's death, as the greateſt obligation that ever he put upon the world; and that we ought to declare our gratitude to God for the favour in the moſt open and public manner; and rely upon Chriſt's death and ſacrifice as the foundation of all our hopes of pardon and ſalvation.——The death of Jeſus Chriſt is the moſt worthy ſubject of the diſcourſe and praiſe both of the redeemed on earth, and the glorified in heaven, according to Rev. i. 5.——v. 9, 12. Hence it was, that Moſes and Elias when they came from heaven to mount Tabor to wait upon their Lord when transfigured, they made choice of Chriſt's death for the ſubject of their converſation, Luke ix. 31. and good reaſon, for Chriſt's death was the ſpring and cauſe of all their glory in heaven; neither Moſes nor Elias had ſhined there, if it had not been for Chriſt's death.

2. A communion-ſabbath is a ſpecial memorial to us of Chriſt's reſurrection from the grave, which was on the firſt day of the week, and hence called the Lord's day, it being the moſt honourable day to our Lord Redeemer and the moſt joyful day to all the redeemed; as it gave a clear proof of the perfection of Chriſt's ſacrifice he offered to divine juſtice, and that our Surety's ſatisfaction was accepted for our complete juſtification and abſolution. Hereby it appeared that the elect's debt was diſcharged, their redemption finiſhed, and their Cautioner liberate from priſon. This day Chriſt was *declared to be the Son of God with power.* As his death did ſhew him to be truly man, ſo his reſurrection did manifeſt him to be truly God and the great Redeemer of the world.—This was the day of Chriſt's victory and triumph, in which he ſolemnly appeared to be the Captain of our ſalvation, and obtained a glorious victory over all his and the churches enemies. This day he triumphed over the grave, death and hell, and over ſin, ſatan and wicked men. Now death was unſtinged, the grave loſt its purchaſe, the ſerpent's head was bruiſed, the powers of hell vanquiſhed, and they were all ſwallowed up in victory.——Likewiſe Chriſt by his reſurrection, as the Head of the church, gave to all the members of his body a ſure pledge and earneſt of their reſurrection from the grave at the laſt day, to immortality and eternal life. And on this day he reſted from all his works of ſuffering and redemption, and rejoiced in the review of them with infinite delight and complacency. Now a communion-ſabbath is a bright memorial of this glorious day, which is to be had in everlaſting remembrance. O believer, remember it with thankfulneſs and joy.

3. This day is a memorial of your ſpiritual reſurrection and new birth, as it declares your reception into God's family, and ſeals your title to the privileges of his children, that you are born *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt* of the heavenly inheritance. And though the Lord's ſupper be not a converting ordinance in its own nature; yet the preaching of a crucified Chriſt this day, has been the means of converting many thouſands, and, in many others, of beginning the pangs and forerunners of the new birth, to wit, ſaving convictions of ſin, and enquiries after Chriſt, and ſalvation through him, which have ended in their converſion. O pray that it may be ſuch a day to you and many others.

4. This day is a memorial of your marriage day; becauſe on it you enter into or renew your marriage-covenant with Chriſt the Bridegroom of the church. Miniſters, by the goſpel-offers, court your ſouls to Chriſt, ſaying as theſe did to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 58. *Will you go with the Man Chriſt?* On the communion-day, you ſolemnly give your anſwer, as ſhe did, *We will go;* and at the Lord's table you ſeal your engage-

ment to him. Likewiſe this day is a memorial of the conſummation of your marriage with Chriſt at the great day, when he will come to receive home his eſpouſed bride, and conduct her to the King's palace with joy and triumph. O prepare and long for that day.

5. The communion-ſabbath is a memorial of your crucifying ſin which was the cauſe of your Redeemer's death. At this ordinance you draw virtue, from the death of Chriſt, to kill ſin and mortify ſtrong luſts. Many wreſtling believers have been enabled, at this occaſion, to give a death's wound to theſe luſts and idols they had been long ſtruggling againſt before. Reſolve then, in Chriſt's ſtrength, that ſin ſhall not out-live this day; it is moſt juſt to revenge the death of Chriſt upon it.

6. A communion-ſabbath is a memorial of Chriſt's conqueſt and coronation: For on this day Chriſt frequently receives the fruit and reward of the travail of his ſoul and his bitter agonies, by overcoming hearts, depoſing ſatan from his throne, and delivering ſouls from his thraldom, and tranſlating them into his own kingdom. And, at this occaſion, all worthy communicants do, as it were, put a crown of glory and honour upon Chriſt's head, by renouncing ſin, ſatan, and all that had exerciſed dominion over them before, and giving their full and hearty conſent that Chriſt alone ſhall reign over them for ever. Chriſt is ſo delighted with this, that he eſteems it as his coronation-day, Cant. iii. 11. O come then and yield your hearts to Chriſt, and pray that the communion-day may be a day of his coronation and conqueſt, when ſinners ſhall give their free and willing conſent to the dethroning of ſatan, and enthroning of King Jeſus; come under Chriſt's ſceptre and government, and abandon all his enemies; for he hath beſt right to the throne, and the juſteſt title to reign over you.

7. A communion-ſabbath is a lively memorial and emblem of the everlaſting ſabbath above, and the heavenly feaſt there that ſhall never end, which Chriſt hath purchaſed and promiſed to his people. Why? becauſe on a communion-ſabbath here, there is an aſſembling of God's people to give thanks for redeeming love, and to feed upon Chriſt and his purchaſe, with ſatisfaction and ſongs of praiſe. In like manner, in the heavenly ſabbath, there will be a great gathering of all the ſaints through all the world, to admire and praiſe God for redeeming goodneſs, and to ſit down and feaſt with Chriſt for ever, upon the benefits of his purchaſe. O how great is the plenty, variety, the fulneſs of proviſion and ſatisfaction which is at the upper-table! there they feed upon eternal redemption from hell and wrath, perfect freedom from ſin and ſatan, and from all afflictions and complaints: They feed upon the glorious preſence of God in human nature, the conſtant ſhinings of his face, and intimations of his love; the bright diſcoveries of the works of God in creation and providence, and eſpecially in the redemption of men by Chriſt. And, in this feſtival, they have perfect ſatisfaction, joined with eternal ſongs of praiſe. But, O how far will the communion-ſabbath above excel theſe we have here below! Here we are oft put to mix our praiſes with mourning and tears, becauſe of ſin prevailing, or the Spirit withdrawing. Here Judaſes, and unworthy gueſts thruſt in among the diſciples; but at the higher-table there is no ſuch mixture, all is pure and holy, and there is nought to allay their joy.——Here our communion-ſabbaths are ſoon over, and have nights, week-days, and trials to ſucceed them; but the communion-ſabbath above, the feaſt, muſic, and aſſembly are everlaſting, without interruption or uneaſineſs of any ſort.—O then improve theſe ſhort ſabbaths, as memorials and means to prepare you for this everlaſting ſabbath; and in all ordinances here, keep your eye upon the heavenly feſtival.

ADVICE XX.

From Jer. iii. 19. *How ſhall I put thee among the children? Thou ſhalt call me my Father.*——

THOUGH there be great mountains of difficulties in the way of ſinners ſalvation, yet God, in his free mercy, hath found out an expedient to get over them; even by making choice of God as our God and Father in Chriſt.—That you may admire his grace the more, take a view of the difficulties that ly in the way. God might ſay, *How ſhall I put thee among the children* of my family, who are the offspring of apoſtate and rebellious parents, who ungratefully departed from God without any provocation, ſold themſelves to the devil to do his drudgery, and rebelled againſt a moſt gracious God, and loving Father? And how ſhall I put you, that have *ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam*, among my children? How ſhall I be reconciled to ſuch treacherous dealers?—Again he might ſay, *How ſhall I put you among my children*, who are condemned rebels in the hands of my infinite juſtice, and whom I am engaged by my truth to deſtroy, having ſaid, *The ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die.* Here is a burning mountain of juſtice in the way of your ſalvation; how ſhall mercy get over it to help you?——*How ſhall I put you among my children*, whoſe hearts are full of enmity againſt me, and have all your days been plotting with the devil, and aſſiſting him to fight againſt me, and pull the crown off my head?——*How ſhall I put you among my children*, who are ſo deformed, polluted and lothſome creatures, as black as hell can make you, who have all your days been wallowing in the mire, and drenched in the puddle of ſin?—*How ſhall I put you among my children*, who have been all your days ſatan's vaſſals, drudging at his work, grinding in his priſon, and ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures?—*How ſhall I put you among my children*, who are impotent and lame, cannot run my errands, nor move one ſtep in my ſervice, nor do any thing to pleaſe or glorify me?——*How ſhall I put you among my children*, who hate my children, and my image in them, and have preferred the devil's children to mine?—*How ſhall I put you among my children*, that hate my childrens bread, and chuſe rather to feed on huſks with the ſwine?—*How ſhall I put you among my children*, that never liked my childrens work, never loved prayer, praiſe, nor any ſpiritual employment?—*How ſhall I put you among my children*, who are ſinners in Zion, have ſitten many years under goſpel-offers and calls to come to Chriſt, and have ſlighted them all, and bolted the door againſt my dear Son, and quenched the motions of my Spirit?—*How ſhall I put you among my children*, who have been ſo impenitent and hard-hearted all your days, as never to drop one tear for any of all the black and heinous ſins you have committed aaginſt me?—*How ſhall I* *put you among my children*, who have never kept one word to me, but have broke all your baptiſmal engagements, and gone over to the devil's camp, and harboured my enemies? O how is it that God can come over theſe mountains, to put ſuch as you among the children, and allow you to ſit down at the childrens table and eat of their bread? How is this conſiſtent with the honour and holineſs of God?

Bleſſed be God who hath found out a way for his mercy to come over all theſe mountains, by providing a Mediator and Surety to ſatisfy juſtice for our ſins, and proclaiming a new covenant, that whoſoever accepts of the Mediator, and makes choice of God as his God and Father in him, ſhall be taken into God's family, and be numbered among his children, notwithſtanding of all you have done to provoke him to caſt you off. *Thou ſhalt call me my Father*. Wonderful condeſcenſion, that he ſhould allow ſuch prodigals and runaways at all to ſpeak to him, and far more that he ſhould put words in their mouths, and ſuch kindly words, as my Father! Amazing goodneſs!

If you would make this addreſs aright, and take hold of his covenant, ſo as you may be taken in among the children of God, and allowed to come to his table and eat of their bread; you muſt be truly grieved for your long rebelling againſt your heavenly Father, and ſlighting his offers of mercy and pardon through Chriſt; you muſt be deeply humbled before him, and fall in with the goſpel-method of acceſs to him by a Mediator; you muſt quit all dependence on your own righteouſneſs, and break with all your Father's enemies; you muſt make a free and hearty choice of God, as your God and Father in Chriſt, reſting wholly upon Chriſt's mediation and righteouſneſs for acceptance with God;—you muſt make a ſurrender of yourſelves, and all you have to him, and engage in Chriſt's ſtrength to ſerve him, as obedient children, deſirous to pleaſe your Father in all things.

O come then, enter into covenant with God, and make choice of him as your Father in Chriſt; this is the only expedient for removing the difficulties in the way of your ſalvation, and for taking you into God's family, and numbering you among his children; unleſs you fall in with it, you can have no right to the childrens bread, you'll be unworthy communicants, and eat and drink judgment to yourſelves. O then prevent it, by entering into covenant with God, that you may be taken in among the children.—O young perſons, let me put the matter home to you, as Joſhua did to the Iſraelites, *Chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve?* Chuſe you whom you will take for your Father, whether God or the devil! Both are courting your hearts; which of them will you yield to? Is there any ſo fooliſh as to halt betwixt two opinions in this caſe? Is there any ſo mad as to ſtand in doubt whether to dwell with Chriſt or the devil for ever?—Now Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, are ſtruggling for your hearts; a cunning devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing; now caſt the balance, and ſhew which of them you incline to: The eyes of the holy Trinity are on you, the eyes of angels and men are on you, to ſee what the iſſue will be. O then be wiſe and come preſently, and make a ſurrender of your hearts to God in Chriſt. There is no muſick ſo melodious in God's ears, as the voice of young perſons weeping and covenanting with God. The ſeaſons of youth is the male in your flock, it belongs to God, let him have it, they are curſed who deny it to him, and reſerve the blind and lame to God, ſuch as the dregs of old age, or ſickneſs, Mal. i. 7.

O communicants, ſee always to bring Chriſt alongſt with you in your covenanting with God; never think of covenanting with him but by ſacrifice; bring the ſacrifice of Chriſt's death to atone for the breach of the firſt covenant, and bring his Suretyſhip to anſwer for your faithfulneſs in the ſecond, otherwiſe you can never call God your Father, nor be taken in among his children.——Remember you are all engaged in this covenant by your parents undertaking for you in baptiſm; but aſſoon as you are capable, God will have you to renew it perſonally and explicitely, and to come ſenſible of your breaking this covenant, in running away from Chriſt's colours, and in going over to the devil's camp; and deeply ſenſible of your folly in delaying and ſtanding out ſo long againſt Chriſt's gracious calls and free offers. O come, as penitent prodigals and mourning backſliders, with your faces Zion-ward, weeping as ye go, willing to enter into God's covenant, and give yourſelves away unto the Lord, who is your rightful owner. Since Chriſt comes to you at this occaſion, as in *ſtreams of blood*, it is ſurely proper that you meet him with *ſtreams of tears* for ſin, that cauſed his blood to be poured forth as water; and that you come preſently to an open rupture with all his enemies, and particularly with your unbelief, your pride, your paſſion, your hypocriſy, and other ſins that have pierced him. Break with them all, and come to him with the appropriating acts of faith, ſaying, *My Father, my Lord, and my God.*

ADVICE XXI.

From Luke v. 26. *They glorified God, ſaying, We have ſeen ſtrange things to-day.*

THeſe, who have been attending ordinances, ought to recollect what they have been ſeeing, doing and hearing, and to be ſuitably affected therewith. Self-examination is needful after communicating, as well as before it. Had you the eyes of faith open to ſee and obſerve the goings of our God and King in his ſanctuary; you may then ſay on the evening of a communion-ſabbath, *We have ſeen ſtrange and marvellous things to-day.* You have ſeen the bloody tragedy of Chriſt's ſufferings repreſented and reacted; Chriſt with garments dipt in blood fighting a bloody battle for us; in which the glory of the divine attributes are wonderfully diſplayed: Behold the free love and mercy of God, who was highly offended with us, yet contriving our redemption, and giving the Son of his love to die for us, who were his enemies; and for this end creating a new thing in the earth, the incarnation of an infinite Perſon, making a woman, a virgin, to be mother of him that created her! God incarnate is a world's wonder, Jer. xxxi. 22.——A ſtrange thing! The Son of God conſents thus to humble himſelf and die for condemned criminals; rather than he would ſee elect ſinners plunged into the bottomleſs gulf of eternal miſery, in his love and pity he would put himſelf into it to keep them out!—Here infinite *wiſdom* diſplayed in finding out a way to ſatisfy juſtice in puniſhing ſin ſeverely, and at the ſame time to gratify mercy in pardoning the ſinner freely! A ſtrange device! *Juſtice* and *mercy* are reconciled; and kiſs one another in man's redemption by Chriſt's death, the demands of both are anſwered, and the glory of both equally diſcovered.—Here is ſeen the ſeverity of juſtice and fierceneſs of God's wrath againſt ſin, in not ſparing his innocent Son when he became our Surety, nor abating him one farthing of the debt! Nay, he awaked the ſword of juſtice againſt him, and poured out the vials of his wrath upon him, which kindled a fire in his ſoul, made him ſweat and fall to the ground; and there he that made the heavens lay grovelling in the anguiſh of his Spirit, and ſweating clods of blood! O how heavy was the burden of guilt that preſſed his ſoul at this time!

You have ſeen a ſtrange thing, *blood ſtreaming* forth of marvellous virtue, that can ſoften hearts, though harder than a ſtone; that can heal all the wounds given you by the old ſerpent; that can waſh away the deepeſt ſtains of guilt, and make creatures black as hell, whiter than ſnow! And though many thouſands have been cleanſed by it, yet the ſtream is nowiſe defiled; but ſtill is pure and clear as cryſtal!——You have ſeen the amazing humiliation of the Son of God for vile worms! a ſtrange thing! He was made a worm, a clod of duſt; yea, made ſin for us! ſtrange! that he who thunders in the heavens, ſhould work with a carpenter in his trade! That the great Judge of all the world, ſhould be brought to the bar, accuſed as a malefactor, condemned and crucified betwixt two thieves, that ſuch criminals as you might have a room among the bleſſed! You have ſeen the Lord of Life deprived of life, to purchaſe life for you! ſpotleſs Holineſs made ſin, and eternal Bleſſedneſs made a curſe to redeem you from ſin, and the curſe due to it! A ſtrange thing! for the holy One of God to make ſuch an exchange with you, to take the curſe to give you the bleſſing! to take ſhame, to give you glory! to take death, to give you life! to take your ſins, to give you his righteouſneſs! A ſtrange thing! to ſee the righteouſneſs of one Man, a robe large enough and ſufficient to cover many thouſands, ſo as not one ſpot of guilt can be ſeen in them by the eye of infinite juſtice!—A ſtrange thing! to ſee Chriſt willing to have his ſide opened, to ſatisfy doubting ſouls of the reality of his love, that you might look into his heart, and ſee it panting with love to you, and hear him ſaying, as to Thomas, *Be no more faithleſs, but believing!* Strange! to ſee him bowing his head on the croſs, to whiſper comfort into your ear, ſaying, Now *it is finiſhed*; I have drunk the brook in the way, even the whole river of God's wrath, ſo that there is not one drop left for you; every believer's debt is paid!—A ſtrange thing! to behold the Father pleaſed to ſee the bruiſes, agonies, and ſufferings of his dear Son, that his enemies might be eternally freed from them!

A ſtrange thing! to ſee death conquering death; the death of Chriſt conquering all his and our enemies! If any had ſeen Chriſt entering the liſts with death and hell, law and juſtice, he might have ſtood amazed, and ſaid, O what will come of this Champion that is engaged with ſuch ſtrong enemies? But ſtay a little, and you ſhall ſee him lead captivity captive, triumphing over them all, and fetch all he came for, out of the hand of the devil! When Chriſt was brought to the croſs, one might have thought that devils, wicked men, and death, were triumphing over him, but the word ſaith, that on *the croſs he ſpoiled principalities and powers; and made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* A ſtrange myſtery! while enemies were ſcoffing and inſulting him, Chriſt is triumphing over them! A glorious conqueſt Chriſt's was, for he not only ſubdued his enemies, but conquered them ſo far as to make them uſeful and ſerviceable to him and his people! Let us admire the conqueſt and the Conqueror, though he was deſpiſed by men; yet, like David, he gloriouſly ſubdued Goliath, that defied the armies of the God of Iſrael: He cruſhed the head of the old ſerpent that had bruiſed his heel, and enſlaved his elect; and he put all his other enemies to flight!

A ſtrange ſight! you have ſeen to-day God coming over the greateſt mountains of difficulties, to pardon and ſave ſinners! taking rebels to be his children and favourites; and exalting them above angels that never ſinned? You have ſeen the King of glory courting poor ſlaves, black Ethiopians, and inviting them with outſtretched arms to come and match with him, and ſealing the marriage-covenant with his blood! You have ſeen him make a rich feaſt to them, and welcome them to feed on a crucified Chriſt, and all his purchaſe! Behold the heavenly Pelican, that feeds his young ones with his blood! How amazing is the ſight, that God ſhould not only feaſt, but ſeal a marriage covenant with you, whoſe deſcent is baſe, whoſe perſon is ugly, whoſe portion is nothing but diſeaſes and miſery? O what ſtrong ſights have you ſeen to-day! you have ſeen the love of Chriſt, the worth of ſouls, the price of pardon, an emblem of the higher table, to which many of your friends and acquaintances are gone, where the feaſt will never end!

You have ſeen, to-day, a ſtrange act of mercy to guilty and ill-deſerving creatures, who have ate and drunk before the Lord, and yet on them he hath not laid his hand; he hath made no breach upon any, as on Uzzah, Nadab, Abihu, or the men of Bethſhemeſh! He hath not ſtruck any dead with the bread in their mouths, or cup in their hands; nor ſent any from the table to hell, though you muſt acknowledge you deſerved rather to have had a cup of wrath put in your hand, than a cup of bleſſing!—A ſtrange ſight! that goſpel-offers are yet continued to theſe who have abuſed many ſacraments and ſermons! that Chriſt ſhould be ſtretching out the ſceptre of grace, and offering pardon and mercy to theſe who have crucified him afreſh, and trampled his blood under foot.

Have you ſeen evidences of gracious changes wrought on hearts and wills by the word, ſecure ſouls awakened, blind eyes opened, proud creatures humbled, careleſs ſinners made to cry, Away with the world, and give me Chriſt: None but Chriſt; I count all things but loſs and dung in compariſon of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. Theſe are ſtrange ſights, with which you ſhould be much affected, ſo as to hate ſin, love Chriſt, bleſs God, and glorify him with your hearts, tongues and lives. It is the end of all God's works that we ſhould glorify him.——Oh! the beſt have reaſon to lament that they are ſo little affected with the marvellous things ſet before them in the word and ſacrament! Surely when you compare the rock whence you are hewn, and that on which God ſets you! and when you conſider the low ſtoop Chriſt has made to purchaſe ſuch clods of earth and ſins with his blood, you have cauſe to be amazed at his love, and confounded at your own ingratitude, in being ſo little affected with his marvellous loving kindneſs, or melted for ſin that was the cauſe of all his ſufferings! O let the ſtrange and wonderful tokens of Chriſt's love you have been ſeeing and ſharing of in the ſacrament, engage you to more thankfulneſs in heart and life. Have you been waſhing your robes white in the blood of the Lamb? be careful to keep them clean, and do not defile them again in the mire of ſin; remember your vows, and keep your face ſtill towards your Father's houſe, which is a pure and undefiled dwelling; you cannot take filthy hands or feet thither, for no unclean thing enters there, Pſal. xciii. 5. "Holi-" neſs becometh thine houſe, O Lord, for ever."

ADVICE XXII.

From Luke vi. 21. *Bleſſed are ye that hunger now, for ye ſhall be filled.*

IN ſcripture, hunger and thirſt when applied to ſpiritual things, imports the ſame thing, to wit, a ſtrong deſire after ſpiritual and heavenly good things; which deſire implies ſpiritual life, a feeling ſenſe of want, and a longing for food to the ſoul together with the uſe of all proper means to obtain it. Now the main object of this hunger or thirſt is Jeſus Chriſt, or God in Chriſt, Pſal. xlii. 1, 2.—lxiii. 1.—Now there are many things in Chriſt which the hungry ſoul doth deſire; as 1. Chriſt's blood, as the ſoul's ranſom and cleanſing fountain.—2. Chriſt's Spirit, as the ſoul's quickener, comforter and guide.—3. Chriſt's righteouſneſs, as the ſoul's clothing and protection.—4. Chriſt's word as the ſoul's daily food and cordials.—5. Chriſt's ſupper, as the ſoul's feaſt and pledge of heaven.—6. Chriſt's graces, as the ſoul's riches and ornaments.—7. Chriſt's way, or holineſs in heart and life, as the ſoul's path to heaven.—8. Chriſt's day, as the ſoul's weekly market-day for getting in proviſions neceſſary for working, journeying, fighting, *&c.*—9. Chriſt's manſions above, as the ſoul's dwelling-place for eternal communion with God and his ſaints.—Now if ye would be truly bleſſed, ye muſt hunger and thirſt for theſe things, firmly believing that in theſe your true happineſs doth ly, and not in the world or ſenſual things.

Again, ſee that your hunger be of the right kind, that it be inſatiable, ſo that nothing can put it off or ſatisfy it but Chriſt; the truly hungry ſoul will not be pleaſed with the beſt duties, ordinances, miniſters, ſermons, ſacraments, or any thing without Chriſt.—The hungry ſoul will adventure on the greateſt difficulties for Chriſt, he will part with any thing for him: All the treaſures, honours, muſic, or comforts of life cannot ſatisfy him, none but Chriſt the ſoul's food. True hunger will put him upon the uſe of all means, and make him content to take Chriſt upon any terms, and put a blank in his hand, and ſay, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do! I'll ſubſcribe to any thing, only give me Chriſt, give me food to my ſtarving ſoul.

Such hungry ſouls are bleſſed, becauſe he hath promiſed to ſatisfy and fill them. It is God that creates the appetite, and excites the hunger, and therefore he will ſatisfy it. The hungry are the moſt earneſt and importunate beggars at the throne of grace; and ſuch he has promiſed to hear, Luke ii. 9. The hungry will wait at God's door for an alms, and he promiſes that theſe who wait for him ſhall not be aſhamed, Iſa. xlix. 23. The proud, the rich, the full and ſelf-righteous will go away, if the door be not preſently opened, but the hungry will aſk, ſeek, knock, and knock again, and wait till God think fit to open, and grant an alms. Theſe God is bound by his word to ſatisfy. He is their Father, and hath the bowels of a Father to pity his children. He hears the ravens and young lions when they cry, and feeds them, and will he not hear his own children, and fill their hungry ſouls? Yes, he hath promiſed it.

Queſt. But what is that fill he promiſes to the hungry? *Anſ.* He fills them with divine diſcoveries, as with the knowledge of God's greatneſs and majeſty, ſo as to make them ſenſible of their own nothingneſs, and with the knowledge of God's goodneſs and free love to ſinners in Chriſt, ſo as to make them fall into raptures of admiration, and cry who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity? Micah. vii. 18.—He fills them with a diſcovery of the excellency of the goſpel-remedy for periſhing ſouls, ſo as to make them ſay it is a device every way worthy of God, Chriſt's mediatory offices, his covenant, his righteouſneſs, his blood, his purchaſe and fulneſs, do nobly anſwer all our ſouls wants and neceſſities; they deliver us from ſin and miſery, and they bring us grace and glory.——He fills his hungry people with goſpel-promiſes, by letting them ſee their name in them, and giving them faith to take hold of them and apply them. Many a ſweet fill do they get from ſuch promiſes as theſe, Jer. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 28. Jer. iii. 22. 1 John ii. 1. Rom. xvi. 20. Heb. xiii. 5.—He fills them with the intimations of the pardon of their ſins, and with peace and joy in believing, Rom. xv. 13. ſo as to baniſh their doubts and fears. What a ſweet fill doth Chriſt's voice give them, ſuch, as that in Matth. ix. 2. Luke xxiv. 36, 38. John xiv. 27. Rom. viii. 1.—He fills them with reſolution and ſtrength to conquer ſin, perform duties, reſiſt temptations, and bear afflictions; when he ſpeaks to them as to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9. or as in Iſa. xli. 10. and xliii. 2.—He fills them by giving them ſweet returns of prayer, aſſurance of his love, and of his gracious preſence with them.—He fills them by making over Chriſt's fulneſs and purchaſe to them, and by giving them Piſgah-views of the promiſed land, and will at laſt fill them with glory.

It is only the hungry that ſhall be filled, the needy, the humble and ſelf-denied, for *the rich are ſent empty away,* Luke i. 53. the *rich,* that is theſe who are filled with a conceit of their own ſtrength and ſufficiency, their gifts and performances, and go about to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own, and ſee not their need of Chriſt; theſe ſhall go empty away, for they do not prize Chriſt, nor are willing to come up to his terms. They go away empty of Chriſt and his riches; but alas, they go away, filled with pride and ſelf-conceit, filled with love to ſin, love to the world, and love to their own righteouſneſs. Oh this is a miſerable fill.

O hungry ſouls, bleſs God that gives you this appetite, when others are rich and full in their own conceit, labour to preſerve this appetite and wait about God's houſe and table, where ſoul-food is to be had; and bleſs him even for the ſmalleſt crumbs, as when he gives you a greater hatred of ſin, a higher eſteem of

Chriſt, a greater deſire after heart-holineſs, a reſtleſſneſs without Chriſt, a willingneſs to part with all for Chriſt, or ſtronger reſolutions to cleave to Chriſt and duty. Theſe crumbs are worthy of thanks, though ye be not filled with joy and peace in believing. Wait on the Lord, and wait for him in every ordinance and duty of his appointment, believing him to be faithful who hath ſaid, *They ſhall not be aſhamed who wait for me.*

Object. Some may ſay, We have waited long, and have not got a crumb. *Anſ.* Some eminent ſaints have been put to cry, *How long wilt thou forget me, Lord, ſhall it be for ever?* Pſal. xiii. But they muſt wait in the uſe of means until God's time come, and adore the ſovereignty of God in his dealings with them. His people have reſigned themſelves to the care and wiſdom of God, who knows what is beſt for them; believing there is a time coming when God will make up all their loſſes. O believers, there is a fill remaining for you above, that will ſoon make you forget all your days of ſcarcity here below.

ADVICE XXIII.

From Pſal. cvii. 2. *Let the redeemed of the Lord ſay ſo.*—

WHAT is it ſuch perſons ſhould ſay? Let them both ſay and ſing of God's goodneſs and mercy to them; for (of all men) the redeemed of the Lord have moſt reaſon to be thankful for Chriſt's diſtinguiſhing mercy in freeing them from the law's curſes and ſatan's power, from the guilt, dominion, and puniſhment of ſin; from the ſting of death, and the wrath to come. Believers are redeemed both from ſin and hell.

Q. How may I know if I be among theſe happy ones, *the redeemed of the Lord? A.* Take theſe marks.—Did you ever ſee your ſlavery and bondage by nature, ſo that no leſs than an infinite price and power could ranſom and liberate you?——Was you ſo convinced and humbled with the ſight of your miſery, as to be content of freedom from it on any terms?—Have you ventured your ſoul on Chriſt's merit and mercy, conform to goſpel-offers, being well pleaſed with the frame of the new-covenant, and the ſelf-denying way of ſaving ſouls by Chriſt's imputed righteouſneſs?—Are you content with Chriſt to be your King and Ruler, as well as your Prieſt and Saviour?—Have you given up yourſelf to the Lord to live for him, deſirous that his love may always conſtrain you to do his will? O then, you may conclude you are among the *redeemed of the Lord,* and that his bleſſed body was broke, and his blood ſhed to ranſom you.

Peculiar reaſons have you to extol his goodneſs and mercy above others. Why? He hath opened your *eyes* to ſee the beauty of your Redeemer, and the ways of holineſs, when others remain in blindneſs!——He hath opened your *ears* to hear the joyful ſound, and fall in with it, when others are deaf to it!—He hath looſed your tongues to pray and praiſe, when others are dumb, and tongue tied!—He hath opened your hearts to entertain Chriſt crucified, when others ſhut him out!—He hath brought you to a *feeling* of the evil and burden of ſin, when others are without feeling!—He hath given you *appetites* for ſpiritual food, when others reliſh nothing but things earthly!—He hath given you the *promiſe* and *hopes* of complete redemption from ſin and miſery above, when others live without Chriſt, and without hope! Let the *redeemed of the Lord* then ſing and praiſe him above all others.

O believing communicants, *redeemed of the Lord,* give him thanks, and expreſs your thankfulneſs by your thoughts and actions, as well as your words; namely, by your high eſteem of your Redeemer, and of his blood and righteouſneſs that purchaſed all for you.—By avoiding every thing that diſhonours him, and flying from the ſins that are common and faſhionable where you live.——By commending your Redeemer to theſe who know him not.——By ſtanding up as witneſſes for him, and for his truths and ways in the midſt of a Chriſt deſpiſing generation.——By ſtrictly obſerving the Lord's day, as being a weekly memorial of redeeming love.——By longing for the enlarging of Chriſt's kingdom, and rejoicing at the news of it: And by putting honour on all the friends and lovers of the Redeemer.

Laſtly, Shew your thankfulneſs, by ſinging pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs in praiſe of redeeming love, and of the Redeemer's perſon, offices and ſufferings; a ſubject that can never be exhauſted. Sing praiſes to the great God, that humbled himſelf to leave his high throne, and come down to dwell in fleſh, and die for us; and to riſe again, and aſcend to heaven, to take poſſeſſion of the inheritance, and make accommodations for us there. On this account the Spirit calls us four times to ſing praiſes in one breath, Pſal. xlvii. 6. "God is gone up with a ſhout; ſing praiſes to God, "ſing praiſes; ſing praiſes unto our King, ſing praiſes." This ſinging is moſt acceptable to God, and profitable to ourſelves. As God makes it the eternal work of heaven, ſo he would have us frequently employed in it on earth. But Oh! how do we fail here! Reformed churches abroad do far exceed us in the frequency of this duty, as they do in the variety and ſweetneſs of their tunes.

What is *ſinging,* but a kind of reading with meditation and deliberation, in order to give the more free vent to the thoughts and affections to breathe and aſcend heavenwards. The wiſe God inſtitutes *ſinging* in his praiſe, becauſe the melody of the voice helps to affect the heart, and raiſe the thoughts; *for he knoweth our frame.* And indeed, it is only when the heart correſponds with the voice, that muſic is pleaſant to God: To this purpoſe one ſaith well;

> *Sweet melody the hymn affords,*
> *When with the lines the heart accords.*

O let the *redeemed* ſing praiſe, and give thanks to God for his unſpeakable Gift, both now, and for evermore. *Amen.*

I ſhall add no more *Sacramental Advices* in the preceeding method, but ſhall ſhut up all with a cluſter of ſhort *Scripture Directions,* proper, not only for communicants, but for all Chriſtians travelling heavenward.

A SHORT

CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY,

CONSISTING OF

Forty SCRIPTURE DIRECTIONS, proper for all Chriſtians intending Heaven.

IT ought to be the great concern of all baptized perſons to renew their baptiſmal covenant betimes, and, by a private tranſaction with God, to take the baptiſmal engagements upon themſelves, and thereby become Chriſtians by their own perſonal conſent and ſurrender, as well as by their parents dedication; and afterwards go and ſeal this tranſaction publicly, by partaking of the Lord's ſupper. Concerning this, I have given directions in *The young communicant's catechiſm.* ——Only I would intreat all my readers, for Chriſt's ſake and their own ſouls ſake, to beware of going about this work in a ſuperficial and formal manner, and of reſting upon lip-labour, and the external part of duty.—O never be eaſy until you inwardly and heartily cloſe with Chriſt, according to the gracious goſpel-offer which God makes unto you. Take no reſt till you get your ſouls united to Chriſt by a true faith, and ſavingly renewed and changed from nature to grace, by the efficacious working of the holy Spirit in regeneration. And as you are to cloſe with Chriſt by faith in your firſt converſion; ſo you muſt ſtudy to live all your days a life of faith on the Son of God, always making uſe of him, and leaning on him for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. I ſhall ſay no more by way of preface, but proceed to branch forth the Chriſtian's work and exerciſe in this world, in the following Scripture-precepts and directions.

Direction I. *Let never the world come in God's room.* Beware of the love of the world; often think upon that awakening word, 1 John ii. 15. "Love not the "world, neither the things that are in the world; if "any man love the world, the love of the Father is not "in him." Oh, this is the ruining ſin of multitudes, their love to, and complacency in, the things of the world. Nay, the moſt part of men are damned for loving the world too much, and loving God too little. ——Remember the faſter grips ye take of the world, the looſer are your grips of Chriſt; and the more ye get of the world, ye have the greater account to make to him that gives it, and has made you ſteward of it; therefore uſe your money and goods for his ſervice and honour: You muſt anſwer for your riches, but your riches cannot anſwer for you.——Alſo, remember if ye ſet your hearts on the world, it will be all that you will get; to have a competent portion of things earthly is a mercy, but to have earthly things for our portion is a dreadful miſery. Wherefore, while your hand is in this world, let your heart be in heaven. Let the buſineſs of your ſoul be the buſineſs of your life.

Direct. II. *Keep up the ſame opinion now of the things of the world, that you will have when you come to die.* You ſee what a low price men ſet upon the riches, pomp and glory of the world when they are dying: Had you the ſame thoughts of theſe things now, I am ſure you would not venture the loſs of your ſouls, the loſs of God's favour, the loſs of a good conſcience, and the loſs of eternal glory, for a whole world; far leſs for a ſmall trifle of it, as many now do. Think much upon that text, Matth. xvi. 26.

Direct. III. *Be not ſtrangers to yourſelves, but often commune with your own hearts;* as directed Pſal. iv. 4. When others are cenſuring and backbiting their neighbours, be you ſearching and cenſuring yourſelves. Self-examination is a moſt neceſſary duty. Examine yourſelves after every ordinance, what good you have got by it, what entertainment you gave your Saviour: Aſk how were your hearts affected by ſuch a word, *&c.* Commune with your hearts about your title to heaven: Judge of your eternal ſtate by your ſpiritual ſtate, and judge of your ſpiritual ſtate by the delightful and cuſtomary actions of your lives. Judge of it by your hatred of ſin, and love to Chriſt, and by the conſcience you make of ſecret prayer, and reading God's word. In communing with your hearts, among other things, aſk yourſelves, What are likelieſt to be your death-bed thoughts and wiſhes? Will they not be ſuch as theſe? O that I had loved Chriſt more, and the world leſs! O that I had improven goſpel-opportunities better! O that I had accepted Chriſt's calls and offers more readily! O that I had ſpent more time in prayer and ſearching the ſcriptures! O that I had been more ſpiritual and fervent in every duty!—Aſk yourſelves, what are theſe ſins or practices which will be moſt frightful to look back on, when ye ſee yourſelves juſt within a ſtep of God's tribunal? Study always to keep up death-bed thoughts of things.——Commune with your hearts about theſe things *upon your bed,* and alſo *before you go to bed.* Let conſcience bring in the accounts of every day before you ly down; mourn over the ſins of every day, and apply the blood of Chriſt for waſhing them away. Thus keep ſhort reckonings with God and conſcience, that you may not have old ſcores to clear when you come to a death-bed. Likewiſe at theſe communings, let every man aſk himſelf, What is my preſent ſtate and condition? Would I be willing to ly down and die in the frame and diſpoſition I am in juſt now? And I know not but I may be as near death this moment, as if my friends were looking on me ſtruggling with the pangs of death on my bed.

Direct. IV. *Begin early in the ſervice of God, and give him the days of youth,* Eccleſ. xii. 1. Theſe who are young cannot begin their ſervice to God too ſoon; God deſires it, to ſhew God's delight in early piety. We ſee the Scripture commends young ones for it; it is recorded with honour, that the child Samuel miniſtered to the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 18. Joſiah is commended for his tender heart for God in his tender years, 2 Kings xxii. 19. Chriſt was well-pleaſed with the hoſannahs of the children that attended him, Matth. xxi. 15, 16.

When Solomon in his youth ſought God for wiſdom, it is ſaid, *The ſpeech pleaſed the Lord,* 1 Kings iii. 10. So Timothy is commended for his early piety, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And God ſays to Iſrael, *I remember the kindneſs of thy youth,* Jer. ii. 2. And he recommends to every one to begin ſoon, Eccleſ. xii. 1. The young diſciple was moſt beloved, and leaned on Chriſt's boſom.——Now is the proper time, O young people, for making your acquaintance with God, and for laying a good foundation for the time to come. Repentance is eaſieſt in younger years; ſin is then leſs rooted, ſatan's grips leſs faſtened, goſpel-offers not ſo ſlighted, the Spirit is not ſo much quenched, the conſcience not ſo hardened; the heart is then more eaſily melted and broke. God ſeeks the *male of the flock,* the beſt of your time, O then let him have it. If you forget God when young, it is juſt with God to forget and neglect you when old.

Direct. V. *Shun the company that ſhuns God, and keep the company that God keeps,* Pſal. cxix. 63. 115. Prov. xiii. 20. Look on the ſociety of the carnal or profane as infectious; but reckon ſerious praying perſons the excellent ones of the earth: Such will ſerve to quicken you when dead, and warm you when cold. Make the livelieſt of God's people your greateſt intimates; and ſee that their love and likeneſs to Chriſt be the great motive of your love to them, more than their love or likeneſs to you. It is not true Chriſtian love, but party love, to love only theſe who are of your ſentiments in all things. Yea, though they ſhould differ from you in ſome things, if you ſee God's image on them, and that they have fellowſhip with the Head, you ought to love them, and have fellowſhip with them: Keep up the communion of ſaints, for it is one of the articles of our creed. Chriſtian conference and ſocial prayer have been bleſſed of God to preſerve the life of religion in many places, therefore let theſe who fear the Lord ſpeak often one to another, Mal. iii. 16.

Direct. VI. *Put a high value upon precious time, and loſe none of it by ſloth,* Eph. v. 16. Eſteem time as theſe do who are at the point of death; and always remember that it is impoſſible to call time again. Look upon the loſs of time as a greater loſs than the loſs of your money, or any worldly thing; and therefore ſhun time waſting games, unprofitable diverſions, and idle talking.——Eſpecially value the moſt precious part of your time, ſuch as the morning of youth, the morning of every day, and particularly the precious time of the Lord's day. Look on the Lord's day as a tryſt-day with heaven; loſe not any part of it, but carefully improve it for God and the good of ſouls, both your own and others. It is want of thought, not want of work, that makes any ſay, they have time to ſpare.

Direct. VII. *Allow a little time every day to think upon eternity.* Conſider the import of theſe words, *everlaſting puniſhment, and life eternal,* Matth. xxv. 46. O eternity, eternity, that is never nearer an end, but always, as it were, but beginning! One ſerious thought of eternity is enough to ſtrike a careleſs ſoul to the heart. Why? he ſtands every hour at the door of eternity, and if he ſtep in while out of Chriſt, he is eternally undone; eternally in deſpair.—O! the ſwift river time is carrying every one of us into an ocean of eternity, an ocean that hath neither bank nor bottom, and what each of us muſt ſoon launch forth into. What an awful thought is this! every one of us is within a ſtep of being eternally bleſſed, or eternally curſed! eternally ſaved, or eternally damned! O if every one would believe and conſider this, and be wiſe, ſo as to pray as for eternity, repent as for eternity, hear as for eternity, live as for eternity, obey and do every thing as for eternity.

Direct. VIII. *Throughout your whole life be mindful of the chief buſineſs of life,* Phil. ii. 12. Now the buſineſs of life is to make it ſure that Chriſt is your life; it is to think much on the end of your life, and provide for it; it is to lay hold on eternal life, and keep ſtill ſight of it: So that 'when Chriſt who is your life ſhall 'appear, ye may alſo appear with him in glory,' Col. iii. 4. Let not religion be your diverſion, but your buſineſs; mind it as the one thing needful; give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure. Make ſure your calling, and thus you make ſure your election. If you would make ſure your calling, make it ſure that you are united to Chriſt by faith, and that Chriſt is the life of your ſouls. Do not reſt in convictions, nor in tears, prayers, or duties, nor in any thing ſhort of Chriſt. Preſs both for an intereſt in Chriſt, and for the aſſurance of it. Aſſurance is attainable, and actually attained by many; and it is moſt neceſſary for chearful obedience, for bearing the croſs, rejoicing in the Lord, giving thanks for redeeming love, and for performing many other duties of Chriſtianity.

Direct. IX. *Let the rational ſoul govern, and the body be ſubſervient to it,* 1 Cor. ix. 27. Alas, many on the contrary make their ſouls drudges to their bodies, and employ their noble faculties, wholly in deviſing how to pleaſe the fleſh. Ah, what fools are they who mind nothing but their bodies! Why? They are the greateſt enemies to their bodies, for by ſo doing they forfeit the eternal happineſs of their bodies, as well as of their ſouls. Whereas theſe who prefer their ſouls, and mind them chiefly, they conſult the happineſs of their bodies as well as of their ſouls; for the body is never ſo well as in heaven; when faſhioned like Chriſt's glorious body, then it is in perfect and eternal health.

Direct. X. *Study both to live and die in the exerciſe of repentance and godly mourning for ſin,* Matth. v. 4. Some may think repentance a melancholly word, but it is one of the ſweeteſt words in all the book of God: It is a goſpel duty, for the law or covenant of works admitted of no repentance; it is the effect of God's free love in and through Chriſt, to open the door of repentance to fallen ſinners; it coſt Chriſt his blood to obtain it for us, and it is his free gift to us, Acts v. 31. Surely it is good news to hear that our Sovereign bids poor condemned criminals, that were brought to the place of execution, repent, and throw themſelves down at his feet, and they ſhall get pardon. It was the ſum both of John's and Chriſt's preaching, *Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.* It was the ſaying of a godly miniſter, 'That if he were to die in the pulpit, 'he would wiſh to die preaching repentance; and if 'out of the pulpit, he would wiſh to die practiſing re'pentance.' Auguſtine ſaith, 'Repentance is the fitteſt 'diſpoſition both for dying Chriſtians and miniſters;' and it is written of himſelf, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for ſin. This is a duty never out of ſeaſon; therefore ſtudy daily to keep up a tender and mourning frame, maintain contrition of heart and abhorrence of ſin, and for that end take every day a turn upon mount Calvary. Many think it a ſad thing to be repenting on earth, but it is a far ſadder thing to be repenting in hell. Seek repentance from God for Chriſt's ſake; ſay with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. *Turn thou me and I ſhall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.*

Direct. XI. *While you mind the neceſſary ſtudy of holineſs or inherent righteouſneſs, let it never take the place of imputed righteouſneſs,* Rom. x. 3. Pſal. lxxi. 16. Inherent righteouſneſs indeed is to be loved, but imputed righteouſneſs only is to be truſted; for though inherent righteouſneſs or holineſs be a neceſſary qualification for heaven and ſalvation, and our evidence for it; yet it is imputed righteouſneſs only that is the foundation of it, and our title to it. Let Chriſt's name be dear to you, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs.*

Direct. XII. *Employ Chriſt as your Surety in all caſes, and in every ſtrait go to him for relief,* Pſal. cxix. 122. Iſa. xxxviii. 14. Study therefore to be well acquainted with your Surety, and live near him.—When the law demands payment of debt, and threatens you with priſon, look to Chriſt, and cry, "Lord be Surety "for me, Lord undertake for me."—When you are called to perform duties, bear affliction, reſiſt temptation, ſtruggle with corruptions, engage with enemies, *&c.* look ſtill to Chriſt to be your Surety, and to undertake for you; plead with him to make out that promiſe to you, Deut. xxxiii. 23. *As thy days, ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be.*

Direct. XIII. *As you expect to live with Chriſt in heaven, ſtudy to live to Chriſt on earth,* 2 Cor. v. 15. Philip. i. 21. If you would live to Chriſt here, then you muſt make Chriſt's honour and glory your ultimate end in all your deſigns and actions; and make your moſt valuable intereſts ſubſervient to his intereſt and glory. Study an univerſal conformity to Chriſt's holy laws and precepts, and make it your great buſineſs to approve yourſelves to Chriſt in all things: Chuſe the things that pleaſe him, and carefully avoid every thing that is diſpleaſing to him, Pſal. cxix. 30. Iſa. lvi. 4.

Direct. XIV. *Cleave faſt to Chriſt, and the way of holineſs, whatever it may coſt you,* Acts xi. 23. 2 Tim. iii. 12. Think not the worſe of Chriſt and his ways that they are perſecuted or reproached, and that few do own them. Chriſt foretold this, and ſaith, His way is a narrow way that few walk in. Join with the little flock to whom the kingdom is promiſed, which will abundantly compenſate all your ſufferings for Chriſt. Never follow a multitude to do evil, but cleave to Chriſt however few join you.

Direct. XV. *Seek the approbation of God above that of men,* 2 Cor. x. 18. What is the applauſe of worms to the ſmiles of the God of heaven? What would it avail us to have poor men like ourſelves to commend us, when the great God that made us doth comdemn us? No matter though men cenſure or condemn our actions, if God approve and commend them. "It is a very "ſmall thing to be judged of man's judgment, but he "that judgeth us is the Lord," 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Direct. XVI. *Be much employed in admiring God's redeeming love, and Chriſt's ſuretyſhip for us,* 1 John iii. 1, 16. This is the employment of the redeemed to all eternity, Rev. v. 9. And all who go to heaven muſt be acquaint with their work while here, Rev. i. 5. O what matter of eternal wonder and praiſe is there in God's giving his dear Son to be our Surety and ſacrifice, and in the Son's voluntary undertaking it!

Direct. XVII. *Delight much in thinking and ſpeaking of Chriſt, and particularly of his death and ſufferings for us,* Luke ix. 31. Rev. v. 9, 12. Oh, did he wade thro' a ſea of wrath, a ſea of blood, a ſea of ſorrows and ſufferings, to bring redemption to us? And will we ever forget him? The great God takes great pleaſure in the work of our redemption, and is well pleaſed with our Redeemer who undertook it. God repented that he made man, but never repented his redeeming man. Now, what God delights in, we ſhould delight in, eſpecially ſince we reap the benefit.—We ſee, from Luke ix. Rev. v. that the ſubject of Chriſt's death is matter of diſcourſe and praiſe to the glorified ſociety above. When Moſes and Elias came from heaven to mount Tabor to wait upon their tranſfigured Lord, they choſe Chriſt's death for the ſubject of their converſation: Why? Chriſt's death was the ſpring and cauſe of all their glory in heaven; neither Moſes nor Elias had ſhined there, had it not been for Chriſt's death. And ſhall not we, here below, delight in thinking, ſpeaking and ſinging of this noble ſubject, which is the ground of all happineſs we either have, or hope for?

Direct. XVIII. *Treat objections raiſed againſt your cloſing with Chriſt, as ſuggeſtions of the enemy, that is ſeeking the ruin of your ſouls.* Reject them, as Chriſt did Peter's counſel, Matth. xvi. 23. *Get thee behind me, ſatan.* As ſatan would have hindered Chriſt's dying for us; ſo he would hinder us from relying on Chriſt's death. Oh, (ſaith one) I am unworthy of any ſhare in Chriſt's death. *Anſw.* If you will have nothing but what you are worthy of, you muſt have nothing but hell. What was Abraham, Paul, Magdalene, the thief on the croſs, the idolatrous Corinthians worthy of, before the Lord called them! Whatever be your unworthineſs, are you willing to apply Chriſt's blood? Then ſee what Chriſt ſaith to you, Rev. xxii. 17. "Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."—O but, (ſaith another) my ſins are heinous. *Anſw.* Canſt thou be more guilty, than Chriſt is gracious?—Doth he not promiſe to waſh away ſins that are like ſcarlet and crimſon, Iſa. i. 18. and tells us, 1 John i. 7. "That his blood cleanſeth us from all ſin?" O bleſs him for that word *all*—— Do not then believe ſatan, who would tempt thee to think that God hath caſt thee off; but, in ſpite of all he can ſay, ſtill believe God's faithful word, that there is mercy enough in God, merit enough in Chriſt, power enough in the Spirit, and room enough in the goſpel-offers and promiſes to you. Believe that word, Lam. iii. 25. *The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the ſoul that ſeeketh him.* Say to thy ſoul, "Can this "word of God fail? Has God made thee willing to "wait and ſeek for him, and is he not willing to be "found of thee? O my ſoul, doſt thou not ſee an "infinite perfection in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, in Chriſt's "blood and merits!" We may ſee an end of all earthly perfection, but we can ſee no end of Chriſt's perfection, which is infinite.

Direct. XIX. *Study much theſe great goſpel-leſſons of denying yourſelves, and exalting God's free grace,* Mat. xvi. 24. 1 Cor. i. 31. The deſign of the goſpel is to caſt down ſelf, and all idols, that God alone may be exalted; it is to make ſelf nothing, and God all, in point of wiſdom, ſtrength, righteouſneſs and glory; it is to take man wholly off himſelf, and caſt him on Chriſt for the whole of his ſalvation. It is a good ſign of a ſaving change upon the heart, when a man is thus humbled, and caſt into the goſpel mould, when ſelf-loving is turned into ſelf-loathing, ſelf-admiring into ſelf-abhorring, ſelf-excuſing into ſelf-accuſing, and ſelf ſeeking into ſelf-denying.

Direct. XX. *Draw all your ſtrength for work and warfare from Chriſt, and preſent all your duties to God in Chriſt's name,* Iſa. xlv. 24. Col. iii. 17. Chriſt himſelf tells us, that *without him we can do nothing,* John xv. 5. that is, nothing aright, or nothing that is acceptable to God. All our duties, if acceptable, muſt be done in Chriſt's ſtrength, and covered with his righteouſneſs. The apoſtle owns that "of himſelf he could "not ſo much as think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5. "but he could do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthened him," Philip. iv. 13. And hence he exhorts us to *be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,* Eph. vi. 10. Let us think, before we go to duty, from whence our ſtrength for it muſt come, and ſtudy to fetch it in by faith, and believing ejaculations; and when we are aſſiſted, let us aſcribe the glory to Jeſus.——Be aſſured of this alſo, that your moſt coſtly ſacrifices are unſavoury, if they be not perfumed with the fragrant incenſe of Chriſt's merits and interceſſion; and that your faireſt *righteouſneſs is but as filthy rags* in God's ſight, if Chriſt's righteouſneſs do not cover it. Let it therefore be your conſtant language, *In the Lord Jeſus have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength,* Iſa. xlv. 24.

Direct. XXI. *In all the actions of your life, ſet the Lord ſtill before you,* Pſal. xvi. 8.—xxv. 15. Acknowledge him in all your undertakings, and by faith and prayer commit your way to him, look to him for direction and ſucceſs, and depend on him as the Father of your mercies, the ſum of your bliſs, the ſtrength of your life, the ſtaff of your bread, the breath of your noſtrils, and the length of your days. Set the Lord always before you as your almighty Creator, your loving Redeemer, your rightful Owner, your careful Preſerver, your all-ſufficient Portion, your holy Pattern, your obſerving Witneſs, and your awful Judge. Undertake and perform all your actions under a ſenſe of God's all-ſeeing eye, and of your being accountable to him for all you do.

Direct. XXII. *Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. x. 31. We eat and drink to God's glory, when we do it for the end that our bodies may be fitted to ſerve our ſouls in honouring and ſerving God; and when we receive theſe mercies with thankſulneſs from the hand of God, and depend upon God's bleſſing to make them nouriſhing to us; and when we remember we are but ſtewards of what we poſſeſs, and are accountable to God the Proprietor how we improve theſe earthly bleſſings to his honour and ſervice.——You muſt alſo apply the buſineſs of your callings to God's glory, and this you do, when you depend on God to bleſs you in it, and to proſper the work of your hands, and to arm you againſt all the ſins, ſnares and temptations, which your buſineſs may give occaſion to. You ought alſo to pay and receive viſits, and attend company with an eye to God's glory, by bleſſing God for giving you friends and earthly accommodations, and looking to God for wiſdom to behave yourſelves ſo, as ye may do no harm to theſe ye converſe with, nor get any harm from them: But, on the contrary, may be helped to do them good, and get benefit from them.——You are alſo to undertake journies for God's glory, to look to him for protection by the way, and for direction, through-bearing, and ſucceſs.

Direct. XXIII. *Spend as much time as poſſible in ſecret prayer and converſe with God,* 1 Theſſ. v. 17. And that ye may do this with delight, endeavour to keep your hearts always in a ſerious praying frame, with an abiding impreſſion of God upon your ſpirits. There is a great difference betwixt a ſerious fit, and a ſerious frame. Ahab, Saul, Felix, and others, had their ſerious fits, but religious perſons only keep their ſouls in a ſerious frame, and ſtudy to be *in the fear of the Lord all the day long,* as God enjoins, Prov. xxiii. 17. Prayer, that is acceptable to God, muſt be performed with faith, delight and livelineſs, and not with deadneſs and wearineſs, as if it were a taſk or burden. A life without prayer, or a prayer without life, are both hateful to the God of our life. He is the living God whom we worſhip, and hath no pleaſure in dead performances. But they who delight themſelves in duty, ſhall have the deſires of their hearts granted them, Pſal. xxxvii. 4. Surely they who ſpend their days in faith and prayer, ſhall end their days in peace and comfort.

Direct. XXIV. *Make conſcience of family religion, as well as of cloſet-duties,* Joſhua xxiv. 15. 2 Sam. vi. 20. Neglect not family-prayer nor praiſes, reading the word, catechiſing children and ſervants, ſanctifying the ſabbath, exhorting to duty, reproving and curbing ſin. Religion and reformation muſt begin in families, if we would wiſh it to be national and univerſal. God is the author and founder of families, and therefore ſhould have homage from families as ſuch, by the morning and evening ſacrifice of prayer and praiſe. Go to him to bleſs family-mercies, ſupply family-wants, ſanctify family-trials, and redreſs family-grievances.——Early train up children in the way they ſhould go, pray much for them, and for God's bleſſing on the means of their education.

Direct. XXV. *Begin and end every day with God,* Pſal. v. 3.——iv. 8. Let prayer be the key to open the heart to God in the morning, and lock it againſt all his enemies at night. Let no Chriſtian ſay, he cannot pray; for prayer is as neceſſary to him as breath, Lam. iii. 56. Let none ſay, they have not time for it; better take time from ſleep, than want time for prayer. Think it not enough to ſay your prayers, but mind you muſt pray your prayers, pray with ſincerity and fervour. Think with yourſelf, this morning may be my laſt morning, or this night my laſt night; for certainly that morning cometh of which you will never ſee the night, or that night of which you will never ſee the morning. Let the concluſion of every day put you in mind of the concluſion of all your days, by the long night of death, that will put an end to all your work, and bring you to count and reckon with your great Maſter about your work. O to ly down every night reconciled with him! O that we could ly down and leave our hearts with Chriſt, and compoſe our ſpirits ſo, as if we were not to awake till the heavens are no more.

Direct. XXVI. *Seeing none knoweth what a day may* *bring forth, ſpend every day as if it were to be your laſt,* Prov. xxvii. 1. Look on yourſelves as ſtanding every day at the door of eternity, and hundreds of diſeaſes and accidents ready to open the door to let you in. No doubt you have ſometimes apprehended yourſelves nearer death than you think yourſelves juſt now; yet it is certain that death was never ſo near you, nor judgment never ſo near you as they are at preſent. We, who ſtand every hour at the door of eternity, ſhould ſpend our precious hours with the greateſt frugality, ſeeing the work we have in hand is ſoul-work, and work on which eternity depends; and the time we have to work it in, is very ſhort, and cannot be recalled. This ſhort life being only a paſſage to eternity, it ſhould be ſpent as a continual preparation for eternity. Surely theſe who have immortal ſouls ſo near eternity, have other work to do than trifle away time in tippling, idle talking, gaming, and ſuch diverſions.

Direct. XXVII. *Sojourn in this world as travellers, keeping ſo looſe from the world, as to be able to pack up and be gone from it upon ſhort warning,* 1 Pet. i. 17. 1 Cor. vii. 19. 31. We have no continuing city nor certain abode here; therefore let us always be ready to ariſe and depart. And if we would be right travellers towards Zion above, we muſt have Chriſt in our hearts, heaven in our eye, and the world under our feet.—We muſt take God's Spirit for our guide, God's word for our rule, God's glory for our end, God's fear for our guard, God's people for our companions, God's praiſe for our recreation, and God's promiſes for our cordials. We muſt make religion our buſineſs, prayer our delight, holineſs our way, and heaven our home. ——O Zion's travellers diſtinguiſh yourſelves from the men that dwell upon the earth. Let Chriſt always be precious to you, the word ſweet, ſin bitter, the world a wilderneſs, and death welcome.——Let Chriſt's will be your will, Chriſt's diſhonour your affliction, Chriſt's cauſe your concern, Chriſt's ſucceſs your joy, Chriſt's day your delight, Chriſt's croſs your glory, Chriſt's ſufferings your meditation, Chriſt's wounds your refuge, Chriſt's blood your balm, Chriſt's righteouſneſs your cloathing, and Chriſt's preſence your heaven.——While travelling here, let your hearts burn with love to Chriſt, love to think of Chriſt, love to hear of Chriſt, love to read of Chriſt, love to ſpeak of Chriſt, love to ſpeak for Chriſt, love to ſpeak to Chriſt.

Direct. XXVIII. *Keep up a lively ſenſe of ſacramental vows and engagements, and walk anſwerably thereto,* Pſal. lvi. 12. 13. You are under a ſacramental oath to be true and faithful ſoldiers to the Captain of your ſalvation, ſee that you fight his battles againſt his and your enemies, the devil, the world, and the fleſh. Remember what your Captain has done and ſuffered for you, let his love, as well as your oath, conſtrain you to abide by his ſtandard. Never go over to his enemies camp, nor keep correſpondence with them.—Your glorious Captain gives you choice feaſts at his table to ſtrengthen and encourage you both for work and warfare; walk on in ſtrength of theſe ſpiritual meals and grow ſtronger in grace, and more lively in all ſpiritual duties, pray more fervently, hear more attentively, meditate more frequently, partake more believingly, keep ſabbaths more delightfully, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleaſing. Your ſpiritual meals are deſigned for your nouriſhment, ſtrength, and growth. Therefore grow in grace. O believers, if you would lay up a treaſure of glory for yourſelves hereafter, lay up a treaſure of grace in your hearts juſt now, increaſe faith, love, heart-purity and humility. Whoever is rich in grace now, will be rich in glory hereafter: For what is grace but glory begun, and what is glory but grace perfected? Who then would not love grace, ſeeing it is begun glory, and a certain pledge of complete glory?

Direct. XXIX. *Improve the talents God gives you for his ſervice and glory,* Luke xix. 13. Remember you were not made for yourſelves only, but for ſociety and the benefit of others; therefore employ your gifts, your ſubſtance, and whatever God has beſtowed, for the good of others; teach the ignorant, relieve the poor, ſtrengthen the weak, comfort theſe that are caſt down, tell them your experiences, commend Chriſt as a choice Maſter and a lovely Saviour, and invite them to come *taſte and ſee that he is good*; pity theſe who are ſtrangers to him, and pray for them. Be uſeful to others while you live, which will make your memory ſavoury when you die; many, alas, are ſo unprofitable in their lives, that when they come to die, neighbours ſcarce think their life worth a prayer, or their death worth a tear; but public ſpirited and uſeful perſons are much lamented. Let every one in their ſtations be active, and occupy their talents for God. Be aſſured, the more you do for God in this world, the more God will do for you in the world to come. If the ſaints were capable of grief in heaven, it would be for their doing ſo little for God on earth.

Direct. XXX. *Let all believers be thankful to God for his diſtinguiſhing favours and mercies to them,* Pſal. cxvi. 8 12. A life of praiſe doth highly become the proofs of God's love to you. Fall down humbly before God, and aſcribe all to his free undeſerved grace! For *who is it that maketh thee to differ from another? What haſt thou, but what thou haſt received in a way of free gift?* O wonder at his free love, that has diſtinguiſhed you from others! has done that for you that he has not done for thouſands, for myriads, for millions! nor for theſe who ſit in the ſame aſſembly, or dwell in the ſame houſe with you! O bleſs God who ſent his dear Son to ranſom you, and bring you out of priſon, when others are left in bondage! Who ſent his holy Spirit to open your eyes, when others are left blind; to open your ears, when others are left deaf; to open your hearts, when others are left ſhut; to open your mouths to praiſe free diſtinguiſhing love, when others are left dumb. Employ your tongues then to commend his love, and ſing his praiſe.

Direct. XXXI. *Since God diſtinguiſhes you from others, in his mercies to you, ſee that you diſtinguiſh yourſelves from others, in your ſervice to him,* Matth. v. 47. Are you Chriſtians indeed? You are under ſtronger obligations to live and act for Chriſt, than others: Why? You have both your new name and your new nature from Chriſt, which others have not; you are more nearly related to Chriſt than others; you are engaged to act for him, by more frequent and ſolemn vows than others; you have greater mercies beſtowed on you than others; others have but common-mercies, but you have covenant-mercies, mercies that accompany ſalvation.—You have ſpiritual life within you, and divine influences which others want; not only the world, but Chriſt himſelf expects more from you than others; all which are powerful engagements on you, to do more for God than others.——You know more of the things of God than others; you talk more of them, you profeſs more, you promiſe and engage to do more than others; yea, God has done unſpeakably more for you than others, and he may juſtly expect more from you than others; and put that queſtion to you, *What do ye for me, more than others?* Matth. v. 47.

Queſt. Wherein ſhould believers diſtinguiſh themſelves, and do more for God than others? *Anſw.* You ſhould be witneſſes for God, and teſtify againſt what is diſhonouring to him, by abſtaining from all known ſin, and from theſe ſins which are common and faſhionable and little thought of by others.——By reproving ſin in others, and endeavouring to pluck them out of the fire.——By keeping up family-religion even in the midſt of buſineſs, and baniſhing all known vice from your dwellings, even minc'd oaths, raſh uſing of God's name, idle walking or talking on the Lord's day, backbitings, evil wiſhes, revengeful actions, unneceſſary drinking or tippling, lottery-games or paſtimes of bad report, &c.—Be zealous for ſabbath-holineſs. Be meek and lowly in your carriage; commend Chriſt to others; ſpeak for the honour of religion before theſe who diſregard it; ſhew ſpecial regard to thoſe who are ſtamped with God's image, tho' mean or deſpiſed; be ready to forgive wrongs, and render good for evil; deal honeſtly and juſtly with all men; be ſober and temperate in eating, drinking, ſleep, apparel, *&c.* Guard againſt pride, paſſion, haſty and unguarded words, put great reſpect upon God's word and ordinances; be concerned for the enlarging of Chriſt's kingdom; never venture upon any known ſin for the ſake of worldly gain; make conſcience of relative and ſtational duties, as to be good huſbands, good wives, good parents, good children, good maſters, good ſervants, good neighbours, *&c.* In ſuch things as theſe, you are to do more for God than others.

Direct. XXXII. *Be not content with a fair profeſſion of religion, or with a form of godlineſs, and a name to live among men,* Tit. i. 16. 2 Tim. iii. 5. But endeavour to know and feel the power of godlineſs in your hearts, and to have your practice in all reſpects correſponding to your profeſſion. If your practice be not anſwerable to what you profeſs, you ſin againſt great light, you diſcredit religion, and tempt men to think it all hypocriſy. If a man live and die a mere profeſſor, it had been better for him, he had lived and died a mere heathen.

Direct. XXXIII. *Keep always a watch on the door of your lips,* Pſal. cxli. 3. ſeeing the tongue hath a world of iniquity in it, James iii. 6. Keep it as with a bridle, Pſal. xxxix. 1. and beg the Lord's help to keep it, and that he himſelf may ſet a watch upon your mouths, as the pſalmiſt prays, Pſalm cxli. as knowing that no watchfulneſs or reſolution of our own is ſufficient for the governing of our tongues, without God's ſpecial grace, without this the moſt wake-rife watchman watcheth in vain. Earneſtly ſeek for Chriſt's ſake God's ſpecial grace to govern this unruly member, that it may not be ſuffered to utter words which may tend to the diſhonour of God, or to the hurt of men. Study to govern your tongues by uſing God's name with reverence, ſpeaking always what is truth and what is ſeaſonable, uſeful and edifying, guarding carefully againſt lying, evil-ſpeaking, paſſionate, proud, and ſelf-exalting words, and againſt all raſh cenſures: You have need of great caution in ſpeaking, and to take heed either how ye commend yourſelves, or condemn others.

Direct. XXXIV. *Walk cheerfully and contentedly in every condition,* Acts viii. 39. Phil. iv. 11. Such a walk as this doth bring great credit to religion and the ſervice of our Redeemer. What tho' a believer be fed with the bread and water of affliction the moſt of his life, he hath other bread and another cup to ſweeten both; the forgiveneſs of ſin is a reviving cordial in every caſe. Have no will of your own diſtinct from God's will, but be reſigned to God's diſpoſing will in every thing, and let God's will and choice be always yours. If you cannot bring your condition to your mind, then you muſt labour to bring your mind to your condition, believing that the will of your heavenly Father is always beſt for you. Still remember that he hath engaged himſelf to be with you in all ſtates and conditions, and to order all things for your advantage: Be ſure then he cannot deny himſelf, all his words are oaths for their certainty, and all his promiſes are the ſure mercies of David. Be content in every caſe; for ſince Chriſt is yours, *all things are yours.* Well then, let your covenanted God chuſe out your lot for you; for you may truſt that it ſhall be done with more wiſdom, and with more affection, than you can chuſe for yourſelf.

Direct. XXXV. If ye would manifeſt yourſelves to be truly religious both before God and man, *keep always the firſt and ſecond table of the law joined together, and make conſcience of both,* Matth. xxii. 37, *&c.* Love both God and your neighbour, be juſt and upright in all your dealings with men, acting always under a ſenſe of the all-ſeeing eye of your heavenly Father, who enjoins you to do the ſame to others, as ye would have them doing to you. Let a moral man try his religion by the duties of the firſt table of the law, and a profeſſor his by the duties of the ſecond table of the law. See that ye love God above all things, and prefer his worſhip and ſervice to every thing. Love God for himſelf, and love men principally for what is God-like in them.

Direct. XXXVI. *Carefully guard againſt apoſtaſy and backſliding from God and his ways,* Heb. x. 38, 39. Be always jealous of your deceitful and treacherous hearts, knowing that they are bent to backſliding. A holy fear of departing from God, is a good means to keep us from departing from God. Therefore endeavour to preſerve always a watchful and tender frame of heart, and be afraid of falling away, according to that word, Heb. iv. 1. If ye would preſerve yourſelves from total apoſtaſy, riſe ſpeedily after every fall by ſound repentance, and recourſe to the blood of Chriſt. Lie not one day in any ſin, but riſe out of the puddle immediately, and get to the cleanſing Fountain, and renew your covenant with God, and beg more ſtrength, and faith to derive continual ſupplies from Chriſt your Head. Be often calling your ſouls to account, and aſking your hearts, What is become of the good frames, the melting ſenſe of ſin, the hungering deſires, the delightful taſtes, the heavenly longings, the warm affections to Chriſt, that they ſometimes had. When ye attain to theſe, or any of them, ſee that ye commit them to Chriſt's keeping, ſaying, with the pſalmiſt, *Lord, be ſurety for thy ſervant for good. Laſtly,* Conſider the dreadful caſe of an apoſtate as deſcribed by our Lord and his apoſtle, Matth xii. 43, 44. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. That man's caſe becomes far more miſerable than it was at firſt. What a ſad caſe is it for a ſoul to fall back into hell, after it had climbed near the gates of heaven? None fall ſo deeply into hell as theſe, who fall backward into it.

Direct. XXXVII. *Be watchful againſt all ſin, and particularly your darling or conſtitutional ſin, the ſin that moſt eaſily beſets you,* Pſal. xviii. 23. Heb. xii. 1. Our adverſary the devil well knows this ſin, and on what ſide we may be attacked with the greateſt ſucceſs; and to be ſure he will bring his ſtrongeſt temptations thither, and employ his moſt ſubtile wiles and devices that way to enſnare us. It were happy for us if we were ſtill watching againſt him, and could ſay with the apoſtle, *We are not ignorant of his devices.* You are likewiſe to watch againſt all ſin whatſomever, ſins of omiſſion as well as of commiſſion. Groſs out-breakings make conſcience to ſtart at their appearance, but it is not ſo alarmed with the neglect of duties. But if conſcience be awakened, ſins of omiſſion will lie heavy as well as ſins of commiſſion. Some eminent Chriſtians who have lived the moſt circumſpect lives, when they have come to die and reflect on their bypaſt time, have been put to cry, *Lord, in ſpecial forgive my ſins of omiſſion.* Venture not to live in any frame, courſe or practice that you would not adventure to die in, ſeeing you know not but your next ſtep may be into the grave. Guard againſt all theſe ſins and evils now in the time of your health, that may put thorns in your pillow when ſickneſs and the harbingers of death approach, ſuch as "miſpending of precious time, neglect of prayer, or reading of the Scriptures, formality and luke-warmneſs in religion, earthly-mindedneſs, unthankfulneſs for mercies, and miſcarrying after them. Neglect of improving Chriſt, quenching the Spirit, neglect of convictions, breaking of vows, falling from your firſt love, returning to old ſins you had mourned over, ſinning againſt light, and after afflictions," *&c.*

Direct. XXXVIII. *Be heartily concerned for the coming and enlarging of Chriſt's kingdom in the world,* Matth. vi. 10. Pſal. lxxii. 19. Bewail it that his flock is ſo little, his ſubjects ſo few, when ſatan's are ſo numerous. Bewail the unſucceſsfulneſs of the goſpel, the reſtraint of the Spirit, the diviſions among Chriſtians, and the many hinderances of the progreſs of Chriſtianity. Lament the wrongs and diſhonours done to God by others; cry and wreſtle for the outpouring of the Spirit, both at home and abroad; pray for the revival of God's work in theſe lands, amidſt theſe declining years; and in enquiring after public news have a view to this, be concerned for the intereſt and welfare of Chriſt's kingdom through the world, for the accompliſhment of God's promiſes concerning the deſtruction of Antichriſt, Babylon's downfall, the inbringing of the Jews, and the ſubduing of the nations. And when you hear of any appearance of God's ariſing to countenance his word, and conquer ſinners to himſelf, whether at home or abroad, rejoice at the news, reckon them good tidings of great joy, and bleſs the Lord for them with all your hearts. It is moſt pleaſing and acceptable to God, to ſee his people heartily concerned for the proſperity of Jeruſalem.

Direct. XXXIX. *Be buſy laying up a ſtock for a ſick-bed or death-bed, when all the comforts of life will be taſteleſs to you,* 1 Tim. vi. 19. Lay up a ſtock of faith and patience, a ſtock of evidences or divine love, and of your intereſt in Chriſt; a ſtock of divine promiſes and experiences of God's loving-kindneſs, which may be ſupporting to you in the day of ſharp trials. When mariners go to ſea, they victual the ſhip, and provide for a ſtorm. And ought not we to forſee the ſtorms of affliction, of ſickneſs and death, and provide and lay up for them? It will be ſad, if, when the Bridegroom is come, we have our oil then to buy, when the market is over. Now is the time for providing oil; now is the market of grace; now is the acceptable time; now is the day of ſalvation.

Direct. XL. *Be looking and longing for the eternal ſupper of the Lamb,* Philip i. 23. Rev. xix. 9. Hungry ſouls who have taſted the love of Jeſus, long for the Lamb's ſupper below, that they may enjoy communion with him here, and this makes them cry, When ſhall the opportunity return? When ſhall I come and appear before God? When ſhall I again ſee his power and glory in the ſanctuary? When ſhall I again taſte his love and goodneſs in the ſacrament? And yet theſe are but ſmall foretaſtes of the Lamb's ſupper above. What is our drinking of the fruit of the vine here, to our drinking it new with Chriſt in his Father's kingdom?—Therefore look out, and long for the time when the day ſhall break, and the ſhadows flee away, and the marriage of the Lamb ſhall be triumphantly ſolemnized and completed with the church his eſpouſed bride, whom he will then lead into the King's palace, where their tranſient glances ſhall be changed into immediate viſion, and their ſhort taſtes into everlaſting feaſting and fulneſs. O *bleſſed are they for ever who are called to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb: Theſe are the true ſayings of God.* I believe, Lord help my unbelief. *Amen.*

Unto the foreſaid *Directory*, I ſhall ſubjoin a variety of *Scripture ſongs*, for the uſe and benefit of *Zions travellers*; and theſe I deſign as a ſupplement to my *goſpel-hymns*, publiſhed ſome months ago; and which addition I underſtand will be agreeable to the deſires of not a few.

As to the duty and advantage of praiſing God by ſinging ſuch *hymns and ſpiritual ſongs*, according to the Apoſtle's repeated inſtructions, I ſhall add nothing to what I have ſaid thereanent, in my preface to the foreſaid *Goſpel-hymns*, but refer my reader thereto.

SCRIPTURE-SONGS
FOR
ZION's TRAVELLERS,
IN
THEIR WAY TO HEAVEN.

SONG I.

The PRIMITIVE COMMUNICANTS.

1 CHRIST's friends at firſt oft broke his bread,
Inſpir'd with love divine,
They drank the Spirit of their Head,
As well's the ſacred wine.
2 They ſhew'd his death with heart and ſoul,
And feaſted on his love;
His blood and wounds they did extol,
And ſung like ſaints above.
3 Lord grant us part of that love-flame,
Which in their hearts abode;
That made them witneſs for the Lamb,
And ſuffer for their God.
4 Warm ſhow'rs from heav'n ſend down on us,
That frozen hearts may yield,
And turn us from a wilderneſs
Into a fruitful field.
5 Thy people, Lord, lament for thee,
And ſore thy abſence mourn;
They long thy face again to ſee;
To goſpel-feaſts return.
6 Come to thy table, with us ſit,
Our grudges all remove,
Unite our hearts, and make us fit
To keep the feaſt of love.
7 Cauſe ſtreams of living waters flow
In channels of thy grace;
And let the north and ſouth wind blow,
Out ſtraitnings to releaſe.
8 Thy Spirit's temple make our hearts,
And with us ſtill abide;
Make his convictions pierce like darts,
Let us no more backſlide.
9 Thy hidings are a bitter cup,
Like flowers we fade and mourn,
We droop, we grieve, and can't look up,
Till thou our Sun return.
10 Lord charge not on us former guilt,
Let all thine anger ceaſe;
Look to the blood on Calv'ry ſpilt,
And bid us go in peace.

SONG II.

The HOLY SPIRIT *fits us for a* HOLY TABLE.

1 O Father of our dying Lord,
Hear thy Son's ſpeaking blood,
Fulfil to us his gracious word;
Send down the heavenly flood.
2 Thy Spirit grant, for when he pray'd,
To glorify thy Son;
His promis'd influences ſhed,
That wonders may be done.
3 Glad we'll his death commemorate,
Ay till he come again;
Bleſs both the word and ſacrament,
Take thy great power and reign.
4 Chriſt's table now ſtands furniſhed
With bleſſings of beſt kinds;
Pardon and *Peace* bought with his blood,
Choice food for troubled minds.
5 Give faith to feed and view his love,
His ſtripes and wounds each one,
How he was jeer'd that's fear'd above,
Blaſphem'd and ſpit upon.
6 In's hands and feet we ſee the nails
Piercing his tender veins;
For us each wound the bluſhing ground,
With blood infinite ſtains.
7 Black clouds for us o'erwhelm'd his ſoul,
Sore was his agonie;
When he cry'd *My God, my God, why*
Haſt thou forſaken me?
8 Thy matchleſs love we'll praiſe aloud,
Our ſouls it doth conſtrain,
To love and live to thee our God,
Who for our ſins waſt ſlain.
9 May I no more to prayer be dragg'd,
To ſerve thee let me run.
May I in duties keep my courſe,
Like to the riſing ſun.
10 Unto the Lamb that once was ſlain,
Be praiſe and glory giv'n,
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hoſts of heav'n.

SONG III.

CHRIST's SACRIFICE, *the only Foundation of our* TRUST.

SO great's the guilt of fallen man,
None could his pardon buy;
Great muſt it be, when God himſelf
Muſt for his creature die!
2 Slain beaſts for ſin could not atone,
Such off'rings all were vain,
Had not the Father giv'n his Son
For ſinners to be ſlain.
3 Had the whole church been offer'd up,
As one burnt ſacrifice;

Our ſmalleſt debt this could not pay,
Creatures could not ſuffice.
4 But mercy, in this hopleſs caſe,
A ſacrifice prepares;
A Lamb of all-ſufficient worth,
Which diſſipates our fears.
5 This Sacrifice more precious
Than all created things,
To us eternal happineſs
In ſoul and body brings.
6 This is the ſure Foundation-ſtone,
Which God in Zion lays,
For men to build their hopes upon,
He's bleſt that on it ſtays.
7 Tho' earth's foundations be remov'd,
This Rock ſtill ſtandeth faſt,
By ſtorms unmov'd, on this alone
My anchor I will caſt.
8 The Lamb, our Rock, for us did die,
For us roſe from the dead,
For us he did aſcend on high,
For us his blood doth plead.
9 O bleeding Lamb, ſhew me my name
Writ in thy book of life;
Then I will long to be with thee,
Out of this land of ſtrife.
10 To worſhip with the heav'nly hoſt,
JEHOVAH one in three,
The Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt,
To all eternitie.

SONG IV.

The DISTRESSED SOUL *looking to the* LAMB *for Pity.*

1 COME ſee my caſe, O bleeding Lamb,
In mercy take me as I am,
Quite naked, and put cloathing on
A ſtranger, and make me a ſon.
2 Burden'd with guilt, and give me eaſe,
A bond-man, and my ſoul releaſe,
A vile, not fit to join thy ſaints;
A creature all made up of wants.
3 By nature I have nothing good,
All muſt be bought me by thy blood;
But ſince thy wounds are open'd wide,
I'll hope in Jeſus crucify'd.
4 Thy blood mens ſoreſt plagues doth cure,
Thy wounds their backward hearts allure,
Thy blood ſtrange changes works in men,
For wondrous works the Lamb was ſlain!
5 Thy Bible doth thy pity ſhew,
I reſt on thy words ſweet and true,
Souls come to me, and no more doubt,
For him that comes I'll not caſt out.
6 Renew my ſoul, plant grace this day,
Give me a heart to mourn and pray,
O kill in me this rebel ſin,
Reſtore thy image me within.
7 For theſe things I to thee do come;
Caſt me not out, ſince there is room,
Make good thy words, and hear my cries,
For on thy truth my ſoul relies.
8 O deareſt Lamb, didſt thou not bleed,
To purchaſe every thing we need?
Doth not thy blood ſtill run to heal
Diſtreſſed ſouls, their plagues who feel?
9 We feel our ſores, Lord, heal us ſoon,
And in us let thy will be done.
Praiſe Father, Son and holy Ghoſt,
One God in Chriſt, that ſaves the loſt.

SONG V.

A call to wonder at CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS, *from* LOVE *to us.*

1 BEhold Chriſt in a bloody ſweat,
Which all his garments ſtains!
See four wide wounds in's hands and feet,
When big nails pierc'd his veins!
2 Behold his ſoul oppreſſed ſore,
And in the greateſt pain!
How heavy was the wrath he bore,
Of which he did complain?
3 Yet, Lord, whilſt our ſins fill'd to thee
This bitter wrathful cup;
A bleſſed feaſt thou mad'ſt, that we
Might at thy table ſup!
4 O friends of Chriſt draw near his throne,
To him thank off'rings bring,
For *in his temple ev'ry one*
Should of his glory ſing.
5 Let men him love; and ſin abhor,
Which caus'd him grief and pain,
Let all the angels ſtill adore
The Lamb for ſinners ſlain!
6 With warm affection, let us bleſs
Our great high Prieſt above,
And ev'ry day admire and praiſe
The wonders of his love!
7 From love he left his throne on high,
Lodg'd in a virgin's womb!
Love brought him to the croſs to die,
Love laid him in a tomb!
8 Love rais'd him up, and took him back,
To heaven to make us room!
From thence return he'll for our ſake,
In love to bring us home!
9 From love he wearies not to plead,
And ſhew his bleeding hands,
Since he hath juſtice ſatisfy'd,
Our freedom he demands.
10 Thy blood hath done all things for me,
I'll glory in thy croſs;
My beſt things I'll give up for thee,
I count them all but loſs.

SONG VI.

From 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.——7. *Being a* PROPHECY
CHRIST, *and king* DAVID'S SWAN SONG *in the view*
of death.

1 A Ruler juſt o'er men ſhall riſe
In God's fear rule ſhall he,
As morning light ſprings from the ſkies,
So welcome ſhall he be.
2 Like riſing ſun he ſcatters all
The black ſhades of the night,
No clouds this morning darken ſhall,
refreſhing is its light.

3 He ſhall the frozen earth ſolace,
Like ſun ſhine after rain,
Whoſe warming beams revive the graſs,
And make all ſpring again.
4 I'm griev'd, all prove not good and juſt,
Who from my loins do ſpring;
But glad to ſee he ſprings from me,
That's Zion's bleſſed King.
5 A King that ſaves us from our foes,
In hearts rules by his might;
With his juſt laws let all men cloſe,
Obey him, it's his right.
6 Although my houſe be not with God
Such as it ought to be;
Yet he hath thro' Meſſia's blood,
A cov'nant made with me.
7 A covenant which life doth bring,
and evermore endure,
Well ordered in ev'ry thing,
With promiſes moſt ſure:
8 My heart's deſire is towards it,
'Tis my ſalvation,
Altho' he doth not come as yet
For to redreſs what's wrong.
9 But Belial's ſons who are his foes,
God ſmite them will in ire,
He'll them conſume who him oppoſe,
Like thorns burnt up with fire.

SONG VII.

The Saints TRIUMPH *over death.* From Job xix. 25. *&c.* 1 Cor. xv. 43, 53. Philip. iii. 21. Ezek. xvi. 14.

1 THough on me heavy trials come,
And death's ſtroke on me fall,
My faith and hope ſhall not ſuccumb,
But triumph o'er them all.
2 I know that my Redeemer lives,
Who pleads my cauſe with God,
To ſave each ſoul who him believes,
He comes to ſhed his blood,
3 Then for a while, he'll go away,
But will return again,
And on the earth, at latter day,
Stand with a glorious train.
4 Though in the grave my body fall,
And worms do it conſume.
Even ſkin and fleſh, blood, bones and all,
Yet death I'll overcome.
5 My Lord will raiſe me from the duſt,
He'll clothe my bones with fleſh,
I'll ſee my God whom now I truſt,
Which will my ſoul refreſh.
6 That fleſh which all conſumed was,
The very ſame ſhall riſe;
Yea, I will ſee Chriſt's lovely face,
With thoſe my very eyes.
7 Though for a time my duſt be loath'd,
Moſt beautiful I'll be,
My mortal body ſhall be cloth'd
With immortality.
8 Like Chriſt's own body will I ſhine,
With raiment white as light.
His comelineſs is ever mine:
This ev'ry ſaint makes bright.

SONG VIII.

CHRIST's ETERNAL LOVE *to Mankind:* From Prov. viii. 27. *to the end.*

1 WHen the creation was begun
By God's almighty hand,
Then, I, his own eternal Son,
Concurr'd in the command.
2 I joined to his counſels wiſe,
loſt mankind to redeem;
I was my Father's chief delight,
And I rejoic'd in him.
3 And in the earth when it for man
Was fram'd with divine art;
With pleaſure I foreſaw the church,
Its habitable part.
4 Before the light was made to ſhine,
My heart was ſet on man;
My thoughts, from all eternity,
On his ſalvation ran.
5 The foreſight of mens miſery,
Made me engage for them
To be their help; for my delights
Were with the ſons of men.
6 O children, then to me give ear;
They're bleſt my ways that chuſe:
Be wiſe and my inſtruction hear,
They're fools who it refuſe.
7 Bleſt is the man that hears my word,
And doth attend my gates;
Who watchfully looks for the Lord,
And at his door-poſts waits.
8 Bleſt is the man that findeth me,
With me he'll live above,
And have, through all eternity,
God's favour and his love.
9 But his own ſoul he doth injure,
Who ſlights my offers free;
And theſe who hate my precepts pure,
Court death eternallie.

SONG IX.

From Solomon's Song, chap. i. *Being a Dialogue betwixt* CHRIST *and his* SPOUSE.

SPOUSE.

1 LIke ſweeteſt ointment ſmells thy name,
Dear JESUS, unto me.
Hence virgin ſouls ſend out a flame
Of holy love to thee.
2 O draw me, and we'll run to thee;
Bleſt King, thou didſt me bring
Into thy chamber, hence will we
In thee rejoice and ſing.
3 More than the taſte of richeſt wine,
Thy love think on we will;
Moſt coſtly was thy love-deſign;
The upright love thee ſtill.
4 Tell me, good Shepherd, whom I love,
Where thy dear ſheep are fed;
Shew me the paths wherein they move,
And where they find a ſhade
5 Leave me not in a wand'ring courſe,
Like thoſe who loſe their way:

With flocks of thy competitors
Let me not go aſtray.

CHRIST.

6 Art thou bewild'red, my fair one,
And canſt not find thy reſt ?
Come follow my direction,
I'll ſhew thee what is beſt.
7 In footſteps of my flock go on,
The ſhepherds tents keep nigh ;
Thy kids and young ones bring along,
So thou ſhalt meet with me.

SPOUSE.

8 While at his table ſits the King,
My ſpikenard ſmelleth ſweet :
My graces languiſhing do ſpring,
With this Sun's quick'ning heat.
9 Dear Jeſus, as a bunch of myrrh,
Shall in thy boſom ly.
To lodge with me he'll not demur,
While nightly ſhades do ſtay.

SONG X.

From Song. ii. 1. to 9.

CHRIST.

1 I Am the Roſe of Sharon's field,
The Lily of the vale ;
I ſweetneſs and delight do yield,
When earthly glories fail.
2 As lilies ſhine amidſt the thorns,
So doth my love the bride ;
The daughters want what her adorns,
Though they live her beſide.

SPOUSE.

3 As th' apple tree doth far excel
The foreſt's barren growth ;
So my Love outſhines mortals all,
Though in their blooming youth.
4 Under his ſhade, with great delight,
I ſat down for to reſt :
I found ſolace, his heav'nly fruit
Was ſweet unto my taſte.
5 He brought me to his houſe of wine
My faintings to allay ;
The banner of his love divine
O'er me he did diſplay.
6 Bring ſtrength'ning flagons unto me,
With cordials from above ;
Fetch me ſweet apples from the tree,
For I am ſick of love.
7 When thus my fainting ſoul did cry
For grace me to uphold,
My tender hearted Lord drew nigh,
His arms me did infold.
8 All things without me and within,
I charge to ſtand in aw,
To wake or grieve my Love with ſin,
Leſt he from me withdraw.
9 Tho' griev'd, he doth return to me,
For lo ! his voice I hear,
O'er hills of guilt him leap I ſee,
My mourning ſoul to chear.
10 He haſtes to me like hart or roe,
Our dark walls he makes light ;
Thro' latteſſes himſelf doth ſhow,
With comelineſs moſt bright.

SONG XI.

From Song ii. 10 to the end.

CHRIST.

1 RIſe up, ſaid Chriſt, my faireſt one,
Come thou away to me ;
The winter-ſtorms of wrath are gone,
I bore them all for thee.
2 From barren ground the flow'rs do ſpring,
Men hear the turtle's voice ;
The drooping birds begin to ſing,
And ſad hearts to rejoice.
3 Young figs and grapes do now appear,
And yield a ſweet perfume ;
The heav'nly vine faint hearts doth cheer,
Riſe up, my love, and come.
4 My dove that lodgeſt in the rock,
In clefts of my deep wounds ;
And doſt to me in ſecret look
When in thee grief abounds :
5 Lift up thy face and voice to me ;
Theſe pleaſe mine eye and ear ;
Thy graces all I love to ſee,
Thy voice of pray'r to hear.
6 Take us the foxes, whoſe deſigns
Are vineyards to annoy,
The little foxes, which the vines
And tender grapes deſtroy

SPOUSE.

7 My Love is mine, my ſoul's delight,
And I am alſo his ;
Among his ſaints, theſe lilies white,
His place of feeding is :
8 There he abides till break of day,
When ſhadows all ſhall flee ;
Till then, come like a hart or roe,
O'er Bether hills to me.

SONG XII.

From Song iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11.

SPOUSE.

1 ALL's dark when Jeſus hides his face,
Night ſhades fall me upon ;
Deſertion is a weary caſe,
When Chriſt my Love is gone.
2 On my bed I my loſs did mind,
I ſought him thus alone ;
My drowſy ſearch him did not find,
Vain was my ſlothful moan.
3 I'll riſe and round the city go,
Thro' ſtreets, broad-ways, and lanes ;
This way I ſought my Love, but lo !
Succeſsleſs were my pains.
4 The city watchmen found me out.
Their doctrine touch'd my caſe :
Ah, where's he ! Can you ſolve my doubt ?
None of them brought me eaſe.
5 When means and duties prov'd ſo weak,
Beyond them all I paſt :
When I ſome ſteps from them did make,
I found my Love at laſt.
6 I him embrac'd, and held him faſt,
Till once I got him brought
Into my mother's dwellings waſte,

To ſtrengthen what he wrought.
7 Since he's come in, I do you charge,
Who Salem's daughters are,
By roes and hinds which run at large,
Our joys you do not mar.
8 Let ſin or earth no motion make,
For to diſturb his reſt;
Let none preſume my love to wake,
Until it pleaſe him beſt.
9 O, Zion's daughters, all go forth,
Behold king Solomon,
Ev'n Chriſt our King, of higher worth,
Wearing his glorious crown;
10 Wherewith his mother crown'd his head,
On his eſpouſal day,
That day on which his heart was glad,
Him love and praiſe for ay.

SONG XIII.

From Song iv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16.

Chriſt.

1 Thou art all fair when in thy dreſs,
My love, thou'rt fair to me;
When clothed with my righteouſneſs,
No ſpot is ſeen in thee.
2 My ſpouſe, come off from Lebanon,
And mounts of vanitie:
Let all the world's deceits alone,
And come alongſt with me.
3 By faith look from Amana's top,
Shenir and Hermon fair;
From dens of prey, behold with hope
The land beyond compare.
4 My ſpouſe, thou doſt my love enhance,
And draw'ſt my heart to thee,
With thy neck chains, and with a glance
of thy believing eye.
5 Thy love to me more grateful is,
Than wine of any kind;
Thy graces more than fragrant ſpice
Acceptance with me find.
6 Thy lips drop ſweet; and from thy tongue
Do milk and honey flow:
Thy garments ſmell as Lebanon,
Which on thee I beſtow.
7 A garden fair, incloſ'd by grace,
My ſpouſe thou art to me;
I chus'd thee from the wilderneſs,
With fine ſprings furniſh'd thee.

Spouſe.

8 If I thy garden be, O Lord,
Cauſe heaven's wind awake,
Sweet quick'ning gales to me afford,
My graces lively make.
9 Sharp northern blaſts ſend to convince,
And cauſe the ſouth wind blow;
With breathings warm aſſiſt my mints,
and make my ſpices flow.
10 Then let my Love his preſence ſweet
Unto his garden grant,
That he may eat his pleaſant fruit,
Which he himſelf did plant.

SONG XIV.

From Song v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Chriſt.

1 My ſpouſe, to anſwer thee I'm come
Into my garden fair;
My myrrh and ſpice of ſweet perfume,
With pleaſure I do ſhare.
2 On honey, wine, and milk I feaſt;
All friends, come eat with me,
And drink my wine of heav'nly taſte,
Yea, drink abundantlie.

Spouſe.

3 While Chriſt invites, my ſoul prevails;
Yet ſomething wakes in me,
To hearken to Chriſt's knocks and calls,
His voice ſpeaks preſſinglie.

Chriſt.

4 Open to me, my Father's child;
Open to me, my love;
Open to me, my undefil'd;
Open to me my dove.
5 From love I'm ſtanding at thy door,
Thy heart caſt open ſoon;
A midnight ſhow'r of wrath I bore,
To ſave thee when undone.

Spouſe.

6 I am undreſs'd, and reſt is ſweet,
From bed I cannot riſe;
How ſhall I now defile my feet?
Thus ſloth did me entice.
7 By the key-hole, my well-belov'd
His hand of pow'r put in;
So that my bowels all were mov'd,
For being ungrate to him.
8 When I rouz'd up, obey'd his knock,
My hands dropt pleaſantly
With oil of myrrh, left on the lock;
Which made the bolt to fly.
9 To my belov'd I open'd faſt,
Who to my grief was gone:
I fainted, when his ſpeeches paſt
I mournfully thought on.
10 I ſought him then with carefulneſs;
But found he could not be:
I call'd on him in this diſtreſs,
He did not anſwer me.
11 The watchmen who do go their rounds,
And keep the city wall,
Abus'd me, and did give me wounds,
And tore away my vail.

SONG XV.

A Dialogue *betwixt the Spouſe and Daughters of Jeruſalem, from Song* v. 8. *to the end.*

Spouſe.

1 O Salem's race, if you him find,
I charge you tell my caſe;
I'm ſick of love, ſore pain'd in mind,
He only can me eaſe.

Daughters.

2 O faireſt one, we fain would know
The object of thy love;

What charms he hath, that thou doſt ſo
Prize him all men above.

SPOUSE.

3 My love is white and ruddy too,
The chief of thouſands ten;
His innocence and ſuff'rings do
Him beautify to men.
4 His bleſſed head doth far excel
The gold that is moſt fine,
His locks are black and curled well,
They raven like do ſhine.
5 His eyes are like the eyes of doves,
When they in flocks are met
Near water-ſtreams, which they do love,
Milk-waſh'd and fitly ſet.
6 His cheeks are like the ſweeteſt flow'rs,
And beds where ſpices grow;
His lips like lilies are, from whence
Sweet-ſmelling myrrh doth flow.
7 As rings of gold with beryl ſet,
So do his hands appear;
His belly bright as ivory
O'erlaid with ſapphires clear.
8 His legs like marble pillars are,
Which on gold ſockets went,
Like Lebanon his face is fair,
As cedars excellent.
9 His mouth that makes ſweet promiſes,
To ev'ry ſaint is ſweet:
Yea, he all over lovely is,
View him from head to feet.
10 O daughters of Jeruſalem,
This is my Love and Friend,
For whom none can deviſe a name,
Or proper emblems find.

SONG XVI.

The DIALOGUE *continued. Song* vi.

DAUGHTERS.

1 O faireſt bride, we fain would know,
Where's thy beloved gone?
Tell us that we with thee may go,
To ſeek this matchleſs one.

SPOUSE.

2 My love is gone to heav'n above,
Yet doth he condeſcend
To come into his garden here,
And beds of ſpice attend.
3 In meetings of his ſaints he's found,
Theſe gardens of delight,
He's there to bring them rich ſupplies,
And gather lilies white.
4 To my beloved I belong,
And my belov'd to me;
To feed among the lilly flow'rs,
great pleaſure taketh he.

CHRIST.

5 O who is ſhe that looketh forth,
Like to the morning light?
When it darts out to chaſe away
The darkneſs of the night.
6 Fair as the moon, clear as the ſun,
With dazzling beams array'd;
Yet like an army terrible,
With banners all diſplay'd §.
7 She comes up from the wilderneſs,
She walks and always leans
On her beloved; for her heart
From all things elſe ſhe weans.

§ *Chap.* vi. 10.

SONG XVII.

CHRIST's *ſufferings for us. From* Iſa. liii.

1 WHO hath believ'd the faithful word,
Which we to men declare?
Who feels the arm of God the Lord
Diſplayed and made bare?
2 Meſſiah, like a weak plant grows,
A root from ground that's dry,
No outward beauty he aſſumes,
To draw the carnal eye.
3 Rejected and deſpiſ'd is he,
Thro' ſinners unbelief;
A man of ſorrows all his days,
And well acquaint with grief.
4 We hid our faces when he came,
To take our wrathful lot,
Deſpis'd he was and put to ſhame,
And we eſteem'd him not.
5 Of griefs and ſorrows all his time,
For us he bore the load;
But ah, we judg'd that for his crime,
He ſmitten was of God.
6 But he for our tranſgreſſions
Was wounded and abus'd,
His ſoul for our iniquities
Moſt grievouſly was bruis'd.
7 On him was laid our chaſtiſement,
By which our peace he ſeal'd;
Sharp bloody ſtripes he underwent,
Whereby our wounds are heal'd.
8 All we like ſheep from God have ſtray'd,
And did our own ways chuſe;
And theſe our ſins God on him laid,
Which love would not refuſe.
9 Oppreſs'd and wrong'd our Surety ſtood,
Accuſed of untruth;
To ſlaughter went he as a Lamb,
And open'd not his mouth.
10 Before the ſhearers, like a ſheep,
He dumb and ſilent lyes;
He meekly goes thro' waters deep,
Without repining cries.
11 His ſoul in trav'ling anguiſh lies,
His pains were multiply'd;
But when the bleſſed fruit he ſees
He was well ſatisfy'd.

SONG XVIII.

A THANKSGIVING *for* REDEEMING LOVE: From Rom. v. and Heb. xiii.

1 WHen we were deſtitute of ſtrength,
Ourſelves to help and ſave;
For the ungodly Chriſt at length,
His life a ranſom gave.
2 Scarce any for a righteous man
Will dare his life to ſtake;
And for a good man it were much

Such an exchange to make.
3 But God his matchleſs love commends,
When his moſt glorious Son
Dy'd for us while unrighteous,
Vile ſinners and undone.
4 Since by his blood Chriſt us from ſin
Doth juſtify and free,
Then ſurely from the wrath to come,
We ever ſafe ſhall be.
5 If Chriſt for enemies to God
Did die to end the ſtrife;
Much more when reconciled thus,
He'll ſave us by his life.
6 Yea more than ſo, we joy in God,
Thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord;
The great atonement we receive,
And ſo obey his word.
7 Now he that's Lord of quick and dead,
The God of love and peace,
That from the grave brought Chriſt our Head,
And him to life did raiſe;
8 Who, as the Shepherd great and good,
His life for us did grant,
And did eſtabliſh with his blood,
Th' eternal covenant;
9 May he in us his work fulfill,
Till he us perfect make,
Still ſtrengthning us to do his will
For our Redeemer's ſake;
10 And work in us what his word ſays,
Is pleaſing him before;
Through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be praiſe,
And glory evermore.

SONG XIX.

MATCHLESS LOVE *in the* GIFT *of* CHRIST: *From* John iii. 14. to 17.

1 O Wondrous divine love to men!
When wrath 'gainſt us did ſwell,
God took our nature, bore our guilt,
To ſave our ſouls from hell.
2 As Moſes in the wilderneſs,
Did lift high on a pole
A brazen ſerpent, for ſtung men
To view and be made whole;
3 So Jeſus Chriſt the Antitype,
Was lifted up on high
Upon the croſs, that wounded ſouls
Might look and healed be.
4 And there, he ſays, who'er believes
In him unfeignedly,
Shall never periſh in their ſins,
But live eternally.
5 God lov'd the world ſo, as to give
His Son to dwell in clay,
And die, that all who in him truſt,
Might live with God for ay.
6 Good news! that Chriſt there twice declares,
All who in him believe
Are ſafe from hell, and ever ſhall,
With God in heaven live;
7 And that his Son God did not ſend
A loſt world to condemn;
But by his blood he did intend
To ſave condemned men.
8 Believers all with Chriſt live ſhall,
And ne'er condemned be;
The broken law he ſatisfy'd,
Them for to juſtify.
9 But vengeance juſt for ever lies
On all the rebel race,
Who God's eternal Son diſpiſe,
And ſcorn his offer'd grace.
10 Obey Chriſt's call who ſaves the loſt,
Serve God that's One in Three;
To Father, Son and holy Ghoſt,
Give praiſe eternally.

SONG XX.

GOD's LOVE *in* CHRIST *unalterable*: *From* Rom. viii. 31. *to the end.*

1 GOD's love in Chriſt tranſcends our thoughts,
In ſaving men from woe;
If God's for us, and ſtands our friend,
Who then can be our foe?
2 Since God for us ſpar'd not his Son,
But gave him up to die;
His leſſer gifts he'll not refuſe,
Nor ought that's good deny.
3 Who ſhall God's elect ones arraign,
Whom God hath juſtify'd?
Or who ſhall dare thoſe to condemn,
For whom this Surety dy'd?
4 Chriſt dy'd for us; yea, in his love,
He roſe up for our ſake,
And doth at God's right hand for us
Still interceſſion make.
5 Who from Chriſt's love ſhall us divide?
Shall trouble or diſtreſs?
Shall perſecution or the ſword,
Famine or nakedneſs?
6 Nay, o'er all theſe we triumph ſhall,
With the celeſtial pow'rs;
Thro' Jeſus Chriſt's victorious love,
We're more than conquerors.
6 I am perſuaded, death, nor life,
Nor principalities;
Nor finite pow'rs, nor preſent things,
Nor yet futurities:
8 No height, no depth, no creature ſhall
Diſſolve the twiſted cord
Of mutual love 'twixt God and us,
In Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.
9 Unchangeable is love divine,
Time makes it not decay;
For theſe whom once the Lord doth love,
He them doth love for ay.
10 From love, great mercies us thou giv'ſt,
But one we'll ſing of ſtill;
Eternal thanks to God for Chriſt,
His Gift unſpeakable.

SONG XXI.

THANKSGIVING *for* GOD's *free love in and through* CHRIST, *from* Eph. i. 3. *&c.* Eph. iii. 18. *&c.*

1 BLeſt be Chriſt's God, and Father dear,
For all our heavenly fare;

In Chriſt he hath enriched us,
With ſp'ritual bleſſings rare.
2 In love he choſe us in his Son,
Before the world he made,
To make us blameleſs holy men,
Like Chriſt our holy Head.
3 Predeſtinate us of his grace,
By Jeſus Chriſt did he,
To be adopted children all,
In his own family;
4 That all the praiſe might ſtill redound
To glorious grace alone;
The Lord hath us accepted made,
In his beloved Son:
5 In whom, thro' his moſt precious blood,
We have redemption free,
Even full remiſſion of our ſins,
That rich grace all might ſee.
6 In wiſdom God makes grace to us
Flow out abundantly,
That grace may be our laſting ſong,
To all eternity.
7 May we be graſping with the ſaints,
Chriſt's love to comprehend,
Whoſe breadth and length, and depth and height
Do boundleſly extend;
8 And preſs to know that wondrous love
Which knowledge all exceeds,
That from his fulneſs we may have
Supply to all our needs.
9 Now unto God who can do more,
Than we can aſk or think,
According to his mighty power,
That took us from hell's brink.
10 All glory in the church by Chriſt,
To him be rend'red then,
Thro' ages all for evermore;
Let all men ſay *Amen*.

SONG XXII.

Our HOPE *is in* CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, *and in being with him: From* Phil. iii. 7. &c. 2 Cor. v. 1. &c.

1 THeſe things I heretofore thought gain,
And of them made my boaſt,
For Chriſt that doth me juſtify,
I gave them up for loſt.
2 Yea, doubtleſs, 'tis my fixt reſolve,
To count all things but loſs,
That I the excellence may know,
Of Jeſus and his croſs.
3 All worldly things for him I've loſt,
I them as dung eſteem,
That I may Chriſt my treaſure win,
And ſafe be found in him.
4 My righteouſneſs as rags I quit,
I plead what Chriſt hath done;
This righteouſneſs which God ordains,
By faith I take alone.
5 May I know Jeſus in that power,
Which rais'd him from the grave,
That with him in his ſufferings,
I fellowſhip may have;
6 And being conform'd to his death,
By dying unto ſin;
A reſurrection bleſt from death,
I may obtain thro' him.
7 Yea, now we know if this clay houſe
Diſſolv'd were of the field,
An heavenly houſe we have on high,
Which God himſelf doth build.
8 With ſtrong deſires we therefore groan,
That to us it were giv'n,
To know that bleſs, and be new cloth'd
With our pure houſe in heav'n.
9 We walk by faith and not by ſight,
And hence we often ſay,
Content we would the body leave,
And dwell with Chriſt for ay.
10 Faith's views of Chriſt prompt us to ſeek,
And make it ſtill our care,
That whether here or with our Lord,
Of his love we may ſhare.

SONG XXIII.

A THANKSGIVING *for the* FRUITS *of* CHRIST'S RESURRECTION: *From* 1 Pet. i. 3, 4 &c.

1 FOR ever bleſſed be the God,
And Father of our Lord,
Whoſe mercy doth to us abound,
According to his word:
2 Who hath begotten us again
Unto a lively hope,
By Chriſt his riſing from the dead,
Of faith the bleſſed prop.
3 For by it we are well ſecur'd
Of an inheritance,
That's not corrupted nor defil'd,
Nor fades by any chance;
4 Which is for us in heav'n reſerv'd,
And we are kept for it,
By the almighty power of God,
Thro' faith, till we be fit
5 For that ſalvation glorious,
To be reveal'd at laſt,
Of which we wait to be poſſeſt,
When time and days are paſt.
6 In this bleſt hope we do rejoice,
Tho' for a time we need,
Here to be kept in heavineſs,
Thro' trials multiplied.
7 Our faith more precious than gold,
By fire is tried here,
That unto praiſe it may be found,
When Jeſus doth appear.
8 This Jeſus, though unſeen, we love,
In him believing ſtill;
Which yields us joy unſpeakable,
That is of glory full.
9 When Jeſus comes, we ſhall receive
The bleſt end of our faith;
Ev'n the ſalvation of our ſouls,
Procur'd us by his death.

SONG XXIV.

The SON *of* GOD *manifeſted*: From 1 John iii. 1, 2, &c.

1 BEhold how matchleſs is that love!
The Father hath beſtow'd

On men, that we ſhould be adopt,
And call'd the ſons of God!
2 His image he makes us to bear,
As ſons of heav'nly birth;
This dignity exalts us far
Above the kings on earth.
3 Tho' now the world us doth not know,
As Chriſt it never knew;
Yet God doth own us as his ſons,
We're chang'd and born anew.
4 And what we ſhall hereafter be,
It doth not yet appear;
But this we know, when Chriſt ſhall come,
We ſhall his likeneſs bear:
5 For we ſhall ſee him as he is,
And like him ſhine full bright:
We then come near our glorious Sun,
From whom we have our light.
6 As Chriſt is holy, ſo muſt we,
All who hope for that hour;
Themſelves will alſo purifie,
As he the Lord is pure.
7 Let's here, as ſtrangers, follow peace,
And walk with one accord;
And always ſtudy holineſs,
As we would ſee the Lord.
8 No eye hath ſeen, no ear hath heard,
No heart can things above
Conceive, which Jeſus hath prepar'd
For them who do him love.

SONG XXV.

The glorious TRINITY *adored, and* CHRIST's LOVE *extolled:* From Rev. i. 4, 5, *&c.* Rev. iv. 8, *&c.*

1 MAY we have grace and peace from God,
The glorious One in Three,
Who us created and redeem'd,
And us doth ſanctifie:
2 Ev'n from the Father who ſtill was,
Who is, and ſtill ſhall be,
And from the ſev'nfold working Sp'rit,
Before his throne on high;
3 From Jeſus Chriſt the witneſs true,
And firſt-born from the dead,
Who of all earthly kings and powers
Is Prince and ruling Head;
4 To this great Lord, that ſo lov'd men,
Such lothſome men as we,
As waſh us in his precious blood,
Our ſouls from ſin to free.
5 To him, who made us kings and prieſts,
To God his Father high;
Be glory and dominion,
Through all eternity.
6 Behold he comes with flying clouds,
Him every eye ſhall ſee,
And unbelievers who him pierc'd,
Shall wail moſt bitterlie.
7 But let believers lift their heads
With joy, to ſee and hear,
For then complete redemption
To them is very near.
8 The hoſts above their homage pay,
And crowns caſt to the ground,
They never ceaſe by night nor day,
Theſe praiſes to reſound;
9 "O holy, holy, holy Lord,
Almighty God alone,
"Who ever was, and alſo is,
And ever is to come!
10 All glory, pow'r, and honour ſtill,
Thou'rt worthy to receive;
All things were made to pleaſe thy will,
And by thy pleaſure live.
11 Moſt worthy Lamb, art thou, they ſing,
To be adored thus;
Let with thy praiſe heav'n's manſions ring,
For thou waſt ſlain for us.

SONG XXVI.

The LAMB *that was ſlain eternally exalted:* From Rev. v.

1 THE heavenly hoſts and elders join,
To bow before the Lamb,
With golden harps and ſweeteſt tunes,
They trumpet forth his fame.
2 They cry, "O Father, who ſhall look
"Into thy ſecret will?
"Worthy the Lamb to take the book,
"And open ev'ry ſeal.
3 "Thou'rt fit God's myſt'ries to reveal,
"For thou waſt ſlain for us,
"And thy blood purchas'd us to God,
"Which thou ſhed'ſt on the croſs.
4 "From ev'ry nation, kindred, tongue,
"Thy precious blood us bought;
"Well thou deſerv'ſt our praiſing ſongs,
"Who us ſalvation brought.
5 "Unto the Lamb that once was ſlain,
"Be endleſs praiſes giv'n,
"By all that dwell upon the earth,
"And all the hoſts of heav'n.
6 "Thou haſt us ranſom'd with thy blood,
"And ſet us pris'ners free;
"Thou mak'ſt us kings and prieſts to God
And we ſhall reign with thee."
7 Let's join while here, our chearful ſongs,
With hoſts around the throne,
Ten thouſand thouſands are their tongues,
Yet all agres in one.
8 "Worthy the Lamb that dy'd, *they cry*,
"To be exalted thus,
"Worthy the Lamb, *let us reply*,
"For he was ſlain for us.
9 "The Lamb is worthy to receive
"Strength, wiſdom, riches, might,
"Eternal honours we aſcribe
"To him, for 'tis his right.
10 "Let heav'n and earth unite in one
"To praiſe the glorious name,
"Of him that ſits upon the throne,
"And to adore the Lamb.

SONG XXVII.

A View of the SAINTS *and* MARTYRS *in Heaven:* From Rev. vii.

1 LET's view by faith the ſaints above,
Redeem'd from ſin by Jeſu's love,

Their various tribes, their ſweet employ,
In raptures of eternal joy.
2 The patriarchs, with Jacob's race,
Rais'd up to heav'n by God's free grace,
With ſongs they praiſe their father's God,
Who led them home the heav'nly road.
3 Next, ſee a num'rous multitude,
Redeem'd from hell by Jeſu's blood,
From ev'ry nation, kindred, tongue,
Who ſing an everlaſting ſong.
4 In white robes cloth'd they all do ſtand,
With palms of triumph in their hand:
" Salvation to God on the throne,
" *They cry*, and to the Lamb his Son."
5 Next theſe, come angels, and fall down,
Humbly adoring Three in One;
" *They cry*, Amen, give glory, pow'r,
" And thanks to God for evermore.
6 But whence come theſe in white who ſhine
All cloth'd with righteouſneſs divine?
Theſe come from ſuff'rings great to God,
Their robes they waſh'd in the Lamb's blood.
7 The martyrs trials now are o'er,
They ſee God's face for evermore;
The Lamb makes ſure their heav'nly bleſs;
They've ſaid, He's ours, and we are his.
8 No more the heat ſhall them torment
Of ſcorching ſun they've no complaint;
The Lamb, who ſhines amidſt the throne,
Shall be their everlaſting Sun.
9 To Father, Son and holy Ghoſt,
One God, who ſaved us when loſt,
Be everlaſting glory giv'n,
By all on earth, and all in heaven.

SONG XXVIII.

CHRIST's *Victory and* BABYLON's *Downfall*: From Rev. xvii. and Rev. xv. *&c.*

1 BEhold, an angel doth deſcend
With power and glory great,
To earth he comes for a good end,
Bleſt tidings to relate?
2 " Great Babylon that did enthral
" The kingdoms of the earth,
" The time is come for her to fall,
" Which calls for holy mirth.
3 " Let heav'ns be glad, with all the ſaints,
" Let prophets all rejoice;
" God doth avenge your long complaints;
" With praiſe lift up your voice.
4 " A milſtone's caſt by Gabriel,
" And in the ſea is drown'd;
" Thus terribly ſhall Babel fall,
" And never more be found."
5 Upon the ſea of glaſs they ſtand,
The beaſt who overcome,
With harps of God into their hand,
To celebrate her doom.
6 Theſe conquerors do meet in throngs,
And to Jehovah's name,
They pleaſantly unite the ſongs
Of Moſes and the Lamb.
7 By Moſes hand, the enemie
Did ſink deep in the flood;
So drown'd our ſins are in the ſea
Of Jeſu's precious blood.
8 The conquerors with fluent tongues,
Chriſt's honour will proclaim,
In ſweeter notes than Moſes' ſongs,
They'll tune thoſe of the Lamb.
9 All nations ſhall to thee bow down,
And worſhip rev'rently,
When once thy judgments are made known,
Againſt thine enemy.
10 The hoſts of God with one conſent,
Shall hallelujahs ſing;
When the Lord God omnipotent,
Takes his great pow'r to reign.
11 At length will end the devil's reign,
Over the ſons of men;
Let heav'n and earth rejoice and ſing,
With all that dwell in them.

SONG XXIX.

The GOOD NEWS *of the* RANSOM *of* CHRIST's BLOOD.

1 GReat pity God ſhews,
To Gentiles and Jews;
He ſent them his goſpel, to bring them good news.
Good news to the loſt,
With racking fears toſs'd,
That found is a Ranſom in which they may boaſt.
2 A Ranſom of blood,
That runs like a flood,
Their ſins off to carry, who God's law withſtood.
News! that Chriſt was ſo kind,
When hell's pow'rs combin'd,
To rout them, he freely his dear life reſign'd.
3 Blood ſtream'd from his ſide,
T' atone for our pride;
Sin was the tormentor that him crucify'd.
When we have him view'd,
With his blood imbru'd,
May we by this proſpect get all ſin ſubdu'd!
4 What ſight do we ſee?
Chriſt ſtretch'd on the tree,
For rebels as we are moſt willing to die!
Pains dreadful he felt,
O let our hearts melt
For ſin that did pierce him, when he bore our guilt.
5 Since for ſins of men,
God's dear Lamb was ſlain,
Hard muſt the man's heart be, that yet feels no pain
When the ſun did faint,
And hardeſt rocks rent,
Shall we be ſo ſtubborn, as never relent!
6 Our glorious Head,
Our victim was made,
To heal us when wounded, his blood all he ſhed.
In our place he ſtood,
And pour'd out his blood,
Yea, gives us free acceſs to that healing flood.
7 Chriſt's feaſt we'll attend,
And his love commend,
We'll think on his ſuff'rings, till our hearts do rend
His wounds I'll not view,
Like a harden'd Jew,
But when ſet before me, my grief I'll renew.

SONG XXX.

The news of CHRIST's PIERC'D FEET: *From* Iſa. lii. 7.

1 HOW beautiful upon the mount!
Were Chriſt's feet pierc'd on our account,
Where he was crucify'd!
His feet tho' nailed to the tree,
Swift tidings bring to you and me,
God's wrath is pacify'd.
2 Tidings that Chriſt has purchas'd peace,
With treaſures full of needful grace,
To ſupply all our wants.
Good news! that he hath purchas'd room,
For ev'ry needy ſoul to come,
To ſit and feaſt with ſaints.
3 Were men at God's bar ſtrictly try'd,
None living could be juſtify'd,
All would be guilty found.
From juſtice throne we ſinners fly,
To Chriſt our bleeding Prieſt on high,
Where mercy doth abound.
4 In Chriſt's the proper *mercy ſeat,*
Where we with God may humbly treat,
In him God's ſatisfy'd.
His blood hath juſtice reconcil'd,
Its flaming ſword hath quit the field,
Juſtice is on our ſide.
5 Now God his friendlyneſs to prove,
Invites us to a feaſt of love,
A rich and coſtly feaſt:
To partake of the rareſt food.
Pardon and *peace* thro' his Son's blood,
Which angels ne'er did taſte.
6 Lord, *ſin* the murderer here ſtands,
That pierc'd thy heart, thy feet and hands;
For which I mourn and grieve.
Lord, give a ſtrong courageous faith,
To doom each darling luſt to death,
Sin ſhall no longer live.
7 This foe my Saviour betray'd,
It bound and hawl'd him to be try'd,
And rais'd the furious cry,
To crucify the Lord our Head:
But, good news! he roſe from the dead,
And pleads for us on high.

SONG XXXI.

The LAMB's BATTLE *and* VICTORY.

1 THE Lamb fought for me,
My foes vanquiſh'd he;
The lion he conquer'd, when nail'd to the tree.
The Lamb when he fought,
Great victory brought;
Our freedom from bondage to *Satan* he wrought,
2 The Lamb for us dy'd,
He was crucify'd;
Yet, when at the loweſt, hell's pow'rs he defy'd.
He lay in the grave,
Our loſt ſouls to ſave;
Yet roſe as our Champion, moſt valiant and brave.
3 He fought and he fell,
Yet overcame hell;
He conquer'd and triumph'd, for ſuch as rebel.
He roſe for our ſake;
And did the earth ſhake,
The devils and keepers to tremble did make.
4 The rocks they did rend;
Him angels attend,
He taught his diſciples, till he did aſcend.
He went up in might,
With chariots of light;
A cloud him received, out of his friends ſight.
5 Above he did land,
Sits on God's right hand,
Our high Prieſt and Sov'reign, all things to command.
There he pleads on high,
Loud doth his blood cry,
For pardon to ſinners, who to him do fly.
6 The Lamb's Judge of all,
The dead he will call,
All muſt ſtand before him, be they great or ſmall,
His mercy is great,
His blood paid our debt,
He will then abſolve us, when judgment is ſet.
7 Of Chriſt that did die,
But now reigns on high,
Our ſongs with ſweet muſic, we'll ſpread thro' the ſky.
With both hearts and tongues,
We'll ſing the Lamb's ſongs,
Let ev'ry ſoul join us that to him belongs.

SONG XXXII.

CHRIST's SUFFERINGS *and his* LOVE *to* BELIEVING SOULS.

1 WHen Jeſus pour'd out blood and tears,
A ſinking load of wrath he bears,
God's Juſtice to appeaſe.
A bloody robe for us he wore,
His ſoul in pain did travel ſore,
And all to bring us eaſe.
2 The plowers his dear back did plow,
Their ſcourges here long furrows drew,
In which his blood did run.
They him expos'd to all diſgrace,
They ſpat upon his bleſſed face,
His love this did not ſhun.
3 He bore our curſe and puniſhment,
Shed blood till every drop was ſpent,
To ranſom us from wrath.
Who can his love enough commend?
That ſaves all criminals condemn'd,
Who look to him by faith?
4 From ſin and wrath thou doſt relieve,
The chief of ſinners, who believe,
Thy wounds do them incloſe:
Their ſouls in theſe thy people hide,
And there they conſtantly abide,
Safe from their deadly foes.
5 A ſkreen from wrath, I know of none,
But Jeſu's righteouſneſs alone;
Which covers all our ſin.
Strict trial this can well endure.
For it is infinitely pure,
No flaw is found therein.
6 Thou, when on earth the ſick didſt heal,
And to the hungry bread didſt deal,
Our ſouls when ſtarving feed:

More precious they are than clay;
Lord Jeſus, pity ſouls this day,
And ſatisfy our need.
7 Believers are by thee belov'd;
A kingdom, ne'er to be remov'd,
Shall unto them be giv'n.
Rich crowns on them thou wilt beſtow,
No matter what they want below,
They'll be made up in heav'n.

SONG XXXIII.

CHRIST's GREAT SUFFERINGS *bring* GREAT BENEFIT *to us.*

1 THE Lamb ſilent ſtood,
While men ſhed his blood!
Himſelf he gave freely, to be our ſouls food.
Crown'd he was with thorn,
Us'd with ſpite and ſcorn,
Yet patiently bore it, to ſave the forlorn,
2 Expoſed he ſtands,
With nail'd feet and hands,
Deep pierced, long bleeding, to pay law's demands,
No man's tongue can tell,
What grief him befell,
In ſaving loſt ſinners from ſinking to hell.
3 He was doom'd to die,
On mount Calvary,
Sore preſs'd he did utter his laſt bitter cry.
Our guilt which he bore,
Squeez'd blood from each pore,
Great was his ſoul's torture, that made him to roar.
4 His wounds bring us peace,
His pains give us eaſe
From ſin's pow'r and bondage they do us releaſe.
Chriſt ſtraying ſouls ſought,
Their pardon he bought,
From ſatan's vile ſlav'ry their freedom he wrought.
5 Lord, thy love's divine,
It doth kindle mine,
O let it cauſe in me all graces to ſhine.
Dead ſouls to revive,
When they life derive,
From thy wounds the fountain, that makes men alive.
6 I'm ſinful and vile,
My heart's full of guile,
It will be free mercy, if on me thou ſmile.
Lord, do not deſpiſe,
My ſoul's feeble cries,
Receive a loſt ſinner, that to thy blood flies.
7 This blood ſaves from hell,
And fears doth diſpel,
The thunders of Sinai, the Lamb's blood doth quell
I plead thy free grace,
One ſmile of thy face,
Or word to be ſpoken, would fill me with peace.

A LECTURE on 1 Cor. xi. 17. to the end, concerning the inſtitution of the LORD's SUPPER.

Verſe 17. *Now in this that I declare unto you, I praiſe you not, that you come together, not for the better, but for the worſe.*
18. *For firſt of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be diviſions among you; and I partly believe it.*
19. *For there muſt be alſo hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you.*

IN this paſſage the apoſtle takes occaſion to reprove the great diſorders and abuſes crept in among them in adminiſtrating and partaking of the Lord's ſupper; which (as the ancients tell us) was commonly adminiſtrate with a love feaſt annexed to it, which gave occaſion to the ſcandalous diſorders here reprehended.

Verſe 17. We have the manner of his introducing the charge, *Now in this that I declare unto you, I praiſe you not,* &c. Which ſhews his willingneſs to commend them ſo far as he could. But ſuch ſcandalous diſorders as they are guilty of in ſo ſacred an inſtitution, he could not paſs without a ſharp reproof. Why? They inverted the very end and deſign of the ordinance, which was intended to make them better, or to promote their ſpiritual intereſts, but it really made them worſe. Wherefore he ſays, they *come together not for the better but for the worſe.*

Obſerve. 1. That Chriſt's ordinances if they do not make us better, the are apt to make us worſe.—If they do us no good, they may do us harm; if they do not melt and mend, they will harden; and that corruptions will be confirmed in us, if the proper means do not work a cure of them. 2. It concerns us all to enquire into the ſucceſs of ordinances and ſolemn meetings. O it is ſad, if our meetings tend to the increaſe of our ſin, inſtead of the increaſe of our grace. Let us earneſtly deprecate this.

Verſe 18. *For firſt of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear there be diviſions among you,* &c. They fell into diviſions, ſects, parties, and factions, in their celebrating of this ordinance; they fell a quarreling one with another about meats and drinks in the love feaſts, or about the order of their down-ſitting, or the time when they ſhould begin, or did not ſtay till they all came up. The whole church did not join together, but they eat it ſeparately; there was alſo uncharitableneſs, alienations of affections, diſcord and contentions among them, which very much marred their edification and ſucceſs of the goſpel.

Queſt. Seeing ſchiſms are mentioned here, what is meant thereby? Who are guilty of ſchiſm, and who are ſchiſmaticks? *Anſw.* In ſcripture the word is variouſly taken: 1. It is taken for a difference in opinions and ſentiments about ſome points, when there is no heat of contention, or breach of communion. Such a diviſion or ſchiſm was among the Phariſees, about Chriſt's curing the blind man, John x. 16. it is ſaid, 'there was a diviſion among them,' originally *ſchiſma.* And ſuch ſchiſms may be among orthodox divines about leſſer points, and yet managed without giving offence. 2. The general ſenſe of the word is, a dividing and breaking off from the communion of the church in public ordinances, without cauſe, like theſe, Heb. x. 25. *Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is.* And in this ſenſe the ancients take ſchiſm as diſtinguiſhed from hereſy. Auguſtine ſaith, *Schiſmaticos facit non diverſa fides, ſed communionis diſrupta ſocietas.* 3. In this place, and commonly in other places of ſcripture, as 1 Cor. i. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 4. 1 Cor. xii. 25. the word *ſchiſma* is taken for uncharitable, contentious and diviſive practices among the profeſſors of the goſpel, without breaking off from the communion of the church; when people are chargeable with uncharitable contentions and diſcords, and alienation of affections from their brethren; for here they came together, and yet were ſchiſmaticks.

Obſerve, There may be ſchiſm, where there is no ſeparation of communion. Perſons may attend ordinances together, and ſit together at the Lord's table, and be yet ſchiſmaticks in ſcripture ſenſe, by reaſon of their uncharitable contentions, and alienation of affections: Whereas Chriſtians may ſeparate from one anothers communion, and yet be charitable towards one another; and this is not ſo much ſchiſm in ſcripture ſenſe, as to be uncharitable and contentious.

The apoſtle had had a report of the diviſions, which he did the more eaſily believe; becauſe he knew there behoved not only to be diviſions but hereſies alſo, that is, falſe doctrines, more dangerous than ſchiſms; for hereſies are corrupt opinions which ſtrike at the foundamentals of Chriſtianity and all ſound religion. Hereſy, according to the modern ſenſe of the word, is an error in the foundamentals of religion maintained with obſtinacy; though we cannot ſay the word neceſſarily imports ſuch a ſtrong ſenſe in this place, hereſy and ſchiſm ſometimes being ſynonymous terms.

Obſerv. 1. We have no cauſe to wonder that there ſhould be breaches of Chriſtian love in the church, when we know ſuch offences will come as ſhall make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience.

Queſt. How ſays the apoſtle, *Hereſies muſt come?* What neceſſity is there for them? *Anſw.* There is no neceſſity of force upon any man to broach them, any further than his own corruption, pride, vain glory, envy or contentious ſpirit, or ſatan's temptation promotes him to it. But the event is certain, becauſe of God's decree permitting them, who by his wiſdom orders them for wiſe ends, that they *who are approved, may be made manifeſt*, by their conſtant adhering to the truth againſt all the temptations of ſeducers.

Obſerv. 2. A time of temptation and ſeduction is a time of trial and diſcovery, who are ſincere and conſtant adherers to the truths and ways of God, and who not.

Obſerv. 3. It is a pleaſure to God to ſee the faith and conſtancy of his upright ones diſcovered to the world.

Obſerv. 4. The wiſdom of God can make the errors and wickedneſs of others a foil to the piety and integrity of the ſaints.

Verſe 20. *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's ſupper.*

21. *For in eating every one taketh before other his own ſupper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

The Heathens uſed to eat and drink plentifully at their feaſts upon their ſacrifices; and this profane cuſtom was creeping in among the wealthier Corinthians. Many think the apoſtle was pointing here at their *Agamai*, or love-feaſts, that in theſe times either preceded or followed the Lord's ſupper; and they are called love-feaſts, becauſe they were deſigned to manifeſt their love to their fellow Chriſtians both poor and rich, and the poor carried away what was left at them: And alſo they had them to repreſent our Lord's laſt ſupper, in which he eat the paſchal lamb before he inſtituted that ordinance now called the Lord's ſupper. Theſe love feaſts were founded on no command of Chriſt, but came in by cuſtom, and by the Jews who became Chriſtians. Theſe would needs have an appendix or appurtenance of the Lord's ſupper; and in imitation of Chriſt's eating the paſchal lamb before the Lord's ſupper, would have a feaſt or ſupper of their own to precede the Lord's ſupper; and having provided it at home, would needs bring it to the place where the church met. To this feaſt all the poor were invited at the charges of the rich as an expreſſion of their perfect love and charity one towards another. But in this church great abuſes crept in, in this practice; the poor Chriſtians were neglected and deſpiſed. The rich did either not invite them, or did not wait for them: But the rich haſted to eat what they had brought with them, and ſome of them eat and drank to exceſs, ſo that one was hungry, another was drunken. The apoſtle inveighs againſt this practice, as turning a feaſt of charity into a debauch, and as that which made them incapable to partake of the Lord's ſupper. This was a ſcandalous irregularity, a profaning a ſacred inſtitution, and corrupting a divine ordinance to the laſt degree. What ſhould have been a bond of mutual amity and affection, was made an inſtrument of diſcord and diſunion.

Obſerv. 1. Duties not done as they ought, are not done at all in Chriſt's account.—Or a careleſs eating and drinking the Lord's ſupper is as good as none, yea worſe than no eating. So prayers may be made, yet not made; ſacraments received, yet not received. Alms given, yet not given, becauſe not done in the manner and form required by God.

Obſerv. 2. A ſincere ſoul muſt and will look not only to the matter of the duty, but alſo to the manner of performing it.

Obſerv. 3. It is an heinous evil for Chriſtians to treat their fellow Chriſtians with contempt and inſolence, eſpecially at the Lord's table. For the rich to deſpiſe the poor, this is a great evil.

Obſerv. 4. That even in the apoſtolical and primitive times, great diſorders and irregularities had crept into the church; and that there is no church without ſpot in this imperfect ſtate.

Obſerv. 5. That the apoſtle, notwithſtanding of theſe, doth not direct the one part of the Corinthians to ſeparate from the other; but he only reproves and rectifies their abuſes. He doth not ſay, withdraw from ſuch perſons, for they will pollute the ordinance to you. No, if they be polluted, it is to themſelves, and not to others. He eats and drinks damnation to himſelf. Every man ſhall bear his own burden. Wherefore, ſays he, *Let a man examine himſelf*, not his neighbour. The apoſtle doth not encourage ſeparation upon that ground, that there were ſcandalous perſons admitted in Corinth, even ſome drunk about the time of partaking, which might be the occaſion of their divided way of communicating. But he reproves their divided communicating, and charges them to come together to the Lord's ſupper, and tarry for one another. He indeed ſharply reproves their ſcandalous practice, and tells them that it was moſt hazardful to themſelves to communicate unworthily, but ſpeaks of no danger to others. He commands them to examine themſelves, and ſo to eat, but not to examine their fellow communicants which certainly he had done, if their joining with them had made them partakers of their ſin and danger.

Verſe 22. *What, have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in? or deſpiſe ye the church of God, and ſhame them that have not? What ſhall I ſay to you? ſhall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe you not.*

The apoſtle here doth condemn both the abuſes of thoſe feaſts, and alſo their keeping them in the place where the church met. Some underſtand the church, of the houſe wherein the church met, and call their feaſting there a profaning or unhallowing the place ſet apart for divine worſhip. Others underſtand it of the people or poor members there met. Why do ye deſpiſe them? by excluding them from your company, becauſe of their poverty; and ſo ye put them to ſhame, whom God has adopted, and admitted into his family. This feaſt was originally deſigned for the poor's relief, and ye exclude them from it.

Obſ. 1. The deſpiſing of the poor members of the church, is a deſpiſing of the church itſelf, yea, Chriſt the Head of the church, as he that pincheth the little toe, paineth the whole body, and the head too.

Obſ. 2. With what lenity and mildneſs the apoſtle reproves theſe great diſorders, *Shall I praiſe you?* It was the firſt time he had told them of their faults, in hopes of amendment, and therefore doth it gently; and ſome think this gentle way of reproof had the due effect, becauſe no fault is taxed in the ſecond epiſtle that was reproved in the firſt.

Verſe 23. *For I have received of the Lord that which I alſo delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus, the ſame night in which he was betrayed took bread.*

24. *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.*

25. *After the ſame manner alſo he took the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, this cup is the New Teſtament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

26. *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.*

After reproving their diſorders he reduces them to the primitive inſtitution, and tells them, how he came by the knowledge of it, ſeeing he was not among the apoſtles at the firſt inſtitution. It was by revelation from Chriſt; and what he had received of the Lord, he communicated to them without varying from the truth in the leaſt, without adding or diminiſhing. As if he had ſaid, "As for theſe love feaſts preceding the Lord's ſupper, "*I received nothing from the Lord;* you have borrowed "them from Jews or Heathens: But all that I received "from the Lord concerning the Lord's ſupper, I here "ſet before you" And indeed he gives a more particular account of the inſtitution than we meet with elſewhere.

1. We have the Author of it, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſ.* It is an act of Chriſt's royal power and authority, as King and Head of the church, to inſtitute ſacraments. The church hath no power to appoint ſuch, but only to execute and adminiſter what Chriſt appoints: And as it is Chriſt's ordinance, we ſhould have a ſpecial regard to it, and not profane or neglect it.

2. We have the time of the inſtitution, *The ſame night in which he was betrayed;* when he was entering on his ſoul ſufferings in the garden, and going next day to the croſs; a night much to be remembered, being the laſt night before Chriſt's death: The night wherein he began his bitter agonies, and ſwate the bloody ſweat for us; a night, wherein he ſaw heaven, earth and hell, even juſtice, men and devils, drawn up in a battle array againſt him. A wondrous inſtance of his love, in ſpending ſo much of that little time he had in the world (when he ſeemed to have more need to mind himſelf) in ſettling an ordinance for the confirmation and conſolation of his people, to the end of the world. Whatever come of himſelf his people muſt not be forgot.—Obſerve from the time of the inſtitution, the night before his ſuffering, that it is very neceſſary when ſufferings are approaching, to have recourſe to the Lord's table, which affords both an antidote againſt fear, and a reſtorative and cordial to faith. Wherefore Chriſt for our example, communicated with his diſciples the night before he ſuffered.

3. We have the ſacramental elements, or the memorative, ſignificative and inſtructive ſigns, bread and wine.

4. The things ſignified thereby, the body and blood of Chriſt, his body broke and blood ſhed, together with all the benefits which flow from his death and ſacrifice.

Obſerv. 1. There is no tranſubſtantiation as the Papiſts abſurdly imagine. Why? Paul calls that which is eaten bread, five times over in this paſſage, and even after what the papiſts call conſecration. A plain argument that the apoſtle knew nothing of their monſtrous doctrine, which makes the bread by the words of conſecration to be changed into the ſubſtance of Chriſt's body, only the accidents of bread remaining; which affronts and deſtroys the nature of a ſacrament, and gives the lie to our ſenſes. It is called his body, becauſe it was a ſign and repreſentation of it, not his real body to be ſure; for then it would follow that Chriſt eat his own body while alive, and that his diſciples did the ſame; yea that they devoured that body over night which hung upon the croſs next morning, with a thouſand ſuch like abſurdities. But whether the Papiſts will or not, they muſt admit of a figurative expreſſion in this paſſage; for when Chriſt ſays, *This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood*, they muſt mean that which was in the cup, and not the veſſel that held it: and this is the ordinary ſacramental dialect, concerning circumciſion and the paſſover. Circumciſion is called God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 18. *i. e.* the ſign of it. Alſo the lamb is called the paſſover, Exod xii. 11. *i. e.* the ſign of it. It is true the Heathens laid it to the charge of the primitive Chriſtians, that they ate human fleſh; but falſly, as appears by the apology made for the primitive Chriſtians, by Tertullian and others: which apology had been falſe, had they daily eaten the fleſh of Chriſt in the ſacrament. It hath been always reckoned a moſt deteſtable thing to eat human fleſh, and much more is it to eat the God we worſhip, and devour him whom we pretend to adore.

Obſ. 2. That both bread and cup are uſed together, which ſhews the unwarrantable uſurpation of the Papiſts in depriving the laity of the cup. It is directly contrary to Chriſt's inſtitution; for our Saviour, (as it were) forſeeing the Papiſts encroachment in this matter, is more expreſs in his injunction concerning the cup, than the bread, in theſe words, Matth. xxvi. 27. *Drink ye all of it;* and their obedience is recorded of the cup, and not of the bread, Mark xvi. 27. *And they all drank of it.* Now, why is Chriſt ſo expreſs in this? Surely it was, becauſe he foreſaw in the after ages this ordinance would be diſmembered, by the prohibition of the cup to the laity, and that by the Popiſh councils and canons, with an expreſs *non obſtante* to the command of Chriſt.

5. We have the ſacramental actions, both on the miniſter's and peoples part.

For the *firſt*, our Lord took the bread, he bleſſed it, he brake it, he gave it to his diſciples. 1. The taking of bread ſignifies God's chuſing, ſetting apart, and appointing Chriſt to be a Surety and ſacrifice, and laying on him the ſins of his people. 2. The bleſſing ſignifies his qualifying and furniſhing Chriſt with all gifts and graces needful for the diſcharge of his mediatory offices, and for anſwering his people's exigencies. 3. The breaking ſignifies all Chriſt's breakings, bruſings and woundings, both in ſoul and body, which were for our ſins in order to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and procure ſalvation for us. 4. The giving ſignifies his offering, giving, and actually beſtowing Chriſt and all his benefits on us. There is no promiſe reſerved, no bleſſings excepted or kept back; all is theirs.

2*dly*, The actions on the communicants part are to take, to eat and drink in remembrance of Chriſt.

Queſt. What is meant by taking this bread? *Anſ.* It is the accepting of Chriſt as he is offered to us; a receiving the atonement, approving of it, conſenting to it, coming up to the terms on which the benefit is propoſed to us. It is an accepting of Chriſt's grace and ſubmitting to his government. Believing on Chriſt is expreſſed by taking or receiving of him. Well then, when we are bid take this bread, we are bid take Chriſt, and all the benefits of his purchaſe; and that ſincerely and honeſtly, without diſſimulation, intirely, fully, and without exception; with cloſs and particular application, ſaying, *My Lord, and my God*; with thankfulneſs and praiſe for ſuch a glorious Surety, ſuch a rich purchaſe, ſuch a free covenant, and ſuch ſuitable promiſes; with humility and ſelf-denial, renouncing all confidence in our own preparations or qualificatians of any ſort, ſaying, *In the Lord only have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*: and with full aſſurance of faith looking on the bread, as the Lord's ſeal and pledge of our intereſt in, and title to the bleſſings of the covenant; and as a token from Chriſt that his body was broken for us; believing that Chriſt and all the bleſſings of the covenant are herewith given to us, as really as Chriſt gives the bread into our hands.

Queſt. What is meant by eating this bread? *Anſ.* It ſignifies our feeding by faith upon Chriſt and his benefits, which is done by our believing the report concerning Chriſt and his purchaſe, and making a particular application of Chriſt and his benefits unto our ſouls and their various neceſſities and exigencies. And particularly this eating ſignifies, 1. Our union with Chriſt. 2. Our ſatisfaction and complacency in him. 3. Our receiving ſtrength and increaſe of grace from Chriſt. 4. Our taking infeſtment and poſſeſſion of Chriſt and his purchaſe as our inheritance, receiving this outward ſign as a pledge of the whole.

As to the words concerning the cup, *This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood, ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins;* it is a figurative ſpeech, ſignifying that the wine in the cup, as repreſenting the ſhedding of Chriſt's blood, is a ſign and ſeal of Chriſt's teſtament or covenant of grace, confirmed by his blood.—From which we may *obſerve*, 1. That every worthy communicant doth here get a copy of Chriſt's teſtament put into his hands with all the legacies and bleſſings it contains, ſuch as pardon of ſin, peace with God, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, redemption, grace and glory. Which teſtament if we take hold of, and acquieſce in the method of ſalvation contained in it, and can prove our relation to the Teſtator by faith and regeneration we are children and heirs, and have an intereſt therein.——*Obſ.* 2. What it was that purchaſed the New Teſtament to us, even Chriſt's blood; there is never a line we read or hear of the New Teſtament, but we ſhould mind the blood of Chriſt. Had it not been for the blood of Chriſt, we had never had the New Teſtament written, and had it not been for the New Teſtament, we had never known the meaning of Chriſt's blood ſhed.

6. We have the end of the inſtitution, 1. To keep up the *remembrance of Chriſt.* Chriſt knew how apt our baſe hearts would be to forget him amidſt a throng of ſenſible objects as we here converſe with; and how much our forgetfulneſs of Chriſt would be to our prejudice and diſadvantage; and therefore he appoints this ordinance, to bring Chriſt, his death and love to our believing, affectionate and thankful remembrance. 2. *To ſhew forth his death*, i. e. to declare, publiſh and proclaim it. It is not barely in remembrance of Chriſt, of what he hath done and ſuffered, but alſo to celebrate, publiſh and proclaim, his gracious condeſcenſion, his love and favour to loſt ſinners. We declare his death to be our life, and the ſpring of all our comforts and hopes. We glory in this atonement and ſacrifice, and ſpread it before God as our only ranſom. We ſet it in the view of our faith for our quickening and comfort. We own it before the world, as the only ground of our hope; and that we are diſciples of a crucified Chriſt, who truſt in him alone for ſalvation and acceptance, with God.

7. We have a mandate or charge given for the celebration of this ordinance, and for doing it frequently. Our Lord's command is twice repeated for ſecurity, *This do; this do ye.* It was our Lord's will that we ſhould celebrate the memorial of his death and paſſion. It is the will of our ſovereign Lord and Lawgiver, the expreſs command of a Saviour, yea, of a dying Saviour.—A command of love; and it is ſuch a command, as if we duly obſerve it, will be a bleſſed means to enable us to obſerve all the commands of God the better. It is ſuch a command, as whoſoever lives in the wilful neglect of it, cannot be called a Chriſtian, but will be treated by Chriſt at the great day as an enemy, and deſpiſer of his dying love. Wherefore it is our duty not only to communicate and partake of this ordi-

nance, but we muſt do it often. We cannot maintain bodily health and ſtrength without frequent meals, ſo neither can we maintain ſoul health and ſtrength without this ſpiritual diet frequently taken and received. The ancient churches celebrated this ordinance every Lord's day. Let us be thankful that we have this ſpiritual meal more frequently rendered to us than formerly. O for ſharpened appetites for our food?

8. We have the perpetuity of the ordinance. It is to be celebrated till the Lord come the ſecond time, without ſin, for the ſalvation of them that believe, and to judge the world.——*Obſer*. 1. That the Lord's ſupper is not a temporary, but a ſtanding and perpetual ordinance.—2. That there is no need of ſacraments in heaven; for Chriſt is there bodily preſent—Faith is then changed into viſion, and hope into fruition. Here we hold communion with him by ſigns and ſymbols: but above, we will ſee him as he is, and enjoy him perfectly. The day then will break, and all the ſhadows will flee away.

Verſe 27. *Wherefore, whoſoever ſhall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

28. *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.*

The apoſtle having declared the original inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper; he comes now to inſtruct the Corinthians in the right uſe of it, and to beware of profaning and abuſing this ordinance, as they had done.

Obſer. 1. The ſin which he warns them of, *viz. Eating and drinking unworthily. Queſt.* What is this? *Anſ.* It is not a weak faith, or weakneſs in knowledge, or want of perfect holineſs, or freedom from ſin, that will denominate a perſon an unworthy receiver; for this ordinance was not inſtituted for angels, but for men who are imperfect and ſinful: But it is to come ignorant, without due preparation, without faith, without repentance, ſelf examination; without reſolution againſt ſin, and without reconciliation to God, or to our neighbour.

Obſer. 2. The guilt and heinouſneſs of this ſin; they are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, *i. e.* It is an acceſſion to the guilt of ſhedding the innocent blood of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.—It is an implicit approbation of the Jews act in crucifying Chriſt.—It is a trampling Chriſt's blood under our feet.——It is a crucifying Chriſt afreſh, and harbouring the traitors and enemies of Chriſt in our boſom.

Obſer. 3. The danger of it, eating and drinking damnation to ourſelves; *i. e.* They provoke God to inflict ſore judgments on them, temporal and ſpiritual judgments here, and eternal judgments hereafter.—The meaning is not, that this ſin is unpardonable, but that it deſerves damnation, and will bring it on, without repentance, and flying to the blood of Chriſt for cleanſing. Every ſin is in its own nature damning, and therefore ſuch a heinous ſin, as profaning this holy ordinance, muſt ſurely be ſo. But timorous and fearful believers ſhould not be diſcouraged from attending this holy ordinance by the ſound of this word, as if they bound upon themſelves the ſentence of damnation, by coming to the Lord's table unprepared. For hearing and praying unworthily incurs damnation, as well as communicating unworthily. But this ſin, as well as others, leaves room for forgiveneſs upon repentance.

Obſer. 4. That unworthy receivers of the Lord's ſupper do contract great guilt, and incur great danger to themſelves. And therefore they ſhould be much concerned to guard againſt this heinous and dangerous ſin; and cry with the Pſalmiſt, *Lord deliver us from blood guiltineſs.*

Obſer. 5. It is only judgment to himſelf, it is not to another that receives with him. For if a wicked man's preſence at the ſacrament ſhould pollute the ordinance to a worthy receiver; then Chriſt and his eleven apoſtles were defiled by the company of Judas at the paſſover, at which he certainly was, and, as many think, at the Lord's ſupper alſo. Which is abſurd.

We have in verſe 26th, the duty required for preventing the ſin and danger of unworthy communicating, and that is the great and neceſſary duty of ſelf-examination.——It is a metaphor taken from goldſmiths, who try the truth of their gold by the touchſtone, the purity of their gold by the fire, and the weight of it by the ſcale. We have here, 1. The perſon examining, *Let a man examine.* 2. The perſon examined, it is *himſelf;* he is to call himſelf to the bar of conſcience, and put queſtions to himſelf, 1. Concerning his ſtate, whether he has a right to come or not. 2. His ſins and ſhortcomings. 3. His wants and neceſſities. 4. His ends and deſigns; whether it be to obey the charge of his dying Saviour, to ſhew forth his death, renew and ſeal his covenant with God, get nearneſs and communion with him, nouriſhment to his ſoul, and ſupply to his wants. And, 5. Concerning his graces and qualifications, particularly as to knowledge, faith, repentance, fear, love, thankfulneſs, holy deſires, and new obedience.

Obſer. 1. It is not enough that a miniſter examine us before partaking. We muſt examine ourſelves, for we only can try our own hearts and thoughts, which a miniſter cannot.

Obſer. 2. Our main concern before partaking is about ourſelves.—It is not about examining others, but about examining ourſelves that we are to be employed. It is not what he or ſhe is that is to communicate with us; but what I am myſelf.

Obſer. 3. It ſhould therefore be our ſingular care before communicating, to examine ourſelves, and commune with our own hearts, as to our right to, and fitneſs for the Lord's table.

We have in verſe 29th, the true cauſe of unworthy communicating, *Not diſcerning the Lord's body;* i. e. not making a diſtinction between this bread and common bread; betwixt the Lord's body and the body of a mere man;—no prizing nor eſteeming the body of a crucified Jeſus, as the meritorious ground of our juſtification.

Verſe 30. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.*

Some were puniſhed with ſickneſs and weakneſs, and ſome with death, for their irreverence in approaching to the Lord's table.

Obſer. 1. That careleſs and irreverent partaking brings on temporal judgments, as well as ſpiritual and eternal.

Obſer. 2. That God may puniſh his own people with temporal judgments: For ſeverals of theſe ſo puniſhed, were in a ſtate of favour with God, as appears from the word *ſleep*, the death of the wicked being hardly called ſleep in any place of ſcripture; and from verſe 32. they were *chaſtened of the Lord, that* they might *not be condemned with the world.* Now, divine chaſtening is a ſign of divine love.

Obſer. 3. That the holineſs of an ordinance, or the habitual holineſs of a perſon will not exempt him from God's diſpleaſure and the infliction of temporal judgments here in this life, if he do not by actual preparations ſanctify the name of God in the duty and ordinances of his worſhip.

Obſer. 4. That God puniſhes his people now to prevent their eternal woe.

Verſe 31. *For if we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged.*

If we would examine, try, cenſure and ſentence ourſelves, and ſo come to the Lord's table, we would eſcape the caſtigatory puniſhment, and condemnatory ſentence of God.——*Obſer.* 1. That as it is our duty often to examine and judge ourſelves, ſo ſelf-judging will preſerve us from the condemnation and judgment of God. 2. That theſe who through weakneſs of underſtanding are not capable to examine themſelves, are by no means fit to partake of this ordinance.

Verſe 32. *But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.*

The nature of theſe judgments, or afflictive evils, which do befal the children of God in this life, they are chaſtenings, *we are chaſtened of the Lord.* To be chaſtened has a double aſpect, firſt upon our privilege, it denotes our relation, as children to God our Father. Chaſtenings are a part of his childrens portion; yet in that we are chaſtened, it taxes us with weakneſs; we are fooliſh and unruly, and therefore ſo long as we are here, muſt always go with a rod at our back. Chriſt who was alſo a Son, was chaſtened. *The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him*; but his were judiciary chaſtiſements, not as a child, but as an enemy, a malefactor, in our ſtead. *Obſerve,* The merciful deſign of God in chaſtening his children, is to prevent their condemnation. When therefore at any time we are under chaſtiſement, let us juſtify God, and condemn ourſelves, ſeeing his chaſtiſements are deſigned to prevent our condemnation.

Verſes 33. 34. *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home: that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the reſt will I ſet in order when I come.*

The apoſtle cloſes all with a caution to beware of the irregularities they had been guilty of, and to rectify them that they come not together to condemnation.——*Obſ.* 1. That our holy duties through our own abuſe may prove matter of condemnation. Chriſtians may keep ſabbaths, hear ſermons, perform prayers, attend ſacraments, and only aggravate their guilt, and bring on a heavier doom on themſelves.—*Obſ.* 2. We have great need to ſee that we come to God in due order.

Laſtly, He tells them, that as to the other points of church order, he would determine them, when he came among them: *The reſt will I ſet in order when I come.* Such unchriſtian diſorders may ariſe in the church, as will require the preſence and coming of an apoſtle to correct and reform them.

A PREPARATION SERMON before the SACRAMENT.

Joſhua iii. 5. *Sanctify yourſelves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.*

IN this chapter we have the hiſtory of Iſrael's paſſing through Jordan to Canaan; and a very memorable hiſtory it is; for long after they are bid to remember what God did for them between Shittim and Gilgal, Micah. vi. 5. *that they may know the righteouſneſs of the Lord.* Shittim was the place where they decamped, and Gilgal where they next pitched. See Joſhua iii. 1. compared with Joſhua iv. 19. He orders them to march up to the river ſide, where they came and lodged, though they were unprovided of means to paſs in the ordinary way. Though they had neither boats nor bridges, yet they go foreward in faith, truſting God's power and promiſe. It was told them, Joſhua i. 11. that they ſhould paſs it. We muſt go in the way of our duty, though we foreſee difficulties, truſting God to help us through them when we come to them.—The people are directed to follow the ark, verſe 3. when borne by the prieſts and Levites, to teach us cloſly to attend ordinances, if we would have the marks of God's favour and ſpecial preſence.

In the text we have two things, 1. A command. 2. Reaſons given for it.

As to the firſt, *Sanctify yourſelves.* The word *ſanctify* has divers acceptations in ſcripture. Sometimes it is applied to God, we are commanded to *ſanctify the Lord,* i. e. to think and ſpeak reverently of him, or humbly to worſhip him. At other times we are commanded to *ſanctify ourſelves,* and then it imports ſeveral things; 1. Our ſeparating or ſetting ourſelves apart to ſome holy uſe. 2. Our cleanſing ourſelves from all ceremonial pollution. 3. Our preparing ourſelves for ſome ſolemn or ſacred action, by the uſe of ſome ſacred rites, or ceremonies, ſuch as legal waſhing, *&c.* 4. Our putting ourſelves in a ſuitable frame for attending on God's worſhip. 5. Our purifying ourſelves inwardly from ſin, and adorning ourſelves with holineſs. I might cite ſcripture for all the ſignifications of the word, as Exod. xix. 22. Joſh. vii. 13. 1 Chron. xv. 12. 2 Chron. v. 11. xxix. 5. xxx. 3. *&c.* I ſhall take it here as comprehending ſomething of all theſe ſenſes, eſpecially the people's preparing themſelves to attend the ark, and the diſcovering of God's power, glory, and goodneſs, with a ſuitable ſorrow and awful frame of ſpirit, befitting ſuch a great occaſion.

II. We have the reaſons for it, *For to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.* See how magnificently he ſpeaks of God's works, he calls them wonders; and indeed theſe were ſo, the dividing of the waters of Jordan, and making them to ſtand upon a heap, and then to run back, turning fluids into ſolids, and cauſe the Iſraelites to walk through the rapid river upon ſolid dry ground. All theſe were great wonders of God's power and goodneſs towards Iſrael. Now, ſays Joſhua, ſince God is about to give you ſuch uncommon inſtances of his power and favour, ſanctify yourſelves, compoſe your minds by meditation, prayer, and abſtractedneſs from the world, that ye may be in caſe for a careful and religious obſervation of his wonderful works, and to receive the diſcovery of his glory, and the communications of his goodneſs, and ſo ye may give God all the glory, and take to yourſelves the comfort of his wonderous works and gracious appearances.

Doctrine. When God is about to make wonderful diſcoveries of his glory and goodneſs to his people, then they ſhould make ſolemn preparation for obſerving and receiving of the ſame. For confirmation thereof, ſee Exod. xix. 10. 11. *And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Go unto the people, and ſanctify them to day and to-morrow, and let them waſh their cloaths; and be ready againſt the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the ſight of all the people, upon mount Sinai.* Or, 2dly, When God ſets tryſt with a people, they ſhould prepare themſelves to attend him, 1 Sam. xvi. 4. 5. *And Samuel did that which the Lord ſpake, and came to Bethlehem; and the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and ſaid, comeſt thou peaceably? And he ſaid peaceably: I am come to ſacrifice unto the Lord; ſanctify yourſelves, and come with me to the ſacrifice.*

Method I. When it is that the Lord makes ſuch wonderful diſcoveries of himſelf to his people.

II. Wherein the preparation for waiting on this wonder working God doth ly.

III. The properties of this preparation.

IV. The neceſſity of it.

V. And laſtly, I ſhall make application.

1. As to the firſt head, When it is that the Lord makes glorious and wondrous diſcoveries of himſelf to a people. 1. When, notwithſtanding of grievous ſins and provocations, he averts threatened and impending judgments, and comes to them in a way of mercy; as when he threatens famine and ſcarcity, he ſends fruitful ſeaſons and plenty of bread; when he threatens the noiſome peſtilence, he removes it and ſends health: when he threatens a bloody ſword, he ſheaths it up, and ſends peace and ſafety.

2. When he is pleaſed to quell the church's enemies and perſecutors to deliver his people from their oppreſſions, and give them the freedom of their aſſemblies, and of obſerving God's inſtitutions in purity.

3. When he pours out a ſpirit of reformation on all ranks and degrees, ſo that people generally turn to the Lord, prize ordinances, prayer, family worſhip, and appear againſt vice.

4. When God pours out his Spirit on the aſſemblies of his people, ſo that the preaching of the goſpel is attended with life, power and ſucceſs, to the melting of hearts, and converting ſouls.

5. When he diſcovers a Redeemer to a loſt ſinking ſoul; when a poor ſelf-condemned ſinner, that was at his wit's end, gets a ſight of the poſſibility of ſalvation through the ſatisfaction of Chriſt.

6. When he ſets forth Chriſt crucified before our eyes in the ſacrament; when he diſplays therein the wiſdom, juſtice, love and goodneſs of God to ſinners in a moſt lively manner.

7. When he returns and makes his people's ſky break after a long night of deſertion; when he makes light to ariſe and ſhine to them that were in darkneſs, and opens the door of his preſence-chamber.

8. When he gives them the victory over ſatan's temptations and aſſaults after long ſufferings and conflicts, and ſpeaks to them as to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.*

9. When he meets with them in ordinances, looſes their bonds, frees them from their ſtraitenings in duty, and enlarges their hearts in prayer, and enables them to pour forth their complaints and requeſts before the Lord.

10. When he comes with a return to their prayers; particularly, 1. By lifting on them the light of his countenance; or, 2. By giving them a view of their covenant relation to God; a well grounded hope of heaven; and new ſtrength to grapple with ſin, perform duties, and bear trials.

11. When he comes and gives a glorious diſcovery of his greatneſs and majeſty, ſo as to fill them with awful fear and reverence of God, and makes them cry, *Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him?* O the unſpeakable diſtance that is between God and us! God is glorious, and the creature is nothing.

12. When he comes and gives the ſoul a glorious diſcovery of the holineſs and purity of God, in his nature, his law and his works, as he did to Job, making him cry, *Behold I am vile*: and to Iſaiah, *Wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips.*

13. When he gives a glorious diſcovery of the goodneſs and mercy of God, particularly in theſe inſtances. 1. The glorious contrivance of our redemption, by ſending Chriſt to ſave us. 2. In pardoning guilty ſinners ſo many crimes, and making them cry, as Micah vii. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy.* 3. In taking rebellious traitors and enemies to God, to be children of God, and favourites of heaven. 4. In exalting them above angels that never ſinned, and providing glorious manſions for them.

14. When he comes in the ordinances, and quickens the dead and languiſhing graces of his people; as, 1. When he melts their hard hearts into the exerciſe of repentance and mourning for ſin. 2. When he comes and actuates their faith, enables the weak ſinner to go out to Chriſt, caſt his ſoul and lay his burden on him, and wholly to look to him, and lean on him for pardon and ſalvation. 3. When he comes and makes their hearts burn with love to himſelf, and to precious Chriſt the Mediator, while he talks to them and opens up the ſcriptures. 4. When he draws out the deſires and pantings of the ſoul towards himſelf. 5. When he quickens the ſpirit of prayer, and elevates the heart for praiſe, and enables the ſoul for every duty.

II. As to the ſecond head, Wherein this preparation and ſanctifying of the heart for waiting on God in ordinances, doth ly. *Firſt*, It ſuppoſes, 1. That we are naturally unfit and unprepared for approaching to God. 2. It ſuppoſes a work of God's grace and Spirit on the heart: he only fits the ſoul for ſpiritual things. 'It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of

‘ his good pleaſure. The preparation of the heart in ‘ man, and the anſwer of the tongue is from the Lord,’ Prov. xvi. 1.

Secondly, It directly imports theſe things; 1. The ſoul's being in a gracious ſtate, tranſlated from nature to grace by the Spirit of God, and that the ſoul is reconciled to God by the blood of Chriſt, and a work of ſanctification begun; without this we cannot be accepted.

2. It lies in bringing our hearts with us, and engaging all the powers and faculties of our ſouls to attend God in duty, Pſal. lxxxvi. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy name;* and, Pſal. cxix. 10. *With my whole heart have I ſought thee.*

3. It lies in our having right thoughts and uptakings of that gracious God whom we approach to; 1. That we believe that God is, and is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him. 2. That he is incomprehenſibly great and glorious, fills the heavens and the earth with his preſence, and that great fear and reverence is due to him. 3. That he is glorious in holineſs, and of of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity. 4 That he is ſpotleſs in juſtice, and will by no means clear the guilty. 5. That he is omnipotent in power, for protecting his people, and deſtroying his enemies. 6 That he is matchleſs in clemency and mercy, eaſy to be intreated, and ready to forgive through Chriſt. 7. That he is faithful, and keeps covenant for ever.

4. It lies in having humble and low thoughts of ourſelves, as unworthy to approach God, or receive any token of his favour. The ſoul that is ſanctified and prepared for approaching to God, hath a deep ſenſe of former ſins and miſcarriages, wonders at God's patience, that the earth has not opened its mouth to ſwallow it up ere now.

5. It lies in cleanſing and purifying ourſelves, by ſearching for and throwing out all theſe ſins and evils that unfit us for converſe with God. If we would have God to accept us, we muſt regard no iniquity in our hearts: particularly, 1. We muſt caſt out pride and ſelf-conceit. If we have a good opinion of ourſelves, our duties and performances, God will not accept us, we muſt count all but loſs and dung for Chriſt. 2. Worldlineſs, and thoughts about earthly things. 3. Unbelief and doubtings concerning the truths of God. 4. Malice and revenge. 5. Vain and wandering thoughts, and ſeek to have our hearts fixed, Pſ. lvi.

6. It lies in our retiredneſs and abſtractedneſs from the world and earthly thoughts. In the temple, for as much fleſh as was uſed there for the ſacrifice, not one fly was ſeen ſtirring; which teacheth us to drive away the flies of worldly thoughts in God's preſence, that they do not ſpoil nor corrupt the ſacrifice, as that grievous ſwarm of flies did every thing in the land of Egypt, Exod. viii. 24. Do as Abraham, when he went to approach God and do ſacrifice on mount Moriah, Gen. xxii. 4, 5. *When he ſaw the place afar off, he ſaid to his young men, abide you here with the aſs, and I and the lad will go yonder and worſhip.* He knew that if they had gone along with him, they would ſo diſtract him with their clamour, that he could not offer ſacrifice with that freedom and tranquillity of ſpirit requiſite.

7. It lies in examining the principles from which you act, and ends to which you move in duty. The principles muſt be faith and love; the belief of God's command, and the love of Chriſt, muſt conſtrain you to duty. Your ends muſt be to glorify God and enjoy him; not as the Phariſees to be ſeen of men; not legal ends, to get a reward. Selfiſh and legal ends are as a dead fly to ſpoil the ointment and make duties unſavoury to God. O for right principles, pure and ſpiritual ends!

8. It conſiſts in labouring to get the heart in a ſuitable frame for converſe with God; as, 1. In a humble and ſelf-denied frame. 2. In a ſpiritual and heavenly frame, 3. In a fixed and ſtayed frame, calling in all ſtraying and wandering thoughts, breathing out that prayer, Pſalm lxxxvi. 11. 4. In a loving and affectionate frame; for God is love, and love is the cement between God and the ſoul in duty. 5. In a cautious and watching frame; guarding always againſt every thing that may creep in, to indiſpoſe you for communion with God and marr your acceſs to him. 6. In an active and lively frame; all the ſpices ſhould flow out, all the graces ſhould be in exerciſe.

9. It lies in wakening our ſouls, which are naturally dull and drowſy, to activity and livlineſs in duty, as David, Pſalm lvii. 8. *Awake up my glory, awake pſaltery and harp: I myſelf will awake early.* Pſalm ciii. 1. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me bleſs his holy name.* Be ſtirred up all that is within me; there muſt be a ſtirring up our ſouls to take hold of God, Iſa. lxiv. 7. Put forth your ſpiritual ſtrength to the utmoſt; pray with the moſt fervent importunity; praiſe with ſpiritual elevation of heart; love God with the moſt ſublime affections, and do all in ſome proportion to the greatneſs of that God with whom you have to do, as Pſal. cl. 2. *Praiſe him according to his excellent greatneſs.*

10. It lies in our earneſt prayers to God to ſanctiſy us; for we muſt put it back on him, and pray for the ſanctifying influences of his Spirit, for the ſubduing of ſin, quickening grace and perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

III. As to the third head, The properties of this preparation; 1. It muſt be timeous preparation. The Jews took time to prepare for approaching God in the paſſover, they had the Lamb four days before in their houſes, tied to their bed poſts, that hearing conſtantly its bleating, they might look back to Egypt, and remember the ſorrows and bondage they endured there, and be thankful for their redemption; and eſpecially for their deliverance from the deſtroying angel that night he paſſed over their houſes, which were ſprinkled with the blood of the lamb; and that they might look forward to the Meſſiah, and remember the bitter agonies and ſufferings he was to endure for their ſins.

2. Inward preparation. It muſt ly mainly in the heart; a grave decent carriage is needful indeed, but God looks to more than the outward appearance, even to the heart.

3. Conſcientious preparation, doing all as in the ſight of God, before whom all things are naked and bare. Study to have ſingle ends and aims, to glorify God, and obey our Lord and Saviour's call.

4. Diligent preparation, not dealing with a ſlack hand, but applying your ſouls with the greateſt activity to the work in hand, believing that your ſalvation depends on it.

5 Humble and ſelf denied preparation, truſting in nothing in yourſelves but in Chriſt: depending on God that he would fit and prepare your hearts, and accept graciouſly for Chriſt's ſake.

6. Univerſal preparation, be mindful of all the parts of it, eſpecially of examining yourſelves with reſpect to your ſtate, your ſins, your wants, your knowledge, faith, repentance, love and new obedience.

IV. As to the fourth head. The neceſſity of this preparation. 1. Becauſe of the falſeneſs, ſluggiſhneſs and deceitfulneſs of our hearts; they love to wander from God, and are bent to backſlide in duty, as the wiſe man ſays, Eccleſ. x. 10. "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then muſt he put to more ſtrength." Labour to heat the iron, ſeeing a blunt iron, if hot, will pierce more eaſily than a ſharper, if cold. Warm your hearts with the love and ſufferings of Chriſt.

2. Becauſe it is the heart God mainly ſeeks in duty, Prov. xxiii. 26. *My ſon give me thine heart;* he ſays as Joſeph concerning Benjamin, *Except your brother be with you, I will not ſee your face.* If the heart be not brought to him, there can be no acceptance.

3. Becauſe God is well pleaſed with them that do ſo, as with Jehoſhaphat, 2 Chron. xix. 3. *Nevertheleſs there are good things found in thee, that thou haſt taken away the groves out of the land, and haſt prepared thine heart to ſeek God.* And he is highly diſpleaſed with thoſe that do it not, as with Rehoboam, 2 Chron. xii. 14. *And he did evil, becauſe he prepared not his heart to ſeek God.*

4. Becauſe God, whom we approach to, is an infinitely holy and pure Spirit, and will be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth.

IMPROVEMENT.

Inference I. See hence the cauſe why ſo few get diſcoveries of God's glory, and wonders of mercy, in the ordinance, but meet with an hiding God, they do not ſanctify themſelves and prepare their hearts in a ſuitable manner.

1. *Uſe of reproof* to ſeverals; 1. To theſe who approach God under the power of wandering and roving thoughts, their minds are not fixed, ſanctified and prepared. 2. To theſe whoſe minds are going after their covetouſneſs, when their bodies only are preſented before God. 3. To theſe who are hypocritical and formal in their approaches to God. 4. To thoſe whoſe hearts are dull and drowſy in God's ſervice.

III. *Uſe of trial.* It concerns you upon this occaſion to examine if your hearts be ſanctified and prepared for approaching God to-morrow. It is highly neceſſary now to examine your ſouls, *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat.* I fear there are many unſanctified and unprepared hearts among us. And in order to aſſiſt you therein, I ſhall give ſome remarks, both negatively and poſitively.

I. Negatively, marks of unſanctified hearts. 1. The ignorant heart that knows not Chriſt, nor has any uptaking of the way of ſalvation through his righteouſneſs. Such are unprepared, and incapable of gracious communion with God. See how the promiſe runs, Jer. xxiv. 7. "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God; for they ſhall return unto me with their whole heart." 2. The unbelieving heart is unprepared. 3. The impenitent heart. 4. The heart that harbours Chriſt's enemy. 5. The heart that hath no love to Chriſt. 6. No love to the friends of Chriſt. 7. No hungering and thirſting after Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. 8. That hath ſlight thoughts of his ordinances. 9. Indifference about the ſucceſs of the ordinances. 10. That reſiſts the motions of the Spirit. 11. The heart that is drowſy, and at no pains to waken itſelf. 12. That is a ſtranger to itſelf, and to ſelf-examination. Such hearts are unſanctified and unprepared for approaching to God to-morrow.

II. Poſitive marks of hearts in ſome meaſure ſanctified and prepared. 1. Hearts ſenſible of their depravity and ſinfulneſs. 2. That are ſenſible of their need of Chriſt. 3. Hearts filled with revenge againſt ſin. 4. That are humble and lowly. 5. Hearts troubled for heart plagues and ſins. 6. Hearts that conſent to the well ordered covenant in all its articles. 7. Hearts that aim at communion and fellowſhip with God in every duty. 8. Hearts that hold on in cloſe purſuit after Chriſt, notwithſtanding diſcouragements and diſappointments, as Mary Magdalene, who would not leave the ſepulchre, when others left it. 9. Hearts that are unſatisfied with the beſt means and ordinances, if God be not found in them. 10. Hearts that are applying themſelves to every duty, in Chriſt's ſtrength, ſaying, Without Chriſt I can do nothing. 11. Hearts that are troubled when they drive heavily in duty, and are weary of their remiſſneſs. 12. Hearts tender of the peace of God, afraid of ſin, and grieving the Spirit. 13. Hearts concerned about the ſucceſs of this ordinance, both with reſpect to themſelves and others. 14. Hearts concerned for want of ſufficient preparation, praying with Hezekiah, for pardon and acceptance, though not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctuary, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

IV. *Uſe of exhortation.* O communicants, ſanctify yourſelves againſt to-morrow, that the Lord may come down and do wonders among you, wonders of mercy for your ſouls.

Motive I. Conſider that the near approach you are to make to God at his table to-morrow, is the neareſt approach you can poſſibly make on this ſide of death. Conſider what preparation God required of the Iſraelites for receiving the fiery law at mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 10, 11. "God commanded them to ſanctify themſelves, waſh their cloaths, and be ready againſt the third day, for upon that day the Lord would come down upon mount Sinai, in ſight of all the people." What awful fear and trembling do you imagine was there among them, when God came down in a thick cloud, when the trumpet began to ſound, and the thunder to crack, the mountain to ſmoke, and the earth to tremble under the weight of the great God deſcending on it.—Well, you ſhould be under the ſame awe of God in this ſolemn ordinance as they were. It is true, he comes not down with ſuch terror, to give a fiery law as on mount Sinai, but to deliver the goſpel of peace from mount Zion. But mind, it is the ſame God that ſpeaks, hath the ſame majeſty, the ſame authority; and therefore you ſhould prepare as carefully, and be as humble before him, as the Iſraelites were. Were God to come down among you to-morrow in terrible majeſty, ſhould a thick cloud fill this houſe, and lightning break out, and ſhould you hear the thunder of his voice, I *am the Lord, thou ſhalt have no other gods before me,* certainly ſuch a dreadful glory would make your hearts tremble within you, Well then, God is come down as really among you as among the Iſraelites, hear him with the ſame reverence, and be as intent upon adoration as they were. Let not his gracious and familiar way of condeſcending to deal with you, tempt you to come with leſs preparation and reverence.

II. Conſider the nature of that God you are to approach to. 1. A great and mighty God, Pſal. lxxxix. 7, 8. *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of the ſaints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord, God of hoſts, who is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulneſs round about thee?* Would we feaſt with a great King with filthy hands and garments? Joſeph prepared himſelf, by ſhaving himſelf and changing his raiment, before he went in to Pharaoh; and wilt thou not prepare thyſelf, by putting thyſelf in the holieſt dreſs and humbleſt poſture, when thou art to go to the King of heaven and earth? 2. He is a jealous and omniſcient God, moſt jealous of his honour, and will come in to ſee the gueſts, Matth. xxii. 11. and then he will ſpy every unprepared and unſanctified gueſt; he notices the ſtate of your ſouls, the frame of your hearts, the ends of your communicating, and your preparation before hand. O then ſanctify yourſelves, before you come to the feaſt.—3. He is a pure and holy God; he cannot hold communion with unholy perſons, he will be ſanctified in them that come nigh him, Lev. x. 3. he will be attended as a holy God, in a holy manner. Did a holy angel ſet tryſt with you at a certain place, againſt ſuch an hour, would you not prepare with all ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity to attend him! Oh! but it is the God of angels that tryſts with you here, even the God before whom the angels adore, and cover their faces and feet with their wings, and cry, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty.* If the linen on the communion table, or veſſels that hold the elements were foul, ye would be ready to exclaim againſt it; and no doubt there ought to be obſerved an outward decency in this reſpect; Chriſt would have the very room in good order where he was to eat the paſſover. But O it is a ſmall crime to have a foul cloth or veſſel for outward elements in reſpect of what it is to have a foul heart, or an unprepared ſoul to entertain a holy God, and to receive the body and blood of Chriſt.

3. Conſider that God's people uſed always great preparation before the ſolemn approaching to God, Gen. xxxv. 1.—5. Where we ſee how ſolemnly Jacob prepared himſelf and his family, when by God's command he was going up to Bethel to ſacrifice unto the Lord. "They change their garments, waſh and make themſelves clean, and put away their ſtrange gods." How much more ought we to prepare, when we go not only to Bethel, God's houſe, but to God's table, by changing our garments of ſin, and putting on Chriſt's righteouſneſs by faith, and putting away and mortifying our luſts and idols of jealouſy! We ſee alſo the pſalmiſt's preparation for approaching to God, Pſal. xxvi. 6. *I will waſh my hands in innocency, ſo will I compaſs thine altar, O Lord.* The Jews had great preparation for the paſſover, and ſo ſhould we for the Lord's ſupper, that is come in its room. Wherefore we find the primitive Chriſtians uſed to ſit up whole nights at prayer before the Lord's ſupper, which they called *vigiliæ.*

4. Conſider that the matter of this ſacrament requires ſolemn preparation. Solomon directs us, when we are to eat with a ruler, to conſider what is ſet before us, Prov. xxiii. 1. There are here the ſymbols of Chriſt's body and blood, rare food! It is a great ſin to abuſe common meat and drink, or to partake of theſe without ſome ſerious thought before hand. We would have veſſels clean to hold our ordinary food; but here is ſoul food, heaven's dainties, the jewel of heaven. Chriſt's body in the ſacrament muſt be wrapt in a clean ſoul, as well as his body by Joſeph of Arimathea was wrapt in clean linen, and laid in a new tomb.

5. The duties to be performed at the Lord's table require preparation, *viz.* Covenanting with God, renewing our baptiſmal vow, expreſſing our love to Chriſt, feaſting on a broken Chriſt.

6. You are naturally unfit for this ordinance; naturally you have neither habitual nor actual preparation, being dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, leprous, lothſome, carnal, and earthly minded. Wherefore we muſt be quickened and purified, before we can hold communion with a holy God.

7. Becauſe communion with God would be altogether diſagreeable to an unſanctified ſoul, he would weary of it, and take no pleaſure in it.

8. Becauſe of the great advantage of this preparation, God will come to-morrow, and work wonders of mercy for ſuch as ſincerely aim at preparation. O then ſanctify yourſelves. *Queſt.* What are theſe wonders of mercy. *Anſ.* 1. He will raiſe dead ſouls out of the grave, and put life in them. 2. He will warm cold hearts, and put ſpiritual heat in them. 3. He will ſoften hard rocky hearts, and make them tender and ſenſible. 4. He will cleave the rock and make waters guſh out of it, the waters of penitential tears. 5. He will cure the paralytic trembling hand, that could hardly be ſtretched out, or grip to any thing. He will enable the weak ſoul to grip faſt to Chriſt, and ſubſcribe his name to the marriage contract. 6. He will ſtrengthen the feeble knees and lame feet, and make the ſoul to run in the way of his commandments with an enlarged heart. 7. He will kill ſtrong Goliaths and luſts, that defied the armies of the God of Iſrael. 8. He will fix a wandering heart, and fix it on God and things above. 9. He will heal a wound conſcience by the balm of Gilead. 10. He will brighten a dark cloudy mind, and reſolve all the doubts and fears of a believer. 11. He will give a ſight of the king in his beauty, a view of the ſmiles of Chriſt's lovely face. 12. He will give a ſeal of the pardon of all your ſins. 13. He will give a Piſgah-view of Canaan, a ſight of the promiſed land. 14. He will feaſt the hungry, and fill them with the dainties of heaven.——O theſe are rare wonders of grace that Chriſt will work for the prepared ſoul, O preparation is your ſeed time, receiving is your harveſt, Now, as a man ſoweth ſo ſhall he reap; *he that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly, and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully,* 2 Cor. ix. 6. It is in the duty of partaking, as in the duty of praying; the more prepared a man's heart is to pray, the greater is his return from heaven, Pſal. x. 17. *Thou wilt prepare their*

hearts, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear. So it may be ſaid in the caſe of receiving, thou wilt prepare the heart, thou wilt cauſe thine hand to give. When God prepares a man's heart for duty, it is a token he hath a hand prepared for mercy. Hence the Lord makes that gracious promiſe, Pſalm lxxxi. 10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. q. d.* I will enlarge my hand, as you enlarge your heart. He ſaith, as Joſeph to his ſteward, Gen. xliv. 1. *Fill the mens ſacks as much as they can carry.* So as Joſeph's brethren prepared ſacks in number and largeneſs, ſo did they carry corn away; and as you have prepared hearts to the ordinance, ſo ſhall you reap benefit thereby.

9. Becauſe of the great danger in coming unprepared. If you do not ſanctify and prepare yourſelves, God will come and do wonders of judgment, wonders of wrath among you. 1. He may inflict bodily diſeaſes, as 1 Cor. xi. 30. 2. He may ſend untimely death. 3. He may ſmite with deſertion from God. 4. He may ſend darkneſs on the mind. 5. He may ſmite with deadneſs and impenitency on the heart. 6. With decaying and withering on the gifts and graces. 7. He may ſend leanneſs and barenneſs on the ſoul. 8. He may ſmite with formality and lifeleſneſs in duty. 9. With ſearedneſs on the conſcience, ſo as it ſhall challenge for no ſin. 10. He may ſend horror and terror on the conſcience, ſo as to make it a Magor-Miſſabib. 11. He may let ſatan looſe againſt you with temptations, atheiſtical and blaſphemous thoughts. 12. He may ſend you to hell from the communion-table, as Matth. xxii. 12, 13. *And he ſaid unto him, friend how cameſt thou in hither not having on a wedding-garment? And he was ſpeechleſs. Then ſaid the king to the ſervants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt him into outer darkneſs.*

Queſt. How ſhall I get my heart ſanctified and prepared, ſo as I may expect the Lord will come and do wonders of grace for me to morrow. *Anſ.* There is a twofold preparation, habitual and actual; you muſt ſtudy both, and habitual preparation in the firſt place. *Queſt.* What is habitual preparation? *Anſ.* It hath ſeveral ingredients in it. 1. A covenant-relation to God in Chriſt. 2. A principle of ſpiritual life. 3. A ſtate of peace with God. 4. The imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs. 5. An univerſal change by regenerating grace. 6. The inhabitation of the Spirit. 7. A holy converſation. 8. The lamp of a profeſſion. *Queſt.* 2. What is actual preparation for the Lord's ſupper? *Anſ.* 1. Sequeſtrating ourſelves from the world. 2. Self-examination. 3. Humiliation for ſin. 4. Renewing of our perſonal covenant with God in Chriſt. 5. Reformation of what is amiſs. 6. Exciting of all the graces to a lively exerciſe. 7. Meditation on the death and ſufferings of Chriſt. 8. Earneſt prayer to God for preparation and aſſiſtance in the work——And after your outmoſt preparation, you muſt lay no ſtreſs thereon, but caſt yourſelf wholly on Chriſt for aſſiſtance, ſaying, *It is only in the Lord I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* We ought to be denied to ourſelves, and to look with David to the Lord both for aſſiſtance and acceptance, Pſalm lxxi. 16. *I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord, I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only.* You ought to imitate king Aſa, who, though he had a great army to fight againſt the Ethiopians, yet cried to the Lord, and truſted in him alone for help, as you have it recorded, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 'And Aſa cried unto the Lord his God, and ſaid, 'Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with 'many, or with them that have no power; help us, O 'Lord our God; for we reſt on thee, and in thy name 'go out againſt this multitude.' So let every communicant ſay, 'Lord all my ſtrength and preparations are 'nought, I have no power for celebrating this feaſt, 'help me, O Lord my God, for I reſt on thee, and in 'thy name I go to this great and weighty ordinance.' And if you come forward to-morrow in this ſelf-denied and ſanctified frame, you have ground to expect that the Lord will do wonders of grace and mercy for you.

ACTION SERMON.

From CANTICLES ii. 4. *He brought me to the banqueting houſe, and his banner over me was love.*

THE whole of this ſong is an allegorical deſcription of the myſterious union and communion betwixt Chriſt and his church, under the perſons of a bridegroom and bride, which is a frequent metaphor made uſe of in ſcripture. The forty fifth pſalm is an abridgment of this ſong.——In this chapter Chriſt and the church ſeems to ſtrive, who ſhall outvie each other in their commendations. Chriſt firſt commends the church, and then the church extols Chriſt. She compares him to *the apple tree among the trees of the wood,* verſe 3. Chriſt is a fruit bearing Tree; but the children of men are barren trees. And O but his ſhadow is refreſhing, and his fruit ſweet to a believer. But as if the ſhadow and fruits of an apple tree were too low a ſimilie to ſet forth his excellency and goodneſs, ſhe tells us of the entertainment he gives her in the banqueting houſe, in the text.

Where we have, 1. The place which the ſpouſe was brought to, the banqueting houſe, or houſe of wine, *i. e.* of feaſting, becauſe wine is a principal part of feaſts; by which we are to underſtand the order, or means, whereby Chriſt conveys his graces and bleſſings to believers; and there is none of all the ordinances of the goſpel that may be more fitly called the banqueting or feaſting houſe, than this of the Lord's ſupper, which is the great goſpel-feaſt wherewith Chriſt entertains his people on earth, ordinances are called his banqueting houſe, becauſe of the great plenty, variety and riches of the bleſſings he thereby communicates to his people.

2. We have the Perſon that brings her into this banqueting houſe, and that is Chriſt: He *brought me;* which ſhews, 1. Our want of right to theſe bleſſings, of ourſelves. All our right is in Chriſt. 2. Our impotency to come to the feaſting houſe; he muſt both give us ſtrength and preparation of ſoul, 3. The freeneſs of his grace in beſtowing theſe bleſſings on us.

3. The manner how ſhe is brought in, and that is

under a banner, ſtandard or enſign. It is a military rod; banners or enſigns are uſed in camps and armies, Pſalm xx. 5. ‘ We will rejoice in thy ſalvation,’ and in ‘ the name of our God will ſet up our banners.’ Her march or entry into this feaſting houſe was joyful and triumphant, ſuch as that of people under a diſplayed banner, or colours lifted up. Colours are uſeful to draw, invite, engage, and lead people after their captain: and the lifting up and diſplaying of colours is a ſign to invite and direct theſe of ſuch a party or ſide, to come to ſuch a place, or march ſuch a way. Now, what is the device or motto of Chriſt's banner; not like thoſe of other generals, a lion, an eagle, *&c.* but Love. The love of a crucified Jeſus is like a banner lifted up and diſplayed in the goſpel for inviting and engaging ſinners to come to him. Love is the banner that Chriſt lifts up and diſplays this day, to engage you to come to him, and liſt yourſelves under his banner. Love is that which leads to the banqueting houſe, and furniſhes proviſion and entertainment for us there.

Obſer. I. That Chriſt has rich feaſts in the ordinances for entertaining his people's ſouls.

II. That the banner which Chriſt diſplays for drawing us to him, is love.

As to the firſt, I ſhall ſhew, 1. That Chriſt in the ordinances doth provide feaſts for his people's ſouls. 2. That the Lord's ſupper in particular is one principal feaſt that he prepares for them. 3. Why he prepares ſuch a feaſt. 4. Shall apply.

As to the firſt, it is evident, 1. From God's promiſe to his people, Pſalm xxx~~iv~~vi. 8. “ They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe; and thou ſhalt make them drink of the river of thy pleaſures.” Iſaiah xxv. 6. “ And in this Mountain ſhall the Lord of hoſts make unto all people, a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.” This promiſe is concerning the goſpel times.—From Prov. ix. 2. where Wiſdom, *i. e.* Chriſt, is ſaid to have *killed her beaſts, mingled her wine, and furniſhed her table.*—And, to name no more, from Luke xiv. where the Father prepares the fatted calf for his penitent prodigal.

2. From the experience of God's people, as of David, Pſalm iv. 6. lxiii. 5. and lxv. 4. and particularly from the experience of the church in the text, God's people can ſet to their ſeal to this truth.

As to the ſecond head, that the Lord's ſupper is one principal feaſt, which the Lord prepares for his people. Wherefore is it called, *the table of the Lord.* 1 Cor. x. 21. It is called *a feaſt on the ſacrifice of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. *a wedding feaſt*, Mat. xxii. 4. In theſe places the Lord's ſupper is principally pointed at.—I ſhall here ſhew wherein the Lord's ſupper reſembles a feaſt; yea, it is not an ordinary feaſt, it is a rich, royal and magnificent feaſt.

1. At a feaſt there is rich and noble proviſion. So here there is more than bread and wine, even the body and blood of Chriſt, *My fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*, John vi. 55. What bread and wine affords to the body, *viz.* ſtrength, comfort, and nouriſhment, the ſame doth the body and blood of Chriſt, received by faith, yield to the ſoul——Here is ſpiritual food to the hungry ſoul, bread that ſtrengthens man's heart, and wine that cheers the fainting ſpirits. Behold here is wiſdom's gates, and wiſdom's feaſt. It is good for us to be here, good to wait at her door poſts.—Here the breaſts of conſolation are drawn forth, here we may ſuck and be ſatisfied.—Here the fountain of life, and the wells of ſalvation are opened, the ſtone rolled from the well's mouth.——Here is the hidden manna, angels food, bread from heaven, yea the fruits of the tree of life, that grows in midſt of the paradiſe of God.—Here is the water of life that ſprings from beneath the throne of God and the Lamb, clear as chryſtal; if you get but one drop of it, it ſhall be an everlaſting ſpring in your ſoul, ſo that you need not thirſt after carnal comforts and enjoyments.——Here are the grapes of Canaan, the fruits that grow in the land of promiſe; yea cluſters of theſe grapes are at this feaſt, the firſt fruits of heaven——In a word, there is at this ſpiritual feaſt for the ſoul to feed on, Chriſt crucified, and all his benefits and purchaſe: And are there not many diſhes and delicacies here?

1. Here is pardon of ſin ſealed to a believer. O is not this a rare feaſt and excellent cheer, Matth. ix. 2. *Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.* Here you get Chriſt's blood, which was ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins. Here we claſp about a crucified Chriſt as the great propitiatory ſacrifice for our ſins, and accept of him as the Lord our righteouſneſs; and thus we receive the remiſſion of ſins. Here God ſaith to a believer, as Nathan to David, 2 Sam. xii. 13. *The Lord hath put away thy ſins, thou ſhalt not die.* Here we hear the voice of joy and gladneſs, which hath made many a broken bone to rejoice. Is there any thing more ſweet than pardon to a condemned man near the place of execution? And what can give more joy, than a free diſcharge to a ſinner arreſted by juſtice, and drawn to hell's door to be caſt into that priſon for debt, out of which there is no redemption.

2. We have peace and friendſhip with God; O rare diſh! not only to be freed of a burden of debt, that would have weighed us down to hell; and for which millions already have been carried thither, and are roaring under it without hope; but alſo to be received into ſpecial favour with God: For in this ſacrament a covenant of peace and friendſhip is ſealed and confirmed. O muſt it not be a ſweet cordial, for an enemy, a rebel, to be owned as a ſpecial favourite of the King of heaven, ſo that the ſoul may ſend a challenge to hell and earth, and bid defiance to men and devils, Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea rather, that it is riſen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us.* And you may ſay with David, Pſalm iv. 8. *I will both lay me down in peace, and ſleep: For thou, Lord, only makeſt me to dwell in ſafety.* Come life, come death, I am ſafe; my conſcience is diſburdened, and I am at eaſe.

3. Adoption is another of the diſhes at this feaſt. You are not only made a friend, but a ſon and heir; and in this ſacrament you get ſeaſine and infeftment of the childrens privileges, relation and inheritance.—And here God ſaith, I will be a Father to thee; and, ſon, thou ſhalt be ever with me, and all that I have is thine. Thou ſhalt have my bleſſing and love, the ſmiles of my face, the kiſſes of my mouth, and the arms of my grace to ſupport and preſerve thee. Thou ſhalt have my Son for thy elder Brother, thy Prieſt and Ad-

vocate; my angels to be thy guards; my providence to be thy protector and manager: Thou ſhalt have manna in the wilderneſs, and water out of the rock. Thou ſhalt be my heir, and joint heir with my eternal Son and Firſt-born. Thou ſhalt have heaven for thy home, Chriſt's throne for thy ſeat, and a kingdom for thy portion; a honourable maintenance while here, and an incorruptable inheritance hereafter.

4. Another diſh is peace of conſcience. This is one of the precious legacies which Chriſt leaves in his Teſtament, which is here ſealed, John xv. 27. It is here Chriſt ſpeaks peace to his people and to his ſaints, here he breathes peace upon them, as in Luke xxiv. 36. Do doubts and fears ariſe within you, that hinders you to believe the good news, as with the diſciples; ſo there is that in this ſacrament which may check all theſe fears, Luke xxiv. 38, 39. "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myſelf; handle me and ſee, &c." O but the prints of the nails may calm the doubting conſcience, and quiet thy fears.

5. Supplies and ſtrength to our weak and decayed graces. Here Chriſt's ſtore houſe is opened, and we may get grace for grace out of his fulneſs; here the ſmoaking flax may be kindled into a flame and the bruiſed reed find ſupport; here you may get weak faith ſtrengthened, cold love enflamed, weak deſire kindled, repentance renewed, hope made lively, the ſoul fitted and fortified for trials and ſufferings, and prepared for paſſing through the valley of the ſhadow of death; Yea, in a word, you may get all your wants ſupplied, all your grievances redreſſed, and maladies remedied. Here you may get a meal that will both ſatiſfy, and beget a ſtomach in you, that will prove life to your ſouls and poiſon to your luſts. It is here the empty ſoul is filled, the ſtarving creature fed, the poor beggar enriched, the hard heart ſoftened, the cold heart warmed, the dead ſoul quickened, the paralytick hand cured, the blind eye enlightened, the thirſty heart ſatisfied, the feeble knee ſtrengthened, the ſtraitened heart enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping deſires elevated, the cloudy ſoul brightened, and the doubting ſoul reſolved. O are not theſe gracious and bleſſed changes! Here you may get ſtrength againſt your ſtrong luſts and temptations, and furniture for every duty, ſo as you may pray with enlargement, hear with comfort, praiſe with elevation of mind, and meditate with delight.

6. Here is Chriſt's gracious preſence, and a ſight of his countenance; That is a rare delicate in this feaſt, that ſatisfies the ſoul, Pſalm xvi. *ult. In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy*, that was the Pſalmiſt's heaven upon earth. It is here Chriſt tryſts with his people, here he walks with them, and is held by them in the galleries; here he viſits them and holds communion with them, intimates his love, and kiſſes them with the kiſſes of his mouth. Here they ſee the King in his beauty, here the ſaints have beheld the beauty of the Lord, Pſalm xxvii. 4. O this is worth our while. O let it be our errand this day to meet with Chriſt, and ſee his bleſſed face. God's people in all ages have placed their happineſs here. Abraham rejoiced in a ſight of Chriſt, though afar off, at 1900 years diſtance. The wiſe men thought it worth their while, to undertake a long journey from the eaſt to ſee him, though but new born. Old Simeon deſires to ſee no more on earth, after he gets a ſight of him though a Child. Zaccheus ran and climbed up a tree to ſee him, though deſpiſed of men.—O now he is ſhining in glory, ſhall we not deſire a ſight of him? David deſired it as his *one thing*, Pſalm xxvii. though he then wanted his throne and kingdom. The ſpouſe ſeeks it as her one thing, Cant. iii. 3. *Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth*? O but a ſight of him would make your face to ſhine, a ſight of him in his love, in his dyed garments, trading out the wine preſs alone.

7 Another diſh is, the comfort of his Spirit, and the clearing up your intereſt in Chriſt and glory, a ſight of heaven and your names written in the book of life, ſo that all your fears may be ſcattered, objections anſwered, doubts reſolved, and likewiſe the evidences of your graces cleared up to you ſo that though you doubted before if you had faith, yet now you may be enabled to ſay with the poor man, *Lord, I believe.* You doubted before of your love, but now you may ſay with Peter, *Lord, thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee.* You doubted before of your intereſt in Chriſt, but now you can ſay with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God*, with Job, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; and with Paul, *I know in whom I have believed.*

Thus I have ſhewn you ſome of the rich proviſion and noble entertainment prepared in this banquet before you: yea, you ſee it is not only rich proviſion, but there are choice rarities here, hidden manna, angels food; yea, not only choice, but plenty and variety, food adapted to our ſouls nature and faculties; food to nouriſh, ſtrengthen, delight and refreſh the ſoul. Here is food ſuitable to all the faculties, light to the mind, peace to the conſcience, ſatiſfaction to the will, and food for all the affections. Here love may ſatisfy itſelf in embracing the chief among ten thouſands. Deſire may ſatisfy itſelf in claſping the deſire of all nations. Delight may here bathe itſelf in the river of pleaſure. In a word, what can the ſoul need but is here? For Chriſt is made of God to us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption. Here is precious blood to purge away our deep guilt; here is perfect righteouſneſs to cover our naked ſoul; here are riches, and unſearchable riches in Chriſt, righteouſneſs for our juſtification, and grace for our ſanctification; here all things are given us richly to enjoy; here hope may feed, on the great and precious promiſes.

2*dly*, At feaſts there uſed to be lavers for the gueſts to waſh in, as at the marriage feaſt in Cana of Galilee, where were ſix water pots ſet for purification, John ii. 6. Doth ſenſe of defilement ſcare you from partaking? Behold here is a fountain opened, Zech. xiii. 1. O come and waſh in it, that ye may be fit to compaſs God's altar, and ſit down at his table.

3*dly*, At banquets there uſes to be mirth and chearfulneſs; ſo here, when prodigal ſinners firſt return to their Father, he hath mirth and muſic to entertain them. See Luke xv. 24. The tidings of Chriſt's purchaſe, and the promiſes, are the beſt muſic and melody in the world: The news of what he hath done and ſuffered, ought to fill your hearts and lips with the high praiſes of God, and thankful admiration of Chriſt and redeeming love. O believers, conſider, you are not to come like mourners to a funeral, but like children to your Father's feaſt, a royal feaſt, *I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my houſe of prayer, ſaith the Lord*: So that ye may eat this bread with joy, and drink this wine with a merry heart, in hopes of God's accepting you and your ſacrifice, Eccleſ. ix. 7.

4thly, At feaſts there is the maſter of the feaſt, to bid the gueſt welcome; as ready is the Father to welcome the prodigal child. Chriſt is the Maſter of this feaſt; he hath ſent forth his ſervants, to call and invite you to the feaſt, and now he is come to the table to bid you welcome, as in Cant. v. 1. *Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

5thly, At feaſts there are ſervants to attend the gueſts; here the miniſters are ſtewards and ſervants to attend Chriſt's gueſts at this feaſt: And their work is to direct you to the table, and to give every one their portion of meat in due ſeaſon. God grant we give not the childrens bread to dogs, and them that have no right to it. We know not the heart, ye all have profeſſed yourſelves to be children, O do not mock God and his ſervants.

6thly, Here is a bleſſing craved by the Maſter of this feaſt; yea, he has commanded, and will command the bleſſings, and his ſervants are to pray for the virtue of that bleſſing to this table.

7thly, At a feaſt there is good company. O there is rare company at this feaſt. *The King ſits at his table*, Cant. i. 12. even the King of glory. Chriſt himſelf is there preſent, and the Father alſo; for in this feaſt we have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, through the holy Spirit. Here the children of God, yea the glorious ſaints above ſit at this table, and ſhare with us in this feaſt. It is true, they ſit at the upper end of the table, and we at the lower end.——They have better appetites, better muſic; they feed on a naked Chriſt, we by ſigns and ſymbols; but we have all the ſame cheer. O what a great and good company is here!—We read of Belſhazzar that made a feaſt for a thouſand of his lords, Dan. v. 1. But here is a feaſt for many thouſands, yea, to all believers, Jews and Gentiles, an open free feaſt, Iſa. xxv. And we read that Ahaſuerus made a feaſt to all his princes and ſervants, which laſted one hundred and eighty days, Eſth. i. 4. But here is a feaſt which laſts to all eternity.

III. As to the third head, why he prepares ſuch a feaſt for his people? *Anſ.* 1. To be a ſolemn memorial of his love to ſinners, in ſuffering and dying for them; and this memorial is to be kept up through all generations till Chriſt's ſecond coming. Juſt ſo the paſſover was a commemorating feaſt to the Iſraelites of their protection and deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

2. To diſcover his infinite riches and goodneſs to poor ſinners. So Ahaſuerus, Eſther i. 3. 4. *made a feaſt to all his princes and ſervants, to ſhew them the riches of his excellent majeſty.*

3. To expreſs the joy and ſatisfaction he hath in the believer's coming to him. The Father of the prodigal evidenced his joy for the return of his Son (*who was dead and now alive, loſt and found*) by a feaſt and muſic. O believers this is the day of the gladneſs of Chriſt's heart; glad is he to ſee his prodigals returning, and this feaſt is the welcome home.

4. To expreſs his love to believers, and that he might have opportunity of nearer communion and fellowſhip with them. At feaſts people have great freedom and familiarity with one another, mutual expreſſions of kindneſs, communicating of ſecrets, rejoicing in one another. O but many a poor ſoul has been raviſhed with Chriſt's love here, and with the wine of his conſolation; he has made rare diſcoveries of his love to them.

5. To ratify and confirm the covenant between God and us. It was uſual in the eaſtern countries to ratify contracts and covenants by eating and drinking together. So was it in the covenant made between Iſaac and Abimelech, ſee Gen. xxvi. 28, 30. And ſo it was a federal rite between Laban and Jacob, Gen. xxxi. 46. between the Iſraelites and Gibeonites, Joſhua ix. 14. between David and Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 20. Conſider then, this is a covenanting feaſt, here a ſolemn bargain between God and us is ſealed and ratified. What is the bargain? See the tenor of the covenant, Acts xvi. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Here we engage to believe in Chriſt, and Chriſt engages to ſave us. Here God promiſes to be to us a God, and we promiſe to be to him a people.——Here God promiſes and ſeals the benefits of the covenant on his part, and we promiſe and ſeal the duties of the covenant on our part.——Here God's giving the ſigns is a ſeal on his part, and our taking them is a ſeal on ours.——Here Chriſt gives us his ſoul and body to ſave us, and we give our ſouls and bodies to ſerve him.—Here God binds himſelf to be faithful, and we bind ourſelves to be conſtant.——Yea, we here ſwear allegiance to Chriſt over his broken body and ſhed blood.

6. To be a cordial to his poor fainting ones, and for ſtrengthening the weak and feeble of his people.——Many of his people are ſore caſt down, and have dwelt long with fears and horrors; and this is relief to them, here Chriſt ſmiles, and ſpeaks peace.——Others are weak in grace, here he brings them ſupplies; here the decayed have renewed their ſtrength; here the lame have been made to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to ſing.

7. To fortify and encourage againſt all difficulties and trials we may meet with in Chriſt's ſervice. We are to look for reproaches and perſecutions, if we hold faſt by Chriſt. Satan and the world will not be idle, ſee Heb. x. 23. Here is a meal and cordial to hearten us for it; and ſome have met with that in this feaſt which hath made them chearfully venture on ſufferings, and reſolve never to leave Chriſt. An hour of ſealing animates the ſoul for an hour of ſuffering. If the Redeemer ſmile on us, and his love be ſhade abroad in our hearts, we can bear any thing, ſuffer any thing, looſe any thing, and not be diſcouraged. O then come, and take in proviſion againſt the evil day, for ye have a wilderneſs to go through. Elijah was excited to take a double meal, for his journey was long. So if you would have ſtrength for your journey, O here you may have it; here is food more ſubſiſting, durable, and nouriſhing than Elijah's cake and cruſe of water, of which he ate and drank, and in the ſtrength of that meal went forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 6, 8.——What bread and wine afford to the body, the ſame doth Chriſt's body and blood in the ſacrament, received by faith, afford to the ſoul, *viz.* ſtrengthening, comforting, nouriſhment. And who but a madman would be ſo cruel to himſelf, as to deny his faint body its ſtated meals and relief? O may it not hearten you, that whatever your ſtraits, bodily wants or neceſſities are, and however ye may be deſpiſed, you have a great King that honours you, owns you, takes you to feaſt with himſelf here, and

will ſhortly call you to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb above.

8. To wean you from the vain pleaſures and comforts of the world, and from ſenſual delights; and to make you long for that glorious and full feaſt above. This is a foretaſte of it, and ſhould ſtir up a hunger for it; for this feaſt is the firſt fruits of heaven.

Improvement I. I infer what a horrid calumny it is, that is raiſed againſt the ways of Chriſt by the devil and the world, that they are ſad and melancholly, of purpoſe to fright men from them. No, you ſee Chriſt has royal feaſts for his people, the world knows little of. A believer would not give a crumb of this ſpiritual feaſt for many days of worldly feaſts.

II. Admire his condeſcenſion, that the Lord of glory ſhould make ſuch a feaſt for beggars, ſee Luke xiv. 21. Poor worms, vile ſinners, will he call us, that deſerve not a dog's crumb beneath the table, to come and ſit down with the children at the table? O what are we that he ſhould deal ſo with us, ſinners vile as the mire, and black as hell. You have far greater cauſe to wonder at this privilege than Mephiboſheth, 2 Sam. ix. 7. 'David ſaid to him, I will ſurely ſhew thee kindneſs 'for Jonathan thy father's ſake, and will reſtore thee 'all the land of Saul thy father, and thou ſhalt eat 'bread at my table continually.' Obſerve his anſwer, 'What is thy ſervant, that thou ſhouldſt look upon 'ſuch a dead dog as I am?'

III. How unexcuſable are they who ſlight this feaſt, that has coſt Chriſt ſo dear, more than ten thouſand kingdoms? He has made all things ready, and has been calling ſinners to come. Conſider how grievouſly the King took it, when he made his marriage ſupper, and thoſe that were bidden would not come, Luke xvi. 24.

IV. *Exhortation.* O communicants who have been preparing for this feaſt, come away to the marriage, all things are ready on Chriſt's part. *Object.* But how ſhall I get acceſs to the banqueting houſe? *Anſw.* Employ Chriſt to bring you in. It is he alone that brings his ſpouſe in. You may come to the table, and get the outward elements, but unleſs Chriſt bring you in to the banqueting houſe, ye will not be taken in. It is only Chriſt can give you appetites, and clothe you with the wedding garment; it is only he that can quicken the dead ſoul, and ſtrengthen the weak, *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me*, ſaith Paul. He only can ſend the Comforter, the north and ſouth gales of the Spirit. He only can remove the burden of ſin, and take away the heart of ſtone, diſſolve doubts and ſcatter clouds. O look and long for him then to bring you in, and ſay with theſe in John xi. 56. *What think ye, will he come to the feaſt?* Will he bring me into the banqueting houſe; will he touch my heart and take me by the hand? Poor ſinner, I will tell you whom he will bring in. It is true, it is not every one, many come thronging to the feaſt that have no ground to expect to be taken in. But there are ſome he will bring in, and they are theſe; 1. The hungry, and thirſty ſinner that is longing for a meeting with Chriſt, ſenſible of his needs and wants, and crying, O a crumb from his hand, a drop from his wounds, a ſeal of pardon from that table elſe I die. Theſe have a promiſe to be filled. 2 The poor broken hearted humbled ſoul, that has a deep ſenſe of his own nothingneſs and unworthineſs, ſaying, I am not worthy that Chriſt ſhould come under my roof, and far leſs worthy that I ſhould come under Chriſt's roof, my ſins are ſo many and great. Is there any ſtanding afar off with the publican, afraid to come to the holy table, ſaying, *God be merciful to me a ſinner*, Chriſt will come to ſuch, Iſa. lvii. 15. 'He will revive 'the ſpirit of the humble, and the heart of the con'trite ones.' 3. The poor praying and wreſtling ſoul, that has been putting up many a petition, ſigh and groan for acceſs, ſaying, *O that I knew where to find him!* O when wilt thou come unto me, how long wilt thou hide thy face? O have ye been ſtorming heaven with your cries laſt week, laſt night, and this morning? Have ye been knocking for the opening of the door of the banqueting houſe? He will come and bring ſuch in. 4. All the friends and lovers of Chriſt will be taken in. O ſinner, art thou ſuch, ſee thy warrant and thy welcome, Cant. v. 1. O ſay ſome, I cannot be a friend to Chriſt; but I wiſh him well, and his people and intereſt. I cannot ſay I'm a true lover of Chriſt; but I find my heart glowing and warming with deſire to him, and I would give all the world I had theſe glowings kindled into a flame. Take courage, poor ſoul, Chriſt will not quench the ſmoaking flax, he will blow it up into a flame, and take thee in. 5. All ſincere covenanting ſouls, that have been yeſternight and this morning honeſtly conſenting to the bargain offered in the goſpel, content to cloſe with Chriſt as he offers himſelf, to renounce their idols and luſts, and to give Chriſt their hearts. Is there any ſoul willing to open to Chriſt; O then he will take you in, Rev. iii. 20. *If any man open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.* O poor ſinners, that never opened your hearts to Chriſt, be perſuaded to open to a bountiful Lord; open your hearts to him, and he will open his banqueting houſe to you. O ſinner, haſt thou no need of Chriſt's dainties? Art thou not a poor, periſhing, ſtarving ſoul, a famiſhed prodigal, and needeſt thou not the bread of life? Chriſt is at the door with variety of bleſſings, and ready to open his banqueting houſe to you, O will ye open to him? Conſider that if ye do not accept of Chriſt, he may paſs ſuch a ſentence againſt you as in Luke xiv. 24. *For I ſay unto you, that none of theſe men which were bidden ſhall taſte of my ſupper.* O will it not be dreadful to ſee the ſaints ſitting at the royal feaſt in heaven, and you yourſelves ſhut out, like a company of ſtarving beggars ſtanding about the doors where the marriage ſupper is kept? They ſee the lights, and behold the rich diſhes carried up, they hear the mirth and muſic of the gueſts, but not a bit comes to their ſhare.

But as for you that are content to accept of Chriſt on his own terms, come away to the marriage ſupper, Chriſt the Maſter of this feaſt invites you, and will make you welcome. And in coming to this feaſt obſerve the following directions.

1. Come with holy awe and reverence of God, the Maſter and Maker of this feaſt. If ye were going to a prince's table, you would have ſome awe upon your ſpirits; mind the Maſter of this feaſt is a glorious, holy and jealous God that will not be mocked.

2. Come with a pure heart and clean hands, waſh your hearts in the tears of true repentance, cleanſe them of all filth, through the blood of Jeſus, which

cleanſeth from all ſin, otherwiſe you will affront the Maſter of this feaſt. Should a beggar that has been wallowing in a puddle, intrude himſelf in that condition into a prince's company, ſit down at his table, and dip his beſmeared hands into the ſame diſh with him, how would he take it? O come not with filthy rags and filthy hands to this holy table, but repent of every ſin, renounce every ſin, and reſolve againſt every ſin.

3. Come with a holy fear and jealouſy over yourſelves, feared that you be not ready. Cry, Lord, let me not wrong Chriſt or my own ſoul, this day! O let me not betray the Son of God with a kiſs; O let me not murder Chriſt or my own ſoul, contract blood guiltineſs, or drink damnation. O what if I want the wedding garment when the King comes in to view the gueſts!

4. Come with a broken and bleeding heart to view the ſlain Lamb. O will not the dying groans and bleeding wounds of Chriſt move you? When you ſee him ſtretched out and nailed, will ye not cry, O behold my Saviour that was nailed for me, dying with love in his heart, and ſmiles in his face; O it was my ſins, drove in theſe nails. Remember, the ſun vailed his face in the time of Chriſt's ſufferings, fainted at the ſight, and could not look; O vail yours, retire inwardly, and take amends of ſin the cauſe of his ſufferings.

5. Have on the wedding garment, *viz.* Faith in a Redeemer's righteouſneſs. Come relying on him for acceptance, and look to him for ſtrength and furniture; look up to him, O dead ſoul, for life and quickening. How unſeemly will it be to ſee a company of dead corpſe ſet down to the feaſt of the living God? O be acting faith in a lively manner on Chriſt, for faith is the life of all: O come reach hither thy finger and behold Chriſt's hands, reach hither thy hand, and feel the prints of the nails, and mark of the ſpear, and cry with Thomas, *My Lord and my God; here will I reſt, and here will I ſtay.* In the clefts of his wounds my ſoul ſhall take ſhelter, where juſtice ſhall not reach me.

6. Come with love, for it is a love feaſt. O love Chriſt, that is both the Maſter, the Maker and matter of the feaſt. Chriſt's heart is burning and bleeding with love to you, O let yours do ſo to him. Without love ye have nothing to do here.—Come alſo with love and charity to all men, be ready to forgive every one, as ye would have God to forgive you.

7. Come with panting and thirſting deſires, to ſee and meet with Chriſt, ſaying, I care not who be here, if Chriſt be abſent. O the deſire of my ſoul is towards him and the remembrance of his name.

8. Come with expectation, depending only on Chriſt's merits, God's promiſe, and free mercy in Chriſt, greedily expecting ſomething from Chriſt this day; as the poor cripple man did from Peter and John, Acts iii. 4. 5. *And Peter faſtening his eyes upon him, with John, ſaid, look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive ſomething of them.* We ordinarily receive little, becauſe we expect little. O raiſe your deſires and expectations, for you come to a merciful and liberal God, that will not let the expectation of the poor periſh, Pſalm ix. 18.

9. Come reſigning yourſelves to Chriſt. Give up your hearts to Chriſt, ſaying, Lord, I have no ſacrifice to bring but my heart, O that it were a thouſand times better than it is, it ſhould be thine; Lord, accept of the poor ſacrifice.

10. Come with admiration and praiſe. O the high praiſes of God ſhould be in our mouths: wonder and praiſe God for the contrivance of our redemption, and for making choice of ſuch a Redeemer. O wonder and praiſe our Redeemer for leaving his throne of glory for a manger; yea, for a croſs and a grave, and all for the ſake of us. Say, "Lord, what am I, that thou " ſhouldſt part with thy glory, yea, with thy blood and " life for ſuch a wretch as I am? O how am I aſhamed, " that I love thee no more; my heart is cold, my tongue " is ſlow, I cannot love, I cannot praiſe. O let heaven " and earth, angels and men join and extol his free " grace and wonderous love." If ye come in ſuch a frame, you will be taken into the banqueting houſe, and his banner over you will be love. And this leads me to ſpeak a word to the *banner of love*.

Chriſt upon the croſs hath lifted up a banner of love, he hath declared himſelf willing to receive every ſoul that will come under his banner, and liſt himſelf to fight under his colours. As ye are profeſſing to leave the devil's ſtandard, and come to Chriſt, by taking your ſacrament, (which uſed to be a military oath among the Romans) and ſwearing allegiance to Chriſt; O mind ye are not to draw back, but to follow the Captain of your ſalvation, and fight againſt the devil, the world and the fleſh. If ye perjure yourſelves, and return to your old ways, ſaying, welcome drunken cups, bloody, oaths, lying, *&c.* ye will incur all the curſes of the law, and vengeance of the goſpel alſo. O ye will ſink deeper into hell than others, and ye will be made to cry, would to God I had been the ſon of a Pagan or Mahometan. Wherefore own and ſtand by the banner of Chriſt; and to encourage you to ſtedfaſtneſs, keep in mind that you have, 1. A noble General, who hath already conquered, and is ready to join you in the fight. 2. A noble cauſe; it is the Lord's battle, they are God's enemies, and enemies to your ſouls alſo. 3. You have noble weapons the ſhield of faith, ſword of the Spirit, *&c.* they are impenetrable and full proof. 4. Noble pay, a white ſtone, a crown and a new name, grace here, and glory hereafter. 5. Ye are ſure of victory, if ye fight valiantly, for Chriſt will fairly bring you out of the field at length.

A banner is a ſign of union; it ſignifies that all who reſort to it, are united in one company, under ſuch a captain: O then ſtudy union among yourſelves. Let the conſideration of Chriſt's love move you all to be united, and to love one another. O ſhun diviſion, diſcord, ſlandering and backbiting; we are ſoldiers of one company, and under one Captain, and if you divide, enemies will reap advantage.——Again, a banner is a ſign of protection, and love is the banner that engages Chriſt to protect his people; as long as Chriſt loves his people, he will protect and defend them. O then mind your work in evil times, flee to Chriſt's love, and abide in this love; keep your ſouls in the love of God, clear up the evidences of Chriſt's love, and ſo you may look to him for protection and through-bearing in the worſt caſe; men or devils ſhall do you no hurt, while his banner over you is love.——*Laſtly*, A banner diſplayed ſignifies victory: When conquerors won a city, they diſplayed their colours on the walls; O has Chriſt this day won your hearts, conquered your enemies and luſts, and diſplayed his banner thereupon. O it is love that engaged him to make ſuch a conqueſt. Be faithful to your friendly Conqueror, and let not theſe enemies and rebels get into the city again. O hold out the city, and fight valiantly under Chriſt's banner; be not cowardly, do not baſely ſurrender the fort that Chriſt has won; he has won it, let him wear it, let him poſſeſs the throne for ever. Say to Chriſt, as the men of Iſrael ſaid to Gideon, Judges viii. 22. *Rule thou over us, for thou haſt delivered us out of the hand of Midian.* O but Chriſt has delivered you out of the hands of ſatan; ſubmit therefore kindly to his government and laws, own him as a King as well as a Prieſt; ſurrender willingly the keys of your heart to him, and keep your heart for him.

THE
BALM of GILEAD,
FOR HEALING
A DISEASED LAND.

THE PREFACE.

ALthough theſe ſermons were preached in Scotland, and have ſome reference to the caſe of that church and land under her preſent diviſions and backſlidings: yet they are compoſed in ſuch a ſtrain, as to be uſeful and applicable to any church under the like diſtempers, which, alas, is the caſe of the moſt. What remedies can be ſo effectual to cure them of theſe evils, as theſe propoſed in the following diſcourſes, to wit, the excellent Balm of Gilead, and the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit? If it were the gracious will of God to diſpoſe all the biſhops and miniſters of Britain and Ireland, to make it their buſineſs to open up and recommend theſe noble remedies to their people, it would contribute greatly to heal their maladies, and increaſe the kingdom of Chriſt in theſe lands. I can't help thinking but thoſe who are conſecrated to ſpiritual offices would be more ſuitably and profitably employed in this work, than in attending courts, and purſuing ſecular deſigns.

Seeing now the arm of the Lord is beginning to awake, and many are excited to run to and fro for increaſing goſpel-knowledge, and labour to propagate the doctrine of ſalvation thro' the imputed righteouſneſs of the ſlain Lamb of God: And ſeeing the Lord is pleaſed in ſundry parts of the world to give countenance to theſe endeavours by the outpouring of his Spirit, for awakening many ſouls to an inquiry and ſearch after true happineſs thro' the bleſſed Jeſus: It doth highly concern all goſpel miniſters and preachers to concur in helping forward the Lord's work, by proclaiming the ſaving doctrine and offers of free grace to the world, and to exert themſelves for removing out of the way all letts and hindrances of the kingdom of Chriſt, that ſo his dominion may ſpread from ſea to ſea, thro' all nations of the earth.

In the following ſermons I have made ſome inquiry into the times and ſeaſons of the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom: and becauſe this is greatly connected with the deſtruction of antichriſt, I have mentioned ſome conjectures and calculations about the time of his fall: though I think none ſhould be too bold or peremptory in fixing the preciſe time, but all ought to wait patiently until God's ſet time ſhall come. All may now perceive antichriſt viſibly riſen and diſcovered. Nay, we have ſeen him arrived at his pomp and height about 1500 years after Chriſt; ſince that time the Lord hath begun to waſte and conſume him, by the revival of religion and learning in the world. As his riſe was gradual, ſo ſhall his conſumption be. He hath now been labouring under a deadly conſumption above theſe 200 years paſt. The wound given him is deep and mortal, ſo whatever pains be taken ſometimes to heal it, all ſhall be in vain; for as Chriſt muſt increaſe, ſo antichriſt muſt decreaſe, and be quite ruined at length, as is ſhewed in the following diſcourſes. May all the lovers of Chriſt pray fervently and look out for that bleſſed and joyful time.

SERMON I.

Upon JEREM. viii. 20, 21, 22.

The harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved.
For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black: Aſtoniſhment hath taken hold on me.
Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

IN the preceding part of this chapter we have repreſented a great deſtruction that God was about to bring upon a ſinful people, and the conſternation the whole land ſhould be in upon the alarm thereof. The ſins of Judah were come to a great height, whereby God was provoked to let looſe the Chaldeans againſt them. The prophet was himſelf an eye-witneſs of the oppreſſion and deſolation of his country and the church of God by the Chaldean army, and he foreſaw ſtill greater judgments and calamities coming upon them, whereby both he and the ſerious people of the land were greatly affected, and put to lament their caſe before the Lord. Among other things they lament the diſappointment of their expectations of healing and deliverance from diſtreſs, ver. 15. *We looked for peace, but no good came, and for a time of health, and behold trouble.* They ſometimes had hopeful and promiſing ſeaſons, when they expected relief; but after all their waiting they were diſappointed; theſe likely times of healing were loſt. Hence they are put to ſay, *The harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved.* Summer and harveſt are proper ſeaſons of action, opportunities for armies to take the field, to ſubdue enemies, and bring about deliverance for an oppreſt people: The winter that follows is not a fit ſeaſon for action. It is ſad when likely ſeaſons for ſaving a people from temporal enemies and grievances are loſt; but it is yet ſadder for them to loſe hopeful and promiſing ſeaſons for ſaving of their ſouls. The loſs of ſuch harveſt or ſummer days for our ſouls is the greateſt ground of lamentation. The prophet being deeply ſenſible of his people's loſs and calamitous condition, he is grievouſly diſtreſſed for them, ver. 21. *For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black,* &c. *The daughter of my people* is a common Hebraiſm uſed in ſcripture, and it ſignifies the body of the people of Judah, which was God's viſible church upon earth; their hurt and diſtreſs did affect the holy man in the moſt tender manner, and drew forth his ſympathy with them. Upon this account, ſaith he, *I am black,* I have loſt my wonted colour, my face is turned blackiſh, or I go in black as mourners do. I am aſtoniſhed and troubled the more that I ſee no appearance of relief for them in their diſtreſs, their caſe ſeems to be hopeleſs and incurable. Upon which he puts the queſtion, ver. 22. "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician there? Why then, &c." Is there no balm for the diſtreſſed church, no phyſician for a diſeaſed land? It is generally thought the queſtion doth not import any deſpair or denial of help, but rather the contrary, as if he had ſaid, Is there no balm? Is there not a Phyſician? Yes, there is. The incurableneſs of their diſeaſe is not owing to the want of balm, or of a Phyſician in the land, but to themſelves and their unbelief. There was a ſufficient remedy in God, and in the Meſſiah for all their grievances, had they accepted and applied the ſame. Hence he adds that pertinent queſtion, *Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? q. d.* What is the cauſe then, or to whom is it to be imputed, that the church or people of Judah do ſtill ly in a dying caſe? ſurely not to the balm nor to the phyſician, but to their own folly and obſtinacy.

Queſt. What is here meant by the balm of Gilead? *Anſw.* The land of Gilead on the other ſide Jordan was a part of the country of Iſrael, where that plant grew which afforded a moſt precious balm for healing, when it was pierced, which was a rare and valuable commodity, that other countries did traffick for with the land of Iſrael, Jer. xlvi. 11. Ezek. xxvii. 17. And we ſee in Gen. xxxvii. 25. the Iſhmaelites that bought Joſeph carried balm from Gilead into Egypt. Naturliſts ſay, this balm was a juice or oil that run from a certain low ſhrub, when its bark was cut, that grew eſpecially about Jericho in the land of Gilead, and was of great value, as having a ſovereign virtue to cleanſe foul ſores, heal deep wounds, help the eye-ſight, cure the ſtings of ſerpents, yea it was a ſort of *catholicon* that cured almoſt all diſeaſes. This balm we may look upon as a fit type to repreſent Chriſt's blood, which is an excellent balm and *catholicon* for all diſeaſes of the ſoul: For God's diſpenſations to the Iſraelites were generally deſigned as types and ſigns of ſpiritual things under the New Teſtament times, according to 1 Cor. x. 11. *All theſe things happened unto them for enſamples:* Orig. TUPOI, *for types.* And among the reſt this balm of Gilead was typical and inſtructive to the virtue of the Meſſiah's blood; for ſeeing God vouchſafed this balm to Iſrael only, and made other nations beholden to them for it, it teacheth us that the balm for healing ſouls is only in the church of God, and Chriſt is the true antitype of this balm, for in Judah's land only was Chriſt known, there they had his blood daily typified to them in the ſacrifices, and its virtue ſet forth.

Again, the Phyſician of Gilead is next mentioned, becauſe phyſicians uſe to abound where there is plenty of good medicines. The Balm and Phyſicians in Gilead are figuratively brought in here to point out the plenty of good means of health that were ſtill in Iſrael for recovering them from their languiſhing conſumption, if they had made a right uſe of them. As they had God himſelf, and the Meſſiah and his Spirit which he had promiſed to them, to look to for relief: ſo they had plenty of under means and phyſicians appointed them. They had God's law, the temple, the ordinances, the altar and ſacrifices. They had alſo the princes, the prieſts, and prophets, whoſe buſineſs it was to redreſs grievances, reform the nation, and apply to heaven for help. So that if the health of the church and nation was not reſtored, it was not for want of balm, or a phyſician; nay, God had plentifully provided excellent means and remedies for their cure: And if their diſeaſe be deadly, or their wound incurable, it muſt be owing to themſelves, and to their deſperate wilfulneſs or incorrigibleneſs in ſin, and to their refuſing to ſubmit to the Phyſician's directions and method of cure.

The words being thus opened up, give ground for the following heads of doctrine.

I. The caſe of thoſe is very lamentable, who loſe their harveſt and ſummer days of grace.

II. Every gracious ſpirit is a public ſpirit, and will lay to heart the calamitous caſe of the church or country whereof he is a member.

III. However deſperate the diſeaſes of thoſe within the church may ſeem to be, yet if they die of them, it will be owing to themſelves, ſeeing they have ſuch an able Phyſician, and excellent balm to look to for healing.

It is the laſt of theſe doctrines, I mainly intend to handle and inſiſt upon; wherefore I ſhall the more briefly touch the two firſt as introductory to it.

I. *Doct.* The caſe of thoſe is very lamentable who loſe their harveſt and ſummer-days of grace: or their moſt hopeful and likely ſeaſons of ſalvation.

I ſhall diſcourſe this point in the following method.

I. Mention ſome of theſe likely ſeaſons, which ſhould be carefully improved.

II. Who may be ſaid to have loſt their ſummer days.

III. Enquire into the cauſes of men's loſing theſe hopeful ſeaſons.

IV. Shew the great evil and danger of loſing them; if the time allow.

V. Make application.

I. As to the firſt, I ſhall inſtance ſome of the ſummer days or hopeful ſeaſons which we ſhould carefully improve for ſaving of our ſouls, and not ſuffer them to be loſt. Such as,

1. The ſummer days of youth. O that is a hopeful ſeaſon, when the heart is moſt tender and tractable, and eaſieſt melted into tears for ſin, and kindled into a flame of love to Chriſt who died for our ſins; God loves the firſt ripe fruits, young tears and prayers, young faith and love, and hence he makes the time of youth the uſual ſeaſon of converting and eſpouſing ſinners to himſelf. O young folks, ſuffer not theſe ſummer days to paſs away in vain; but begin in this ſeaſon to be religious, and to remember God and eternity, Eccl. xii. 1.

2. It is a promiſing ſeaſon, when perſons enjoy lively means and ordinances, whereby Chriſt crucified is evidently ſet forth before their eyes, as the only remedy for their periſhing ſouls, and they earneſtly called and preſſed to come and cloſe with him as ſuch. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of ſalvation.* O let not this ſummer-day of grace go over without cloſing with Chriſt in the offers of the goſpel.

3. It is a likely ſeaſon, when there is a noiſe and ſhaking among the dry bones, by the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit in and with the word, as when the Spirit brings the word cloſe home to the ſoul's caſe finding and ſingling it out, as Nathan did David, ſaying, *Thou art the man*, thou art the child of wrath, the enemy of God, the unregenerate ſinner, againſt whom the ſword of juſtice and curſes of the law are levelled. Or when the Spirit ſo faſtens the arrows of conviction on the conſcience, as to bring the man to a reſtleſs thoughtfulneſs about the guilt of his ſins, and his eternal ſtate, and to cry, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* And to make him diſſatisfied with all his earthly comforts, and ſay, *All theſe avail me nothing* while I go Chriſtleſs. O this is a harveſt-day of ſalvation, every minute of it is precious, and ſhould be carefully improved for the ſoul.

4. The time of ſatan's reſtraint is a ſeaſon not to be loſt: Sometimes the devil is ſo bound up that he cannot diſturb the church by bloody perſecutions, or by errors and ſchiſms as at other times, that is a fair ſummer-day of grace, which ſhould be well improved. Tho' we can't ſay that ſatan at this time is altogether bound up, nay he is wofully let looſe in reſpect of error and diviſion; but bleſt be God, he is reſtrained with reſpect to perſecution, ſo that, my brethren, he cannot preſently drive your teachers into corners, nor put you to ſeek your ſpiritual bread with the peril of your lives, becauſe of the ſword, in the wilderneſs, as ſometimes hath been the caſe in our land. O then, do not ſin away this calm ſummer-day, but with earneſt attention and care hearken to the ſweet voice of the *turtle*, which is ſtill to be heard thro' all corners of the land.

5. The time when God is viſiting a land with wakening and alarming diſpenſations of providence, is a ſeaſon to be carefully improved for ſaving of the ſoul. When God doth premoniſh us that either a ſtorm is coming on the church and land in general, or that death approaches us in particular, we ſhould take warning, like Noah, while the evils are at a diſtance, *be moved with fear, and provide an ark for the ſaving* of our ſouls, before the flood of wrath come upon us. Nay, my friends, you have God to bleſs, that the *ark* is already prepared to your hand, and a window opened in the ſide of it for your entrance. May you be ſo wiſe as to take warning in time, get faith's wings, and flee into the ark Chriſt, before the flood ariſe, and before death come. You have had a long harveſt-day of grace in the land, and now have ſhrewd tokens of night approaching: You may look for the night of death, or the winter of deſolation, ſtrokes, perſecution, and darkneſs. Wherefore, as Chriſt ſaith, *Work while it is day: yet a little while is the light with you, walk while you have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you. The night cometh* (ſaith he) *when no man can work.* Surely it draws towards eventide, and the night of death: Yea, a fearful night both of ſpiritual and temporal judgments ſeems to be drawing on; and ſhould not the remaining light or day be well employed? There are ſeveral ſigns of an approaching night.

Firſt, When the force and heat of the ſun do abate, it draws towards night; ſo when the goſpel ſun, or preaching of the word, hath little heat or effect upon ſinners cold hearts, it betokens night coming on. *Secondly*, When the ſhadows of the evening are ſtretched out and grow long, it is a ſign of approaching night. And oh! how long are the ſhadows ſtretched out beyond the ſubſtance! How much doth the profeſſion of religion exceed the power of it at this day? *Thirdly*, When the labourers go home from their work, it is a ſign the night comes on. Ah! how many of our choice and faithful labourers do we ſee going home, without others to fill their room?—*Fourthly*, When the evening wolves and beaſts of prey creep out of their holes, it is a token of night. And ſurely there have been evening wolves ſeen among us, who have intruded upon the vineyard, ſpoiled the vines, and miſerably ſcattered the flock of Chriſt.—*Fifthly*, Growing darkneſs is a forerunner of the night. Ah! how much doth darkneſs prevail among us at this time, yea ſo much, that ſeveral of the ſharpeſt-ſighted are reeling and miſtaking their way, not being able to diſcern between ſin and duty in divers caſes: Alas! many are wandering and loſing their way. Surely then it is our wiſdom and duty to improve the light that remains, in ſeeking converting grace to ourſelves, and an aſſured intereſt in precious Chriſt, before the darkneſs of the night overtake us: And alſo to pray for pity to the land, that *at evening it may be light*.

In the *laſt place*, Notwithſtanding of theſe diſmal tokens, it makes the ſeaſon ſomewhat promiſing, that we hear of Chriſt's goings as a conqueror in other parts of the world, and many bowing down at his feet. Now if the King of Zion, be riſing up to make his circuit thro' his churches, to diſplay his glorious power and grace among them; may it not raiſe our hopes, and encourage us to look out for his marching towards us, to make good that word, Zech. xiv. 7. *It ſhall come to paſs that at evening time it ſhall be light*; that is, when it was not expected. And, oh! what a pleaſant ſurprize would this appearance be to all the lovers of Zion!

II. The 2d head is to enquire who may be ſaid to have loſt their ſummer-days, or their likely ſeaſons of grace. Though we cannot be peremptory about any, while life remains, yet of ſome there may be ſad grounds of fear, that the text is too applicable to them, *Their harveſt is paſt, their ſummer is ended, and they are not ſaved*, Such as——*1ſt*, Thoſe who have had the Spirit long ſtriving with them, and they have reſiſted all his motions and operations, ſo that he is quite withdrawn from them. The caſe of ſuch is very hopeleſs, according to Ezek. xxiv. 13.—*2dly*, Thoſe who perſiſt in ſinful courſes, and harden their necks againſt all challenges and reproofs for the ſame, we ſee what is ſaid of them, Prov. xxix. 1.——*3dly*, Thoſe who come the length to ſin preſumptuouſly, that is, venture upon ſin againſt light, in hopes of repentance and pardon, their caſe is diſmal, according to Numb. xv. 30.——*4thly*, Thoſe who provoke God, by their bentneſs on ſin, to ceaſe to be a reprover to them, to ſtrike both conſcience and miniſters dumb, that they challenge them no more, Ezek. iii. 27. Hoſ. iv. 17.——*5thly*, Thoſe who deliberately relapſe into ſin, after rods, convictions, reſolutions, and vows, Iſa. i. 5.—*6thly*, Thoſe who give themſelves up to commit ſin with greedineſs, and glory in it, Eph. iv. 19. Phil. iii. 19.——*7thly*, Thoſe whoſe deſpiſe all goſpel offers, and mock the meſſengers who bring them, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Alas! ſuch have reaſon to fear *their harveſt is paſt*, &c. Their caſe is very hopeleſs, though none can ſay it is paſt the reach of ſovereign grace.

III. The 3d head is, to enquire into the cauſes of mens loſing their hopeful ſeaſons.—*1ſt*, It proceeds from their unbelief and doubting of the certainty of goſpel truths: This keeps many hovering ſo long between heaven and hell, death and life, Chriſt and the world, that their ſummer and harveſt days are gone before they come to a reſolution. Did men believe the certainty of wrath to come, and that they are born heirs of that wrath, they would think no motion ſwift enough in fleeing to Chriſt, and cloſing with him in order to eſcape it.

2dly, Many trifle away their ſummer days and ſeaſons of action, becauſe they look on death and eternity at many years diſtance, and that they will have time enough, before theſe expire, to mind ſalvation work. By this deluſion, ſatan cheats many out of their moſt hopeful ſeaſons. Did men look on death as within a ſtep of them, and having no more but a ſingle thread to cut, ſo that within a few days they ſhall either be ſinging with the ſaints in heaven, or roaring with the damned in hell, they would not let their ſummer days paſs ſo idly.

3dly, Promiſing ſummer-days are loſt through indulging of ſloth. Many, before they will be at ſome pains now in prayer and ſecret duties, will venture upon endleſs pains in hell hereafter. Oh! prodigious folly! What pains was Chriſt at to ſave you, and will you be at none to ſave yourſelves? Hath not God an eternity of reſt and pleaſure to recompence your ſmall toil and pains in improving your ſummer days!

4thly, Love of ſenſual delights and carnal company proves a ſnare to many. They are hereby drawn into idleneſs, games, paſtimes, tippling, fooliſh talking and jeſting, and other ſinful pleaſures; whereby their ſummer-days are trifled away and miſpent. Even theſe diverſions which are judged the moſt innocent, ought to be uſed with fear and caution, leſt they ſteal away our heart and thoughts from our chief concerns; which if they do, they are not innocent but hurtful. Oh! they are ſad diverſions that would divert us from Chriſt and heaven. It is unbecoming a Chriſtian that looks for eternal delights in another world, and pleaſures of a higher nature, to have his heart ſet upon the pitiful delights of this earth, which fly away as a dream, and leave nothing behind them, unleſs it be a ſting in the conſcience for ſpending days of grace ſo unprofitably. One hour's enjoyment of Chriſt's preſence and favour hath far more pleaſure in it, than many years of ſenſual delights.

But for ſhortening this diſcourſe, I muſt paſs ſeveral things I had in view, and proceed to

The APPLICATION.

Infer. 1ſt, Doth God in his mercy afford men hopeful ſeaſons for ſaving their ſouls, ſummer-days of youth; harveſt-days of goſpel-grace? O how lamentable muſt it be to ſee men waſting away theſe ſeaſons by delays, putting off converſion-work and cloſing with Chriſt from day to day, till both their ſummer and harveſt are paſt. When conſcience or God's Spirit preſs them, they anſwer with Felix, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I'll hear thee;" meaning nothing but to put off the preſent conviction. Oh! Sirs, the work is ſo weighty and neceſſary, you cannot make too much haſte to expede it, it is work for your immortal ſouls and work for eternity. How careful would a man be to improve a day, if his natural life dependeth upon it? If a condemned man had an hour allowed him to beg his life from his prince, would he think he might delay till ſome minutes of it were paſt! No, he would apply at the very firſt, and uſe the moſt moving words and arguments he could deviſe to obtain it, and leave nothing uneſſayed during that hour. But oh! Is there not much more at ſtake here? When the ſalvation of the precious ſoul through all eternity depends upon the improvement of the preſent ſummer-day of grace! It is your wiſdom to take the morning rather than the evening of it. The morning is fitteſt for beginning a journey; you would call him a fooliſh traveller that would ſet out only when the ſun is ſetting.

Infer. 2. How much are they to be blamed, who waſte away their precious ſeaſons of grace, in purſuing fooliſh luſts and pleaſures, who take God's time and their ſoul's ſeaſons too, to do the devil's work in. Oh, Sirs! doth God create pleaſant ſummer and harveſt-days for you to ſerve the devil his grand enemy? Wretched ingratitude! Or, do you think that God ſhould wait till the devil, the world and the fleſh have done with you, and then be content to take their leavings! Be aſhamed of ſo requitting the Lord, and dealing ſo with your Maker, O fooliſh people and unwiſe!

Infer. 3. Surely, goſpel-ſlighters, and neglecters of the ſeaſon of grace, muſt have an uncomfortable death-bed, ſeeing the mournful ditty of my text belongs to them, *Our harveſt is paſt, our ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved.* Oh! how cutting muſt the review of waſted ſummer-days be to you when death calls upon you! It will be ſo far from yielding you any comfort at that time, to call to mind your carnal company and converſe, your jeſts and ſports, your games and paſtimes, your tippling and idle talking, that the very remembrance of theſe will increaſe your ſorrow.

Infer. 4. We may hence juſtly conclude goſpel-ſlighters to be men beſide themſelves, and without the free uſe of their reaſon, ſeeing they act a part below the very brutes and inſects. Theſe obſerve the proper ſeaſons in providing for winter, but ah! you neglect yours in providing for eternity. *The ſtork in the heavens knows her appointed times; the turtle, the crane and the ſwallow obſerve the time of their coming*, Jer. viii. 7. *The ant provideth her meat in the ſummer, and gathereth her food in the harveſt, and all to lay up for winter*, Prov. vi. 8. But ah! you let your ſouls ſummer and harveſt-days paſs over without minding the winter of death, or providing for them when diſlodged of the body. It muſt ſurely be the height of madneſs to trifle away the ſeaſon which is given you for ſaving your ſouls through all eternity. If ſin had not wofully bemiſted your eyes, you would have been ready to have looked upon him as a monſter or madman, that had but a few days to win or loſe his ſoul for ever, and yet would be playing theſe away at cards and dice, or trifling them away in jeſts and diverſions, tippling and idleneſs, and never once minding the ſaving of his ſoul! And yet how many of all ranks may I apply to, and ſay, *Thou art the man!*

Infer. 5. If goſpel ſeaſons be the ſummer and harveſt for our ſouls, it muſt be our unqueſtionable duty and intereſt to improve them with the greateſt care, by complying with the Spirit's motions, and the goſpel-offers, by cloſing with Chriſt, and 'giving all diligence 'to make our calling and election ſure;' for if the proper ſeaſon for theſe be loſt, the work cannot be done at all. You are all careful to obſerve the ſeaſons for your ſecular profits. The huſbandman his ſeaſon for plowing, ſowing and reaping; the merchant his time for attending fairs and markets; the mariner his time when the wind is fair for ſailing. And ought not you much more to be obſervant of your ſummer and harveſt ſeaſons of grace? Remember and believe it, O trifler, the time is at hand, when you will be put to cry, 'O for one of theſe ſummer-days again! O for 'one of theſe ſabbaths or communion-ſeaſons, wherein 'I had the free offers of a crucified Chriſt! O how 'would I prize it; but alas! a thouſand worlds, had 'I them to give, cannot recal one of them to me.' It was a vain wiſh of that poor woman when dying, O call time again, call time again. No, no, a ſummer-day or a harveſt-day cannot be recalled; therefore be wiſe to ſpend them with fear and care, while you enjoy them.

May the Lord bleſs goſpel ſeaſons to us. Amen.

Of a public Spirit.

SERMON II.

On Jer. viii. 21. *For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt*, &c.

THE doctrine which now falls to be handled, is,

Doct. II. That every gracious ſpirit is a public ſpirit, and will lay to heart the calamitous caſe of the church or country whereof he is a member.

So did Jeremiah here, and in ſeveral other parts of his writings, as in Jer. ix. 1. Jer. xiii. 17. and in his book of Lamentations: Such public-ſpirited perſons alſo were Moſes, Samuel, David, Iſaiah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Paul, and other ſcripture ſaints.

The method of handling this doctrine may be,

I. To enquire into the nature and evidences of a truly public ſpirit.

II. To ſhew the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of a public ſpirit.

III. Make application.

I. As to the firſt, to wit, the nature of this public ſpirit which is in gracious perſons, eſpecially as it is evidenced by their holy zeal, and concern for the church under diſtreſs: it doth imply ſeveral things.

1ſt, A ſincere love to Chriſt, and concern for his glory, which prompts us to prefer the things of Chriſt to our own things. If we love not Chriſt the head, we cannot have a true love to his body and church, nor a concern for its welfare. It is this love that makes gracious ſouls *prefer Jeruſalem above their chief joy*, Pſal. cxxxvii. 6.

2dly, There is in it, a ſympathy and fellow-feeling with the church in diſtreſs, as being members of the ſame body. We ſee every living member of the body feels the injuries which are done to it, or to any of its fellow-members, and is ready to act for their relief: So the eyes and hands are ready to help the leg or foot when hurt, as feeling the ſmart of it. In like manner the members of Chriſt's body myſtical have a fellow-feeling together, and are ready to act for the relief of each other in diſtreſs.

3dly, It imports not only a deep concern and ſorrow for the church in trouble, but alſo a diſpoſition to expreſs and evidence this concern, by uſing all the means in our power to help and relieve her; ſuch as *faſting, mourning and weeping* for all the ſins, whether of ourſelves or others, which draw down wrath and calamities upon the church; and wreſtling with God by earneſt prayer for her relief, looking to Chriſt and his blood for pardoning and removing thoſe ſins which have raiſed the ſtorm againſt her. This did Nehemiah, Daniel, Ezra, David, Jeremiah, and others.

II. The 2*d* head, is to ſhew the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of this public ſpirit, and zealous concern for the church in diſtreſs. Now this will appear from ſeveral grounds and conſiderations; ſuch as,

1*ſt*, The near relation to, and intereſt which Chriſt hath in his church: The church is his building, his houſhold, his peculiar treaſure, his jewels, and dear purchaſe; yea, ſhe is Chriſt's body, of which he is the Head. Now, if you have any love to Chriſt himſelf, you cannot be unconcerned for the church, which is ſo nearly related to him, when ſhe is in trouble. If you love the Head, you cannot but love the body alſo.—Again as Chriſt's relation to the church is near, ſo his love to her is proportionable; he compares his love to that of a tender mother's to her ſucking child, which ſhe cannot forget; and therefore *he engraves Zion upon the palms of his hands, and hath her walls continually before him*, Iſa. xlix. 15. 16. In that expreſſion, he alludes to the practice of the Jews in ſhewing their concern for Jeruſalem in ruins, during the Babyloniſh captivity: They engraved the effigies of Jeruſalem upon their rings, to keep her in perpetual remembrance: In like manner, ſaith the Lord, I have the church engraven upon the palm of my hands, ſo that I can never open my hand to beſtow a bleſſing upon any, but the church's caſe preſents to my eye. Now, if God ſo loves the church, and is concerned for her welfare, it becomes us alſo to be concerned and affected for her.

2*dly*, This affectionate concern is reaſonable and neceſſary, becauſe your intereſt. Every one of you is nearly connected with that of the church, as being members of the ſame myſtical body, who muſt ſuffer one with another; ſo that in ſeeking the public good of the church, you conſult your own private intereſt alſo; for your own proſperity is bound up in her welfare. You are like paſſengers in a ſhip, that have your perſons and all your effects along with you there; ſo that, if the ſhip be proſperous you are well, but if ſhe ſink, you loſe all. Your precious ſouls in particular muſt ſuffer when the church doth ſuffer: They cannot but be reduced to a melancholly ſituation, when the church is diſtreſt with ſpiritual judgments; ſuch as the plague of dry breaſts, and the withdrawing of the Spirit of God from ordinances. If the mother be ſickly, the ſucking child muſt languiſh.

3*dly*, To be public-ſpirited makes a man a public bleſſing, and an inſtrument of much good to others, which is a man's greateſt honour. This would make you reſemble your heavenly Father, who doth good to all, by making his ſun to riſe and his rain to fall upon them. And alſo like your Saviour, who was a public bleſſing, while on earth, for he ſtill *went about doing good*, Acts x. 38. And like Abraham, who was a *bleſſing to the nations*, Gen. xii. 2. Job was a man of a noble public ſpirit, upon which account he was had in the greateſt love and eſteem, reſpect and reverence by all ranks; when the ear heard him, or the eye ſaw him, they bleſſed him; why? becauſe (ſaith he) *I delivered the poor that cried, I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame*, &c. Job xxix. 11, 12. &c.

4*thly*, Becauſe God's glory ſuffers when the church ſuffers, *for Zion is the ſeat of his glory*, Pſal. lxxvi. 1. 2. It is the church that doth diſplay and ſhew it forth. God's revenue of honour and praiſe in the world would come to little, if God had not a church therein to pay him his rent: hence he calls his church *the branch of my planting, the work of my hands that I may be glorified*, Iſa. lx. 21. The reſt of the world embezzle their talents, but God's church and people improve theirs for God's glory. Now when theſe are ſuppreſt and ſunk, they are diſabled for ſhewing forth his glory. Nay, then the enemy is ready to inſult them, and to reproach both them and their God. Hence king Hezekiah called the time of Jeruſalem's diſtreſs, *a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blaſphemy*, Iſa. xxxvii. 3.

5*thly*, Becauſe God is highly pleaſed with a public ſpirit, and with thoſe who interpoſe for his church in trouble; he repreſents himſelf in ſcripture as ſeeking carefully for theſe to put marks of honour and reſpect upon them, Jer. v. 1. Ezek. xxii. 30. Alſo we ſee what ſingular honour God put upon Moſes and Phineas upon that account, Exod. xxxii. 11, 14. Numb. xxv. 10, 11. Pſal. cvi. 23, 30, 31. Alſo he promiſes proſperity to all ſuch, and familiarity with himſelf, Pſal. cxxii. 6. Iſa. xlv. 11.

6*thly*, Becauſe on the other hand, God is much diſpleaſed with thoſe who are unconcerned about his church when in diſtreſs, yea, he denounces a *wo againſt them who are at eaſe in Zion, and are not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph*, Amos vi. 1, 6. And we ſee what wrath was threatened againſt Eſther, if ſhe ſhould be eaſy or ſilent when the church was in danger, Eſth. iv. 14. *For if thou altogether hold thy peace at this time, then ſhall enlargement and deliverance ariſe to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's houſe ſhall be deſtroyed.*

The APPLICATION.

Infer. 1. If God be well pleaſed with thoſe who are ſenſibly affected with the church's caſe when in diſtreſs, how flaming muſt his wrath be againſt thoſe who are the inſtruments of her diſtreſs, and inſtead of ſympathizing with her in it, do rejoice in her trouble; O that ſuch would know that they are not only the enemies of the church, but they are the enemies of God, and the very butt of his anger every day, Pſal. vii. 11. How dreadful is their caſe, who have the poiſoned arrows of God's wrath levelled againſt them!

Infer 2. If it be the character of gracious ſouls to be concerned for the church, what a bad ſign muſt it be of thoſe who mind their own things, and not the things of Jeſus Chriſt? of whom the apoſtle ſpeaks, Phil. ii. 21. And alas! how many are ther amongſt us who have their minds and affections wholly ſet upon the earth! They are warm, keen, and anxious about the concerns of their bodies and families, but cold and indifferent about the things of Chriſt and his church: They, like Gallio, care for none of theſe things, Acts xviii. 17. If their bodies or friends be in diſtreſs, they are troubled; but tho' the church of God be in affliction, it gives them no uneaſineſs; which is a ſad ſign they are not living members of Jeſus Chriſt, for if they were, they would have a feeling and ſympathy with the body.

3dly, We may take up a lamentation for the want of a public-ſpirited and generous concern for the church of God among us, which is this day in great danger and diſtreſs by errors, diviſions, and decay of piety: And yet how few are laying it to heart? Ah! whence doth this indifference proceed? Surely, from want of love to Chriſt the church's Head, or from exceſſive love to the world, and carnal pleaſures. When men *ly upon beds of ivory, chant to the ſound of the viol, and drink wine in bowls, they are not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph*, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6.——Again, this indifferency about Chiſt's matters, proceeds from that curſed root of ſelf-love, and ſelf-ſeeking, which is in all men by nature, tho' in the mean time ſin and Satan have blinded their eyes, that they know not their true intereſt: they know not what it is rightly to ſeek themſelves; if they ſeek the good of their bodies with the neglect of their ſouls, they think to ſeek themſelves beſt this way; but oh, if their eyes were opened, they would ſee that this ſelf-ſeeking, is nothing but ſelf-hating and ſelf-deſtroying. The rich glutton fancied he was ſeeking himſelf and his own happineſs, when he cloathed himſelf in purple and fared deliciouſly every day; but afterwards when he lifted up his eyes he ſaw his ſelf-ſeeking was really ſelf-deſtroying, for by pampering his body a little time, he damned his ſoul for ever. So that thoſe who ſerve God beſt, by ſeeking his glory and his church's good, before their worldly intereſt, do really ſeek themſelves moſt; for they hereby ſecure the happineſs of both ſoul and body through all eternity.

4thly, It may be needful here to give ſome caution againſt the wrong uſe of this doctrine, which ſome may be in hazard to make, by ſpending their zeal and concern about the public caſe of the church to the neglect of their own perſonal caſe. Oh, ſirs, beware of this extreme, and ſuſpect this zeal not to be of the right ſort; for where there is a ſincere regard to God's glory, it will ſhew itſelf in the firſt place in ſeeking to have matters right at home, to have your own ſouls caſe put in good order, to have a true faith in Chriſt, the nature renewed, and corruptions ſubdued, without which you can never glorify God, or do any thing to pleaſe him: Likewiſe it will ſhew itſelf in eſteeming and preferring the great and eſſential truths of the goſpel, and deſiring to hear of the excellency and uſefulneſs of a crucified Jeſus, and of the holy Spirit's dealing with ſouls in beginning and carrying on a work of grace. Now when theſe ſweet truths are not ſo much reliſhed, as to hear reflections and cenſures upon the management of public affairs, you have ground to be jealous that your deceitful hearts are carrying you to an extreme, and to a zeal for the church, which is not right. True zeal for God will make you careful to be acquainted with your own hearts, to have matters right in the firſt place between God and your own ſouls, to have humility, truth and ſincerity in the inward parts, without which God will not dwell, nor hold communion with you, nor can you claim God's promiſes of guiding and direction in dark and dividing times; for it is not the proud or ſelf-conceited Chriſtian that hath the promiſe, but the humble and ſelf denied; Pſal. xxv. 9. *The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.* Study always then to be meek and humble, and in order thereto to be acquainted with your own deceitful hearts, which will be fair to deceive you if you be not on your guard. Watch then, and let never your concern for the public draw you off from private duties, nor from ſecret and heart-work; for ſome may make very ſplendid appearance for public things, and yet prove nothing at laſt but caſt-aways for want of perſonal godlineſs. But by telling you this, let none think I encourage any to turn Gallios, with reſpect to the matters of God, and the intereſt and welfare of his church, as, alas! the generality are; no, I teach and preſs the contrary.

5thly, Let all therefore be exhorted to be public ſpirited, and ſuitably concerned for the church in diſtreſs. O lay to heart her calamity, and ſhew your concern for her relief, by mourning for ſin which brings on wrath, and praying earneſtly for deliverance from it, ſaying with David, *Do good in thy good pleaſure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jeruſalem.*

Motives to it: *1ſt*, From the pattern of our bleſſed Lord and Head, whoſe example we ſhould copy after in his ſympathy with, and concern for the church in trouble. *His ſoul was grieved for their miſery: In all their affliction he was afflicted.* When they are perſecuted he feels himſelf injured, and this ſympathy ſets him on work to interceed for them, as he did for Jeruſalem under the Babyloniſh captivity, Zech. i. 12. 'O Lord of hoſts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem, and on the cities of Judah, againſt which thou haſt had indignation theſe threeſcore and ten years.' Let all the members then follow the example of their Head.

2. Public ſpirited perſons are the pillars of ſocieties, and bear off wrath and judgments from them. Hence we ſee the flood could not riſe to deſtroy the old world, till Noah was ſhut up in the ark; nor could the fire be rained from heaven upon Sodom, till Lot was houſed in Zoar; and both Noah and Lot were public-ſpirited men, and therefore great bleſſings and pillars to the world. O ſirs, this public-ſpirited diſpoſition would make you bleſſings to the church and to the iſland: It would make you live deſired, and die lamented: Men would reckon your lives worthy of many prayers, and your deaths of many tears. Elijah was of this diſpoſition, and we ſee how Eliſha bewailed his departure, 2 Kings ii. 12. *And Eliſha ſaw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Iſrael, and the horſemen thereof;* meaning that Elijah was the ſafety and ſtrength of Iſrael, by his prevalency with God; and a better defence to them than chariots and horſemen.

3dly, This diſpoſition is a good evidence both of love to God, and of love to the ſouls of men: for it is of the nature of true love to be concerned for the good of thoſe whom we love, to mourn when they ſuffer, and rejoice when they proſper. If we love God, we will lament the diſhonours which are done to him. If we love the ſouls of men, we will pray for their converſion, and bewail their ſins which bring deſtruction upon them.

4thly, It would be a good means to ſave you from the guilt of other mens ſins, and ſecure you from the wrath which they bring on. For they who ſigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midſt of Jeruſalem have a mark ſet upon them for their preſervation, Ezek. ix. 4. God looks upon our mourning for the ſins of others, as an entering of our diſſent againſt them, and ſo will not charge them upon us.

Queſt. How ſhall we attain to this public ſpirit and zealous concern for the church in diſtreſs?

Anſw. Take the following directions:

1. Beg for the Spirit of God that dwells, breathes and acts in all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body. He ſurely is the public Spirit that inclines all the members to take the ſame care one for another, and to ſeek the good of the whole body, Rom. viii. 14.

2*dly*, Let the grace of love abound in your hearts, love to God and to all his people; and ſee to keep this holy fire always burning. Love makes the wants and ſufferings of others to be our own, and prompts us to lay out ourſelves for them.

3*dly*, Love the ſociety of the public-ſpirited and zealous ones of the land, and particularly thoſe who ſtudy to manage their zeal with piety and prudence; for as iron ſharpens iron, ſo the converſation of ſuch may be the means of enlivening you.

4*thly*, Beware of carnal company, which oft proves a dangerous quench-coal to zeal and activity for God. Peter found this by going into the ſociety of the high-prieſt's ſervants; for tho' he got his hands warmed amonſt them, he got his heart miſerably cooled to Chriſt and his people.

Laſtly, When you attain to any meaſure of zeal and public-ſpiritedneſs, endeavour to manage it with holy wiſdom and caution, ſo as you may recommend this grace to others, and not ſtumble them at it thro' your miſmanagement. There is much need for this caution, eſpecially in reeling and dividing times; wherefore take theſe advices:

1. See that you act from a principle of true love to God, which will engage you to love all who bear his ſtamp and image.

2. See that your ends be pure and ſincere, not to gain eſteem or applauſe, or increaſe a party; but that God may be glorified, and Chriſt's kingdom advanced in the word.

3. Watch carefully that your zeal do not mix itſelf with your own paſſion and bitterneſs of ſpirit, which we are always in hazard of: The apoſtle James doth nobly caution us againſt this evil, Jam. iii. 14. to the end. A cauſe ſometimes may be good and juſt, and yet managed with too much heat and animoſity againſt our godly brethren: Job's friends were good men, and expreſſed much zeal for God and religion in their ſpeeches, but yet God was diſpleaſed with them for mixing their zeal with ſo much bitterneſs and raſh cenſures againſt his upright ſervant Job. Wherefore if conſcience oblige you at any time to oppoſe them who are godly, ſee that you do it with much calmneſs, tenderneſs and caution; and take care that your zeal do not degenerate into paſſion, bitterneſs, or hatred againſt any of them. Mind what the centurion ſaid to the chief captain, when going to ſcourge Paul, Acts xxii. 26. *Take heed what thou doſt, for this man is a Roman.* So ſay I, take heed what you do to any man, that is a member of Chriſt.

Object. Are we not called to contend with earneſtneſs when matters of faith are at the ſtake? according to Jude, ver. 2. *Anſ.* 1. All points of truth are not of equal weight and importance, and therefore not to be contended for with equal zeal and concern —2. Zeal and meekneſs are very conſiſtent, and not oppoſite; ſo that there may be zealous and earneſt contending for truth without wrath and paſſion.—3. Be perſuaded that the wrath of man never worketh the righteouſneſs of God: yea, wrath or paſſion is the worſt thing that can be brought into a religious controverſy, for as a bad cauſe is never made better, ſo a good cauſe is always made worſe by it. The glory of God doth not need ſuch rotten pillars to ſupport it, as our wrath and paſſion, or our bitter and angry words. Alas! it is the raſh uſing of the tongue that greatly inflames our differences, namely, by perſonal reflections, rigid cenſures, uncharitable conſtructions, evil ſurmiſes, aggravating the miſtakes of others, &c. This the wiſe man obſerved of old, Prov. xv. 1. 18. Suerly the tongue is an unruly member, and full of deadly poiſon. May God of his infinite mercy give us grace to govern it aright, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

The Diſeaſes of Souls.

SERMON III.

On Jer. viii. 22. *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no Phyſician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?*

THE words being before explained, and the doctrines raiſed, I proceed to

Doct. III. *viz.* However deſperate the diſeaſes of thoſe within the church may ſeem to be, yet if they die of them, it will be owing to themſelves, ſeeing they have an able phyſician, and excellent balm to look to for healing.

This being the doctrine which I chiefly intended to inſiſt upon, I propoſe to do it at ſome length in the following method.

I. I will enquire into theſe dangerous diſeaſes for which there is balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there.

II. Take notice of ſome of theſe dangerous ſymptoms which make our diſeaſes appear deſperate and incurable, for which there is yet balm in Gilead.

III. Speak of the phyſician there, who hath the balm, and applies it for curing the diſeaſed.

IV. Enquire into the nature of the balm, and means which the phyſician makes uſe of for healing.

V. Touch at the phyſician's method of applying the balm, and performing the cure

VI. Make application of the whole.

I. The firſt head, is to enquire into the dangerous diſeaſes of thoſe within the church for which the balm is provided. And for the better underſtanding hereof I ſhall premiſe ſome things.

1. When I ſpeak of the church, I mean the church viſible, which includes hypocrites as well as true believers.

2. Though the ſtrength and power of the ſoul's diſeaſes be broken in believers by renewing grace, yet there is no diſeaſe in the unrenewed, but believers are

in part liable to it, and have the relicks of it to groan under, while they are here below.

3. I am not to ſpeak of the diſeaſes of the body natural, which is the province of phyſicians; nor of the body politic, or civil ſociety, which is the buſineſs of politicians and ſtateſmen; though in the mean time the abounding of theſe at this day is ſo viſible to all, that we have ground to bewail and mourn over them before the Lord. Ah! the diſeaſes of our body, both civil and eccleſiaſtic, are ſo great and lamentable, that we may juſtly apply that word to ourſelves, which we have in Iſa. i. 5, 6. *The whole head is ſick, and the whole heart faint: from the ſole of the foot even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs in it, but wounds, bruiſes, and putriſying ſores.* Such a caſe indeed is mournful, yet, bleſſed be God, it is not deſperate: There is balm in Gilead for the ſtate as well as the church, and we ſhould plead with the great phyſician in Iſrael to pity both, and heal their reſpective diſeaſes. Thanks be to God that he is both able and willing, and that he gives us ſuch promiſes to plead with him, as theſe following, in Iſa. i. 25, 26. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy droſs, and take away thy tin: and I will reſtore thy judges as at the firſt, and thy counſellors as at the beginning; afterwards thou ſhalt be called the city of righteouſneſs," &c. ——And that in Iſa. xlix. 22, 23. "Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and ſet up my ſtandard to the people; and they ſhall bring thy ſons in their arms, and thy daughters ſhall be carried on their ſhoulders: and kings ſhall be thy nurſing fathers, and their queens thy nurſing mothers," &c.——And that promiſe in Iſaiah lx. 17, 18. "I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteouſneſs: violence ſhall no more be heard in thy land, waſting nor deſtruction within thy borders; but thou ſhalt call thy walls ſalvation, and thy gates praiſe." Now, it is ſurely the duty of all the members of both church and ſtate to plead theſe promiſes with God, and to wait his time for accompliſhing them to us. O what is there ſo hard, but the out-pouring of his Spirit can do?

4. The diſeaſes which I propoſe to ſpeak of in this place are the ſins of ſpiritual plagues and diſtempers of mens ſouls, which are very dangerous and deadly; theſe we ought all to know, with their ſymptoms and effects, that we may ſeek after the balm in Gilead, which is mercifully provided of God for our healing. God would have every man to know the plague of his own heart, 1 Kings viii. 38. This every man ſhould know and be acquainted with in the firſt place, in order to healing; though yet we are not wholly to confine our thoughts and care about thoſe diſeaſes which are private and perſonal, but ſhew our concern alſo about thoſe which are public and national; of which more afterwards.

5. Theſe ſoul diſtempers are called, in ſcripture, diſeaſes, wounds, and ſickneſs; Pſal. xxxviii. 5. and ciii. 3. and cxlvii. 3. Ezek. xxxiv. 4 Matth. ix. 12. becauſe they produce effects in the ſoul, like to thoſe which diſeaſes produce in the body: ſuch as, 1. As diſeaſes waſte the beauty of the body, and produce uncomelineſs and deformity in it, Pſal. xxxix. 11. As they make the eyes ſink and turn dull, the ſkin ſhrink up and gather blackneſs, the fleſh melt away, and bones ſtick out, and the moſt beautiful perſon to look pale and ghaſtly: So our ſins and ſpiritual diſtempers deſtroy the comelineſs of the ſoul, deprive it of its primitive beauty, the image of God; and bring upon it a moſt ghaſtly deformity, and make it reſemble both brutes and devils, the one in ſenſuality and luſt, the other in pride and malice.——2. As diſeaſes weaken the body, and make it unfit for labour; ſo ſin weakens the ſoul, and makes it unfit for ſpiritual work and exerciſes, as prayer, hearing, meditating, &c. ſo that duty becomes a burden to it.——3. As the diſeaſes deprive men of their appetite for food, and of their digeſtion; ſo ſin takes away the ſoul's appetite and digeſtion, that it hath no hunger for the bread of life, for communion with God, and the influences of his Spirit; and though the man attends ordinances, he doth not digeſt what he hears, nor is nouriſhed by it.——4. Diſeaſes occaſion pain in the body that it cannot reſt; ſo ſin brings anguiſh and torture into the ſoul. Hence David complains of his bones being vexed, and his ſoul being ſore vexed, Pſal. vi. 2, 3. Theſe things being premiſed, I ſhall mention ſome of thoſe dangerous diſeaſes of the ſoul, for which we need the balm in Gilead.

I. *Atheiſm.* Infidelity or miſbelief of divine truths revealed to us is a deadly diſeaſe, for it hinders the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and the ſaving of ſouls. What is it that keeps many halting ſo long between two opinions, and hovering betwixt Chriſt and the devil, but their not believing firmly the Bible to be God's word, and the goſpel tidings to be certain truth: namely, that God ſent Jeſus Chriſt, his eternal Son, into the world, to aſſume our nature, and die for ſin in our ſtead: and their not giving firm credit to the being of a God, the immortality of the ſoul, and the life to come. Tho' many will not openly queſtion any of theſe truths, yet the wavering thoughts they have about them hinder them from falling in with the goſpel method of ſalvation, which God hath eſtabliſhed. Ah! this is a deadly diſeaſe! Alſo, there is much practical Atheiſm among us: many profeſs to own God, and yet live as if they believed there was no God that made the world, and no providence that governs it: They pay God no homage nor reſpect; they put the creatures, or ſelf in God's room; they aſcribe their mercies to fortune, or to their own wiſdom or induſtry, rather than to God. A woful diſeaſe! God's children indeed are cured of prevailing Atheiſm, yet the dregs of the diſeaſe do remain, and ſometimes atheiſtical thoughts come to a great height in them, as is Aſaph, though afterwards he was heartily grieved and aſhamed for entertaining them, and calls himſelf both a fool and a beaſt for it, Pſal. lxxiii. 21, 22. And no wonder he did ſo, for Atheiſm and infidelity, tho' it abound in the church, yet there is no ſuch diſeaſe in hell, no ſuch madneſs there, for the devils believe and tremble, James ii. 19. But tho' the diſeaſe be grievous, yet Chriſt hath balm for it, and to him we muſt go both to help our unbelief, and increaſe our faith.

II. Ignorance of God and of goſpel truths is a mortal diſeaſe, and deſtroys many, even of thoſe who profeſs to know him, according to Hoſ. iv. 6. There are multitudes living in the midſt of goſpel light, who yet continue in groſs darkneſs. They are ignorant of the infinite juſtice and holy nature of God; and of the miſery of man in his fallen eſtate, of the evil of ſin, and the ranſom neceſſary for it. They are ignorant of Jeſus Chriſt and his mediatory offices, and of the nature and neceſſity of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and of faith which applies it to us. They know nothing of the Spirit's office in our redemption, nor of his work in regeneration; yea, they do not ſo much as know, if there be a Holy Ghoſt. Alas! that this diſeaſe of ignorance ſhould ſtill prevail, notwithſtanding all the means of knowledge we enjoy. I grant believers are ſpiritually illuminated, and get the ſtrength of this diſeaſe broken at their firſt converſion, yet ſtill much blindneſs doth remain with them; and frequently clouds of darkneſs do ſo overſhadow them, that they have but faint views of divine myſteries. This is a ſad diſeaſe, but yet there is balm in Gilead, and eye-ſalve in Iſrael for it; Rev. iii. 17, 18. Jer. xxiv. 7.

III. Hardneſs of heart is a ruining diſeaſe to multitudes. Oh! it is this that makes them ſit under the miniſtry of the word, and hear the moſt terrible threatenings and curſes denounced againſt their ſins, and yet be no more moved than the ſeats they ſit on, or the dead that ly under their feet: ſo hard is the ſtone in the heart, that the hammer of the word in the hand of man makes no impreſſion upon it; promiſes draw not, and threatenings drive not; mercies do not allure, and judgments do not alarm: this is a prevailing plague among the generality of goſpel hearers. And though believers at converſion have the heart of ſtone taken away, and a heart of fleſh given, yet they are much plagued with recurring hardneſs, that oft makes them complain of being little affected either with ordinances or providences; and tho' the fire burn round about them, that they lay it not to heart. This is an evil diſeaſe, yet there it balm in Iſrael, and help in the promiſes for it; Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Phil. i. 6.

IV. Earthly-mindedneſs is a woful diſeaſe; it clogs the mind and unfits the ſoul for ſpiritual work. The thoughts of the world ſhut out the thoughts of God and eternity: they tempt many poor ſouls, like Martha, to be carefully troubled about many things, even things which will not avail them at a dying hour, while the one thing neceſſary is quite neglected and forgot. Ah! what numbers are there dying of this diſeaſe? when other plagues kill their thouſands, this ſlays its ten thouſands. O what havock doth it daily make among profeſſed Chriſtians? Pharaoh's words concerning the Iſraelites may well be applied to many of them, Exod. xiv. 3. *They are entangled in the land, the wilderneſs hath ſhut them in.* So hot are they in purſuing the world, ſo buſied in providing for their families, in paying their debts, in making bargains, purchaſes, and in courting the favour of men, that they can find no time in their lives, nor room in their hearts for precious Chriſt, and the concerns of their ſouls. O ſinners! this diſeaſe of *earthly-mindedneſs* doth quite defeat the deſign of the goſpel; and marr your profiting by ſabbaths and ſermons: it turns the houſe of God into a place of merchandize, by your thoughtfulneſs in it about worldly gain and profit. What a fearful diſtemper is this, that turns a man's head and heart where his feet ſhould be! that makes him beſtow his ſoul and all its noble faculties upon a little white and yellow clay! and ſo all his days dig for droſs and dung with mattocks of gold! Nothing can cure this diſeaſe but the balm of Gilead. The prevailing power of it is indeed broken in believers at converſion, the world is then put down from the throne and chief place in the ſoul; yet afterwards it doth rally its broken forces, and ſtruggles hard to recover the throne again; and this proves very troubleſome even to the beſt. It diſtracts their thoughts, moleſts them in holy duties, and ſteals away their affections from Chriſt and heaven. This is a ſore plague, yet there is balm in Iſrael and help in God's word and promiſe for it; Cant. iv. 8. Jer. xxxii. 4. Col. iii. 1, 2.

V. Averſion to ſpiritual duties is a ſore diſeaſe, when the heart becomes backward to pay God a viſit in ſecret, and the man unwilling to go to his cloſet to converſe with his Maker. Ah! this is the caſe with many, who would rather toil their bodies a whole day, than ſpend a quarter of an hour upon their knees with God in ſecret. Their animal ſpirits are vigorous and lively in purſuing their worldly buſineſs, or even their diverſions; but they are low and faint in ſoul-work and ſpiritual exerciſes. We ſee many, they do not weary to ſpend whole days, yea, and nights too, in drinking, dancing, gaming and ſerving their luſts: but they grudge to give God ſo much as one day, or any part even of his own day. They ſay of ſabbaths and ſermons, *What a wearineſs hath it? When will the ſabbath be gone?* This is a prevailing diſeaſe, and how ſtrong are the dregs of it even in believers! For tho' at converſion their hearts are reconciled to God and his ways, yet at times they feel much of a recurring backwardneſs for ſpiritual work, ſo that when they would do good, evil is preſent with them. But yet there is balm for this diſeaſe, in the phyſician of Iſrael, and his gracious promiſes; Pſal. cx. 3. Iſa. xl. 31. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

VI. Indwelling corruption, prevailing and venting itſelf various ways, is a ſad diſeaſe. Sometimes it riſes like a flood, ſwells high, and carries all before it, like the current of a tide that cannot be withſtood. So it is with thoſe in whom the ſtrength of corruption was never ſubdued by converting grace. And tho' the tide be turned with renewed perſons, yet upon ſome occaſions we find them making great complaints of the prevalency of indwelling ſin, through the power of temptation, as Paul, Rom. vii. and David, Pſal lxv. *Iniquities prevail againſt me;* and, Iſa. lxiv. 6. *Our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.* This is a moſt humbling diſeaſe; yet the phyſician of Iſrael hath provided balm for it in his word, Pſa. lxv. 3. Mic. vii. 19. Rom. vii. 24, 25.

VII. Hypocriſy and formality in God's ſervice is a woful diſeaſe. When men draw near to God with their lips only, and give him no more but bodily ſervice, which is no better than that of a ſtatue on a tomb, with eyes and hands lift up, only it wants a voice. And how unpleaſant is a voice to God without the heart and affections? He heavily complains of it, Iſa. xxix. 13. Among the unrenewed, hypocriſy is a deadly and reigning diſeaſe. And though the converted be delivered from its reigning power, yet they are ſadly diſtreſſed with its remains, and oft put to complain that they give God more of the body, than of the heart in duty; and that their prayers are little better than lip-labour. But the phyſician of Iſrael hath promiſed balm for this diſeaſe, Jer. xxxi. 33. Prov. iv. 23. 2 Cor. iv. 16.

VIII. Inconſtancy and wandering of heart in duty is a prevailing diſeaſe. Alas! for the unfixedneſs of the heart that goeth out in many vain excurſions towards the world and its trifles, and even in time of the moſt ſolemn approaches unto God! Hereby our religious performances are wofully marred, and God provoked to loath and abhor them. There is a voluntary and habitual wandering of heart, that is the reigning plague of the unregenerate: and there is an unvoluntary wandering, that is the diſeaſe of God's people, which they bemoan and lament before the Lord. But there is balm in Gilead for it in all ſhapes; Jer. xxxii. 29. Ezek. xi. 19.

IX. Backſliding from the Lord, or a ſpiritual conſumption, is the common diſeaſe of God's people. They are liable to backſlide from the power and life of godlineſs, and to loſe their former ſpirituality and livelineſs in ſerving God in their cloſets, families, and public aſſemblies: ſo that ſometimes, their religious duties are like to wither and dwindle away into a dead form, and *the things that remain are ready to die*, as it was with the church of Sardis, Rev. iii. 2. This decay comes upon them when known ſin or ſloth are indulged by them. Then it is that ſpiritual exerciſes become a wearineſs, and averſion grows to heart-work and ſecret duties, ſuch as prayer, reading the Bible, meditation, and communing with their own hearts: Then the graces do languiſh, the faith of divine revelation becomes weak, the truths which God reveals concerning his glorious perfections, the excellencies of Chriſt, and concerning ſin and duty, heaven and hell, make but ſmall impreſſion on the mind. The repentance is reſtrained, and the ſoul is little affected with ſin and its evil: then love turns cool to Chriſt and his image, it doth not conſtrain to duty, nor to hate and mortify ſin as before: then hope becomes faint and languid, and hath not ſuch deſirous expectations of the eternal world, and things unſeen, as to fortify the ſoul againſt the allurements of the devil, the world and the fleſh. This ſpiritual conſumption is a mournful diſeaſe, and calls us ſpeedily to apply to the phyſician of Iſrael for the balm he hath promiſed for it; Deut. xxx. 6. Hoſ. xiv. 4. 5. 6. Pſal. lxix. 32. John xiv. 16 Gal. ii. 20.

X. Diſcouragement and down-caſting of ſoul is one of God's people's diſeaſes that requires this balm. They are often caſt down by outward afflictions, and eſpecially by the prevalency of ſin and ſatan's temptations, by the hidings of God's face, the ſhutting out of their prayers, the darkening of their evidences, the revival of former guilt, and the renewing of mount Sinai's thunderings againſt them. Under theſe trials, they are apt to think that God holds them for his enemies, and writes bitter things againſt them, and hence are put to cry with the Pſalmiſt, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And will he be favourable no more?* This is a diſeaſe which ſadly enfeebles their hearts and weakens their hands; yet the great Phyſician of the church hath provided balm for it, Pſal. xlii. 5. *&c.* Iſa. xli. 10. 17. 18. and liv. 7. *&c.* Iſa. lvii. 16. *&c.* Jer. xxxi. 25. Heb. xiii. 5. 6.

XI. Ingratitude to God for mercies is a common diſeaſe. Alas! we turn unthankful both for common and ſpecial mercies, and for the unſpeakable gift of Jeſus Chriſt to Adam's fallen race: What bad requitals do we make to God for his goodneſs? There are many who make uſe of God's mercies as darts to ſhoot at heaven, and weapons to fight againſt God himſelf. The more he gives them of health and money, they turn the more profane and debauch'd; ſo that inſtead of ſerving God with his benefits, they make a ſacrifice of them to the devil, Hoſ. ii. 8. I fear ſuch will be found guilty of this evil who beſtow their time and money upon games and paſtimes, balls and aſſemblies, plays and comedies, and ſuch vanities that prove nurſeries of ſin, and ſerve greatly to debauch the minds and morals of men and women. O let us not ungratefully requite the Lord our gracious benefactor. Ah! how much of this diſeaſe doth remain even with the beſt? Even Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. Great need have we all of the balm of Gilead to cure us of this plague.

XII. Truſting to our own righteouſneſs is a diſeaſe which all are liable to. The unbeliever goes about to build an imaginary tower of his own righteouſneſs, and will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt the glorious Surety, who hath brought in an everlaſting and law-biding righteouſneſs for ſinners to fly to. Nay, believers who have actually fled to it, do ſtill groan under the remains of this woful diſeaſe within them. They have ſtill a hankering after ſome dependence up on their duties and performances, altho' they cannot but own that their beſt duties need the blood of Chriſt, as well as their worſt ſins; and if they be not waſhen from the ſins that cleave to them, they would damn them. O! then, what need have we all of the balm in Gilead, and the Phyſician there, for theſe deadly diſeaſes which cleave to us?

Time would fail me to mention and inſiſt upon many other grievous diſeaſes which abound among us, ſuch as pride, ſelf-conceit, and lifting up of ourſelves becauſe of ſome attainments above others; diſcontentment with our lot and condition in the world; impatience under croſſes, ſinful ſelf-love, intemperance, covetouſneſs, envy, raſh anger, malice, revenge, and many other deadly plagues. However light ſome may make of theſe diſtempers, yet there is none of them but what will prove deadly, if the balm of Gilead, and Phyſician there be not applied to for cure. But, bleſſed be the God of Iſrael, that this balm is an univerſal, medicine, a catholicon for all manner of ſoul diſeaſes, if ſinners would but ſeek to it, and ſubmit to the application of it in the Phyſician's own way. May we all be brought to ſee and feel our diſeaſes in time, that we may haſten to the great Phyſician of the church, while his balm and power are preſent to heal us. May God of his infinite mercy determine us to it for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

SERMON IV.

On Jerem. viii. 22. *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician there,* &c.

IN the preceding ſermon I mentioned many ſoul-diſeaſes, which are more ſecret and inviſible, prevailing among us: In this I ſhall ſpeak of ſome other diſeaſes of a more public nature, which affect not only the particular members, but, in ſome reſpects, threaten the whole body of the church, and the ſeveral congregations thereof; and upon which account our poor diſeaſed church and land do greatly need the balm of Gilead, and phyſician there, at this day.

I. Hereſy and error is a diſeaſe which ſpreads like a gangrene, and doth very much threaten our church and land at this day; when doctrines are vented, and books diſperſed in favour of Deiſm, Socinianiſm, Arianiſm, Arminianiſm, and other errors: When principles are eſpouſed and ſpread, which tend to weaken divine revelation; to advance corrupt reaſon and ſelf-love as the ſpring and ſtandard of religion; to exalt our moral performances more than imputed righteouſneſs; to reproach the operations of the holy Spirit upon ſouls, with enthuſiaſm; and aſcribe our good actions more to the power of corrupt nature, than to efficacious free grace. Now, when ſuch errors as theſe, beſides many Popiſh tenets and ſuperſtitions, are propagated among us, there is ground to ſay, we have a ſick and diſeaſed land, that needs balm.

II. Schiſm and diviſion among the miniſters and members of the church is a grievous malady that we at preſent labour under. Surely it is a moſt unnatural diſtemper that cauſes the ſheep of Chriſt to bite and devour one another, and the members of Chriſt to ſeparate as aliens, yea, not only break up Chriſtian communion, but break out in uncharitable reflections, bitterneſs, wrath, clamour and evil-ſpeaking one againſt another. A ſtrange diſtemper! that puts thoſe who will delightfully worſhip God together thro' a whole eternity, in ſuch a caſe, that they cannot keep fellowſhip together here! A diſtemper, that makes men renounce communion with thoſe they once delighted in, and with whom the glorious Head doth ſtill hold communion; that takes many off from the vitals and eſſentials of religion, and employs their time in public controverſies about party opinions, the grounds of ſeparation, the characters of preachers, and things which rather tend to beget alienation of affections, and angry quarrels, than to promote ſaving knowledge, faith, love, and godly edifying. Oh! how wrath-like a judgment is that ſpirit of ſtrife and diviſion, which God hath poured out upon this land for our former miſimprovement of the goſpel and contempt of glorious Chriſt! Ah, what a flood-gate doth it open to many evils and calamities! That is a true word of the apoſtle James iii. 16. *Where envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion and every evil work.* What a plague muſt that be that produces every evil work? What a ſad diſeaſe is it, that turns Chriſtian converſe into vain janglings, that hinders ſocial prayers, that mars the ſucceſs of the goſpel, weakens the intereſt of religion, propagates all kind of evil, and expoſes the church to the ſcorn and deriſion of her enemies! How applicable is that word to us, Lam. ii. 13. *Thy breach is great like the ſea, who can heal thee?* Surely none but he that hath the balm of Gilead.

III. Giddineſs and unſettledneſs in religion is a diſeaſe that ſadly prevails among us. Many are now *reeling to and fro like drunken men*, as the prophet ſpeaks, Iſa. xxiv. 20. They do not like ſober men, keep the highway in a ſtraight courſe; but, like drunkards, ſtagger and reel from one ſide of the way to another. Alas, the moſt part are reeling either to one extreme or another, and very few are going on in a ſtraight and ſteady courſe. Many are reeling towards defection from our reformation principles and attainments which our worthy anceſtors valiantly contended and ſuffered for; particularly in encouraging and drawing on the yoke of patronage upon the church without neceſſity. Yea, pleading for it as lawful and harmleſs, tho' our reformers declared it to be contrary to the word of God, and the practice of the apoſtolical and primitive church. Likewiſe in compliance with that yoke, many are voluntarily falling in with courſes for wreathing it upon the church's neck, and departing from ſeveral parts of our eſtabliſhed government and diſcipline to which they ſtand ſolemnly engaged, ſuch as our approved rules and practice with reſpect to the moderation of calls, the election and ordination of paſtors; and in conſequence thereof obtruding miniſters into congregations againſt their will, whereby the church is ſpoiled of her right of calling her own paſtors, the flock of Chriſt is ſcattered, the edification of ſouls hindered, the great ends of a goſpel-miniſtry defeated, and the work of the goſpel greatly obſtructed. Many alſo are ſwerving from our old covenant-engagements, and openly denying the lawfulneſs of national-covenanting, and the binding obligation thereof upon poſterity: and forming to themſelves ſchemes of government which would open a door to anarchy and licentiouſneſs.—Again, many are reeling towards Eraſtianiſm, and injurious infrigements upon church's intrinſic power, and upon Chriſt's immediate headſhip and ſupremacy over her, falling in with acts and practices which tend to take the keys of church power and government out of the hands of Chriſt and church officers of his apointment, and put them into the hands of the magiſtrate.—Alſo, many are reeling from the ancient uſe of creeds and confeſſions of faith, towards a boundleſs toleration of all ſorts of errors and hereſies, aſſerting that neither the church nor the magiſtrate have any power to reſtrain them. Many are reeling towards the exalting of ſelf, even putting it in the room of God, ſaying it is in the power of a man's free will and natural abilities to repent and convert himſelf, and that there is a neceſſary connexion between a man's moral ſeriouſneſs and his obtaining of ſaving grace.—Yea many are wraping towards popery and old ſuperſtitions, pleading for a middle ſtate, for prayers for the dead, and for the Euchariſt's being a proper ſacrifice for ſin: for the neceſſity of a prieſt's abſolution in order to the forgiveneſs of ſin, and of bowing to the altar, and at the name of Jeſus, of obſerving uninſtituted feſtivals, of uſing the croſs in baptiſm, kneeling at the ſacrament, the organ in praiſe, and other inventions of men in God's worſhip. Nay, many are reeling from the very fundamentals of Chriſtianity, and the doctrine of the glorious trinity, Chriſt's deity and ſatisfaction, the neceſſity of ſupernatural revelation, and of the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and the operations of the holy Spirit; and, inſtead of theſe precious doctrines, offering the ſufficiency of reaſon, or nature's light, to conduct men in the way to happineſs. And theſe Socinian and Deiſtical tenets are not a little encouraged by the preachers of a rational or natural religion; I mean thoſe dry moral preachers who are more earneſt in recommending a ſort of Pagan morality to the world, than in ſhewing the excellency and uſefulneſs of Chriſt for periſhing ſinners, and the nature and neceſſity of the work of his Spirit in applying his purchaſe, and of goſpel-holineſs to make them meet for heaven: who prefer a good ſaying, or moral precept, in ſome ancient philoſopher, to the counſels of Jeſus Chriſt, or the dictates of his apoſtles; vainly oppoſing the dim candle of man's reaſon to the ſun ſhine of goſpel light diſplayed in the holy ſcriptures. All which do ſhew how ſadly the diſtemper of giddineſs and unſettledneſs in religion prevails in our land, and how greatly we need the balm of Gilead to cure us of it. If it ſhould be aſked, what is it that makes the land reel ſo? We have the anſwer in the forecited text, Iſa. xxiv. 20. *Becauſe the tranſgreſſion thereof is heavy upon it;* both the tranſgreſſion of the former and preſent age. Alas, there are many old ſins little minded by us! old perjuries and treacherous dealings with God; old defections and backſliding, old perſecutions and bloodſhed. We have ground to fear that theſe old tranſgreſſions, together with thoſe of a latter date, ly ſo heavy upon the land, that it is made to reel and ſtagger with the weight of them. O when ſhall we be diſburdened of that load?

IV. *Barrenneſs* and *unfruitfulneſs* with reſpect to converſion-work and the bringing forth of children to God, is a grievous malady which the church's womb ſeems to be ſmitten with at this day. Ah! how little is the doctrine of regeneration and the new birth known and experienced among us! How rare is converſion work now, in reſpect of former times! Our ears have heard and our fathers have told us what days of the Son of man have been ſeen in our land, when the Captain of our ſalvation took to himſelf his great power and mounted his white horſe of a triumphant goſpel, and rode through the cities and congregations, with his crown on his head, his bow in his hand, and his ſword girt on his thigh, going forth conquering and to conquer. When the arm of the Lord did thus awake and put on ſtrength, how glorious were the effects! the preacher's tongue was looſed, the hearers hearts were melted; the word of the Lord did run, and the goſpel had free courſe. The enemies of the power of godlineſs were filled with confuſion and aſtoniſhment, and made to acknowledge that God was among his people of a truth. Mockers and curious perſons were catched by the word, and hundreds have been wrought upon by one ſermon, and made to date their converſion from it. The angel came down and troubled the waters, and multitudes of diſeaſed ſouls ſtept in at once, and the power of the Lord was preſent to heal them. Such pleaſant ſeaſons have been of late in ſome parts of New-England, and in others of the plantations: may the Lord continue them there, and cauſe them to ſpread through all our colonies in America. May he ſend them alſo to Britain and Ireland, and to the poor land where he hath had his dwelling in times paſt, that ſo *the wilderneſs and ſolitary place may be glad for them, and the deſart may rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe, the glory of Lebanon may be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon.* Then ſhould our land ſing as in the days of old.

Queſt. Oh, what may be the reaſon of the unfruitfulneſs of a preached goſpel in the land where Chriſt hath had his glorious marchings in times paſt?

Anſ. Surely we muſt juſtify the Lord, and leave our complaints upon ourſelves. A holy God is provoked to withdraw his Spirit from the aſſemblies of profeſſed Chriſtians becauſe of their formality and hypocriſy, their diviſions and contentions, their ſatisfying themſelves with bare ordinances without the God of ordinances, with communion-occaſions without communion with God. The Holy Spirit and his gracious workings are ſo far from being ſought after, that they are ſcarce credited or believed, nay, by many they are reproached with the odious names of Enthuſiaſm, whimſical notions, and melancholy imaginations. And may not God, in his righteous judgment, make ordinances a miſcarrying womb and dry breaſts to them?

Again, God by our ſins and backſlidings is provoked to call off the ſtage a godly and faithful ſet of miniſters and Chriſtians, who ſtood in the gap, and wreſtled for God's preſence and Spirit to ordinances, without ſending others to fill their room; nay, inſtead of that, to ſuffer the church to be plagued with a ſet of earthly minded preachers and ſtudents, who give ſad diſcoveries of their carnal motives and ends in purſuing after the prieſt's office, that it is more to win ſtipends than to win ſouls, to get bread to themſelves, than to get glory to God. Which ſurely is a fearful judgment and token of wrath againſt a poor ſinful land.

Likewiſe, God is provoked to leave miniſters, and deny them ſucceſs, becauſe of their defection from the uprightneſs, piety, and zeal of our godly anceſtors, from their humility and ſelf-denial, from their ſingle aims at God's glory and the ſalvation of ſouls, from their dependence upon God, in the exerciſe of faith and prayer, for his preſence and bleſſing upon their labours, and from their travelling in birth till Chriſt was formed in their people's ſouls.——And finally, No doubt, many miniſters are unſucceſsful by reaſon of the grudges and prejudices which they beget in their people's breaſts againſt themſelves, for ſwerving from reformation-principles, and concurring in violent ſettlements and intruſions upon pariſhes, whereby people are tempted to abhor the offerings of the Lord; and ignorance, error, profanation of the Lord's day, immoralities and diſorders are greatly encouraged. From whence it is too evident, that miniſters are to be blamed as well as people for the preſent barrenneſs under the means of grace. O! that both they and we were helped to ſee the cauſe, and to cry for the balm of Gilead to cure us of it.

The ſecond head. I proceed to the ſecond head, in the method I laid down, to wit, to take notice of ſome of thoſe dangerous ſymptoms which make our diſeaſes ſeem incurable and deſperate; for which there is yet balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there.

I. It is a dangerous ſymptom, when the body is univerſally diſtreſſed, and when there is a complication of diſeaſes on it, and ſome of theſe of contrary natures.——Then the patient's caſe is very hopeleſs, and the cure much deſpaired of, becauſe what is good for one diſeaſe is bad for another. Thus alas! it is with the body of Chriſt in our land. The church is ſick not in one part, but over all, as it was in the prophet's time, Iſa. i. 5, 6. *There is no ſoundneſs in it, nothing but wounds and diſeaſes* of divers ſorts. In ſome parts of the houſe a dangerous fire is kindled, in other parts deadly diſeaſes, as tympanies, fevers, dropſies and lethargies do prevail. One part is blown up with pride, another is in a fever of ſtrife; another part is drowned in ſenſuality, and another deadned with a lethargy and ſpirit of ſlumber. And theſe diſeaſes are of ſo contrary natures, that what is phyſic for the one, is death for the other. We may ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxvi. 12. *We go through fire and through water:* two contrary elements, what expels the one, cheriſheth the other. Now, when our caſe is ſo deſperate, is there any remedy for us? Yes, the balm of Gilead is a medicine that ſuits the moſt complex and dangerous caſe: ſee what David ſays of it, Pſal. xxxiv. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* This he alſo found to his own ſweet experience, Pſal. xlii. 7. 8. *Deep calleth unto deep, at the noiſe of thy water-ſpouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me; yet the Lord will command his loving-kindneſs in the day-time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.* David was like a ſhipwreck'd man, almoſt ſwallowed up with the ſea-billows from beneath, and at the ſame time near drown'd with ſpouts of rain from above. Not only the powers of hell and earth were againſt him, but heav'n ſeem'd angry with him too. But praiſes be to our glorious Phyſician who hath balm to anſwer the greateſt varieties and contrarieties of our diſtempers. David bleſſeth him for it, Pſal. ciii. 2. 3. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, who healeth all thy diſeaſes.*

II. It is a deadly ſymptom, when the body is in a violent hot fever, attended with great inflammations. This is very much our caſe; our diſtemper is hot and violent, and our wounds much inflamed with the old ſerpent's poiſon, and the rage and paſſions of men; yet the balm of Gilead can cure the moſt deadly wounds and inflammations; it can take out of them, not only the venom of the ſerpent's ſting, and the heat of man's rage; but alſo the inflammation of God's wrath, which is worſe than either.

III. When diſeaſes are of long continuance and rooted in the body, the cure is hard, Deut. xxviii. 59. Such are our maladies, which make us ready to ſay, there is no hope. Yet the balm of Gilead can cure the oldeſt and moſt rooted diſtemper. It can heal thoſe who have been diſtreſs'd for many years, as ſoon as thoſe who has been ill but a few days. The Phyſician of Iſrael can as eaſily raiſe up his people when their bones are dry, as when juſt new dead, Ezek. xxxvii.

IV. When all about the diſeaſed look on their caſe as deſperate, we loſe hope. This is our caſe; all who view the church, look on her as ſinking; and even thoſe of the moſt faith are putting the queſtion, *Can theſe dry bones live?* And we are apt to ſay of ourſelves, with the poor captives, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. 'Behold our bones are dry'd, our hope is loſt, and we 'are cut off for our part.' Yet even when all give up the caſe as deſperate, the balm and phyſician in Gilead can effectuate a cure. We have an aſtoniſhing promiſe to the church in ſuch a caſe, Jer. xxx. 17. *For I will reſtore health unto thee, I will heal thee of thy wounds, ſaith the Lord, becauſe they called thee an outcaſt, ſaying, this is Zion whom no man ſeeketh after.* Her caſe was hopeleſs, and therefore neglected by all, but even in that caſe the balm of Gilead can 'bring 'health and cure,' Jer. xxxiii. 6.

V. A diſeaſe is the more dangerous, when its threatening ſymptoms are not obſerved, ſo as to provide timely remedies. Ah! this is very much our caſe, we obſerve not our dangerous ſymptoms, tho' *the fire be kindled round about us, we lay it not to heart:* the impending clouds of wrath and judgments do not alarm us, ſo as to make us, ſearch and try our ways, and 'turn again unto the Lord.' The preſent calamities we groan under, as ſcarcity and decay of trade, war and blood ſhed, loſſes and diſappointments, the grievances of church and ſtate, do not make us ſee the Lord's hand in them, nor hear his voice by them, ſo as to humble ourſelves under his mighty hand, and turn to him with mourning and ſupplication, as he calls us: But we will ſtill go on in our old courſes without relenting. Our caſe is not unlike that of God's profeſſing people of old, Iſa. lvii. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him, I hid me, and was wroth.* And yet after all theſe tokens of God's anger, it is added, *He went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* Now, can there be any remedy for him in ſuch a caſe? Yes, the Lord ſaith, there is even balm in Gilead for ſuch a deſperate condition, and, which is moſt ſurprizing, that the Phyſician himſelf will come and apply it, as he adds in verſe 18. *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him.* In theſe hopeleſs circumſtances I will ſtep in myſelf, with the balm in my hand which will heal him of his frowardneſs and perverſeneſs, when nothing elſe can. Now who could have expected ſuch a word in ſuch a deſperate-like caſe, and that there could be balm for ſuch a froward diſtemper of heart! One might have thought God would have added, 'I have ſeen his ways, and will damn him.' But inſtead of that he ſays, 'I have ſeen his ways, and 'will heal him.' Oh! the condeſcending goodneſs and mercy of God to the chief of ſinners.

VI. A diſeaſe is judged deſperate and incurable, when the patient loſes his ſenſes, or turns lethargic, that he cannot be awakened. Ah! we are become lethargic under our maladies, we have loſt our ſpiritual ſenſes in a great meaſure. Our hearing is gone, we hear not the voice of rods, nor the voice of mercies, the voice of conſcience, nor the voice of God's word, nor do we ſet about the duties they loudly call us to. Our ſight is departed from us, we ſee not the Lord's hand in his diſpenſations; when mercies come, we receive them like brutes, without ſeeing the hand that gives them, or rendering thanks to the giver. When afflictions come, and the Lord's hand is moſt viſible in them, yet we ſee it not, like thoſe, Iſa. xxvi. 11. we ſee not the Achan, the ſin which is clearly pointed at by the rod. Why? becauſe a ſpirit of ſlumber and of deep ſleep, hath fallen down upon miniſters and profeſſors, which have cloſed their eyes, according to Iſa. xxix. 10.——Our feeling is almoſt gone, we feel not the weight of ſin, nor the ſtings and upbraidings of conſcience for it, we groan not under the burden.—We ſmell not the ſweet ſavour of Chriſt's name, nor the precious ointments of his graces and comforts which draw ſouls unto him, Cant. i. 3. 4.——We taſte not the ſweetneſs that is in his promiſes, and in the fruits of the bleſſed apple-tree. Alas! ſabbaths and faſt-days, ſermons and ſacraments do not reliſh with us as in times paſt. Now theſe deadly ſymptoms of our diſeaſed church and land, when we view them, make our maladies ſeem incurable, and our caſe deſperate; yet when we look to the balm of Gilead, we ſee a remedy for them. We find the ſame ſymptoms in the caſe of Jeruſalem, which made her wounds and bruiſes ſeem incurable, yet, ſaith the Lord, Jer. xxx. 17. 'I will reſtore health unto thee, and will heal thee of thy wounds.' And Jer. xxxiii. 6. 'Behold I will bring health and cure, and reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.'—May the Lord take compaſſion upon our helpleſs and hopeleſs condition, and accompliſh theſe his gracious promiſes to our diſeaſed land, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

Who is the Phyſician.

SERMON V.

On Jerem. viii. 22. *Is there no Balm, &c.*

HEAD III.

I Propoſed in the 3*d* place to ſpeak of the phyſician who hath this balm for us. God himſelf is our phyſician. He is *Jehovah that healeth us*, Exod. xv. 26. Our cure is the work of the whole Trinity, but eſpecially of Jeſus Chriſt, God incarnate, who came to the world with a commiſſion to heal ſouls. This commiſſion he opened and read at the beginning of his miniſtry, Luke iv. 18: and ſtill after owned it to be his buſineſs to heal ſouls, Mat. ix. 12, 13 In this office of a healer, he was held forth and typified of old by the *brazen ſerpent* that healed the ſtung Iſraelites, John iii. 14. and by the *ſun of righteouſneſs* that riſeth to us with healing under the wing, Mal. iv. 2. and by the *tree of life*, whoſe leaves were for the healing of the nations, Rev. xxii. 2.

The Lord Jeſus Chriſt being God-man, is nobly qualified to be our ſoul-phyſician; for, 1. He hath infinite knowledge and ſkill for taking up all diſeaſes, with their cauſes, and the proper remedies for them, ſo that he can never miſtake the caſe of the afflicted, nor make wrong applications for their cure. 2. He hath ſovereign authority and almighty power, whereby he can command diſeaſes to come and go at his pleaſure. 3. He hath infinite pity and readineſs to help the diſtreſſed: as he hath in him the compaſſions of a God, ſo he hath alſo the bowels of a man, which endows him with a peculiar tenderneſs of heart towards us, as being touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities; and hence he is inclined many times to come to the ſick without being ſent for, to the poor who have nothing to give him, and to be found of them who never ſought him. On this account Chriſt is repreſented by the good Samaritan that came to the wounded man that fell among thieves, and was lying by the way ſide, in a helpleſs caſe; the diſtreſſed man ſent not for him, but he came of himſelf, he pitied him and took him up, and poured wine and oil into his wounds. 4. He hath wonderful patience towards the diſtreſſed, he doth not leave them for their unthankful carriage, and the abuſes he gets from them, but bears with them all, and reſolutely goes on with his deſigned applications till the cure be perfected. He knows if he ſhould caſt them off, none elſe could take them in hand, and death would infallibly be the iſſue.

That the Lord Jeſus might convince us the more of his compaſſion and readineſs to heal diſeaſed ſouls, he readily cured men's bodies when he was on earth, and put none away that came to him. His deſign in this was to encourage us to come to him with our ſoul-maladies, and to afford us a ſtrong prop to our faith, and an argument, to plead with him, and ſay, "Lord, thou didſt ſhew compaſſion to diſeaſed bodies that muſt rot in the earth, and wilt thou not be moved with pity to precious ſouls that will live for ever? Did the diſeaſes of bodies draw out thy bowels, and ſhall not the wounds of ſouls affect thee much more? Was it not thy main errand to heal ſouls, O reject not thoſe which are laid down at thy feet."

The fourth Head. I propoſed in the 4*th* place, to enquire into the nature of the balm and means of healing which the Phyſician makes uſe of.

In the firſt place, the blood of Chriſt may juſtly be called the *balm of Gilead*, that heals ſouls, for it is the meritorious cauſe of our health and cure, and purchaſes all under-means of healing to us. This is evident from Iſa. liii. 5. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed.* Our glorious Phyſician ſaw that no leſs than his blood and ſtripes, his ſuffering and dying in our room, could ſatiſfy juſtice and obtain pardon to take away the guilt and puniſhment of ſin, and procure the graces of the Spirit to remove the power and pollution of ſin, and therefore he willingly ſheds all his blood for curing us of the diſeaſes of ſin. This blood then is our healing balm. Tho' the ſcripture ſpeaks of other means of healing, which our Phyſician makes uſe of, yet we are to underſtand that all theſe are uſed in ſubſerviency to Chriſt's blood which is the bleſſed meritorious mean of our cure, the only balm that procures all the other means of healing to us; ſome of which I ſhall mention; as,

I. The Spirit of God with his ſaving operations in ſouls, is the great mean of healing, which our bleeding Saviour procured for us. He ſends the Spirit to intimate the pardon of ſin to the wounded conſcience, and thereby cures the ſoul of its fears of wrath. And for curing the power and pollution of ſin, he ſends the Spirit to heal and change the nature, to ſubdue ſin, infuſe grace, and incline the ſoul to holineſs. And to render the cure univerſal through all the faculties of the ſoul, he enlightens the underſtanding, renews the will, ſoftens the heart, ſanctifies the memory, makes the conſcience tender and lively, and ſets the affections upon right objects. Now all theſe operations of the Spirit are the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood, as is clear from Gal. iii. 13, 14. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us, that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith.* May the Lord fulfil that promiſe to us, for healing our ſick ſouls and our ſick land.

II. The word and ordinances of Chriſt are another mean he makes uſe of for healing our ſpiritual diſeaſes. Theſe are the leaves of the tree of life, which are for healing of the nations. As the word is a mean in the hand of Chriſt and his Spirit for breaking and wounding the hard heart, and therefore called a hammer and a ſharp ſword; ſo it is alſo a mean of healing the wounded ſoul, by bringing healing promiſes to it, and preſcribing remedies againſt ſin, according to Pſal. cvii

20, *He ſent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their deſtructions.* The ſacraments alſo are means of healing, as they ſeal the pardon of our ſins, and bring cordials to our fainting hearts.

III. Afflictions are means of healing, made uſe of by our phyſician. He ſends croſſes and loſſes to make us feel how bitter ſin is, to cauſe us to ſearch our wounds, to mourn over them, and reſolve againſt ſin for the future. Sanctified rods are the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood to his patients; they are his phyſic to purge away their ſins, Iſa. xxvii. 9. *By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away their ſin.* So that believers, inſtead of murmuring, ought to bleſs God for their afflictions, ſeeing they are Chriſt's phyſic which he hath purchaſed for them at a dear rate.

IV. Stupendous providences are ſometimes made uſe of by Chriſt as balm for his church's diſeaſes, when he doth terrible things which they looked not for, as in Iſa. lxiv. 3. Thus he healed the fears of Iſrael by opening a way for them in the red-ſea. He healed their murmurings in the wilderneſs by giving them waters out of the rock. So the Lord by ſtupendous diſpenſations and revolutions hath often brought relief and healing to his diſtreſſed church in our land, as in the years 1560, 1638, 1688, 1714, and at other times. O let us ſtill remember the years of the right hand of the moſt High.

V. Faithful miniſters are appointed as balm and means of healing to diſeaſed ſouls. The great phyſician ſends them to diſpenſe ſound and wholeſome doctrines for that end, 1 Tim. vi. 3. Tit. ii. 1. They are his apothecaries to weigh out, mix, qualify and prepare the medicines according to his preſcriptions: This the apoſtle points at by a miniſter's *rightly dividing the word of truth,* 2 Tim. ii. 15. and Chriſt himſelf means it by the *ſteward's giving his houſhold their portion of meat in due ſeaſon,* Luke xii. 24. It is happy for a diſeaſed church, when God gives them underſtanding of the times (like the men of Iſſachar) to know what Iſrael ought to do in difficult caſes. And it is as unhappy for her, when they are left to miſtake the proper means, and ſometimes to inflame her wounds inſtead of healing them. It is the Lord that muſt give miniſters underſtanding in all things, 2 Tim. ii. 7. May they be helped always to depend upon him for it.

VI. Reforming magiſtrates have been made uſe of as balm for the church's diſtempers, when the Lord ſtirs them up to reſtore her liberties, redreſs her grievances and to uſe their authority to curb error and vice, idolatry and ſuperſtition, to call ſynods to conſult about reformation, and excite miniſters to their duty. Such balm were David, Solomon, Jehoſhaphat, Joaſh, Hezekiah, Joſiah, and Nehemiah to the church of God in their times. And ſo alſo were Ahaſuerus, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, and other heathen magiſtrates, by the Lord's turning their hearts to favour his church in their dominions. And when the Lord's time of fulfilling his promiſes to her doth come, he can ſtill make ſtrangers to build up her walls, and their kings to miniſter to her: And kings to prove her nurſing fathers, and queens her nurſing mothers, according to Iſa. lx. 10. and Iſa. xlix. 32.

VII. Godly praying perſons in every ſtation are as balm to a diſeaſed land, and the pooreſt of them may help to heal it by their prayers; even as a little child may bring phyſic and preſent it to its ſick mother. O that all the children of Zion were thus employed at preſent, when there is ſuch need for it. The Lord encourages them to it, by promiſing that the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, James v. 15. and contribute to heal the whole land, 2 Chron. vii. 17. *If my people who are called by my name ſhall humble themſelves, and pray, and ſeek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their ſin, and will heal their land.* Wherefore as long as God is pleaſed to preſerve a praying remnant in the land, however deadly our diſeaſes be, there is hope in Iſrael concerning it; ſeeing there is ſtill good balm in the land. May poor Scotland never be without it!

The fifth head. I propoſed in the next place to enquire into the phyſician's method of applying the balm and performing the cure of the diſeaſed.

I. Our bleſſed Phyſician firſt makes ſinners ſick before he makes us whole, that is, he makes ſinners ſenſible of their diſeaſe, by convincing them of ſin and miſery, and humbling them under the view it, that ſo they may prize Chriſt and his healing balm; ſuch are ſaid to be ſick, Mat. ix. 21. Now this preparatory ſickneſs hath ſeveral things in it; as,

1ſt, A diſcovery of the dangerous nature of our diſeaſe, ſin, that it is the root of all the other plagues and miſeries which we complain of; that it draws down the wrath and curſe of God upon us and puts us in a ſtate of damnation.

2dly, A ſolicitous care and thoughtfulneſs about our diſeaſe, as being of a deadly nature; which makes us reſtleſs and inquiſitive about it, like the Jailor, to ſay, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* What ſhall we do to be healed? To get our ſins pardoned and our nature changed? Is there any balm or phyſician for us?

3dly, There is in it a diſſatisfaction with all earthly comforts and enjoyments, as helpleſs things to us under our diſeaſe. The ſick man can take no pleaſure in eating, and drinking, ſleeping or any wordly thing, while his diſeaſe continues; bring gold, ſilver, honours, pleaſures or friends to him, he anſwers like Haman, *All theſe things avail me nothing,* while I want Chriſt's healing balm to my ſoul, which is every hour in hazard of the ſecond death.

4thly, The ſick man groans under the burden of his diſeaſe, he hath grief and ſorrow of heart for ſin, like the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xxxviii. 6. 18. *I go mourning all the day long, I will be ſorry for my ſin.* Why? It is a diſeaſe of my own bringing on, I have given the wounds to myſelf, and made my ſoul lothſome to God. O what a fool and beaſt have I been!

5thly, The ſick man is brought to deſpair of all healing and cure in his own doings or contrivances: All his former refuges and confidences are daſhed in pieces, and he joins with penitent Iſrael, Hoſ. xiv. 3. “Aſhur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon horſes, neither will we ſay any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods:” We will not any more make balm of our prayers, of our tears, or reſolutions, we muſt ſeek it from another quarter.

6thly, The ſick man ſees his abſolute need of a phyſician, and of one that is ſkilful, and hath balm of infinite virtue, even of Chriſt who is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, and can cure the deepeſt and deadlieſt wounds. It is he and he only (ſaith he) who hath an infinite fulneſs of merit and ſpirit that can ſuit my deſperate malady. None but the eternal Son of God can be my phyſician: "O that I knew where to find him!"

7thly, The diſeaſed man is brought to a willingneſs to ſubmit to the phyſician's method and preſcriptions, and to ſay with Paul, Acts ix. 6. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Let him cut me, lance me, blood me, purge me. Let him put me to what pain he pleaſeth, let him lay me never ſo low, I'll ſubmit. Let him preſcribe a potion never ſo bitter, I'll drink it. Let Chriſt do with me what he will, if he cure my diſeaſe, all is well. I will not haggle with him for a right eye, or a right hand, or any darling ſin, or any thing dear to me in the world; no, every thing ſhall be parted with at his command.——Thus the ſinner by the great Phyſician's power and ſkill is made ſick and ſenſible, humble and willing, in order to prepare him for the healing balm.

II. Another ſtep which the Phyſician takes to cure the diſeaſed man, he by his Spirit works faith in his ſoul; that is, he powerfully perſuades and enables him to embrace Chriſt as his Saviour, and apply the balm of his blood and merits unto his wounds, for removing guilt, pardoning ſin, and reconciling God to his ſoul. Now when this is done, the danger of death is over, John v. 24. "He that believeth ſhall not come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death to life." Faith is a healing grace, for it is the inſtrument which applies the healing balm of Chriſt's blood to the diſeaſed ſoul. Every touch of faith's hand brings healing, nay, every one of its looks is healing, Iſa. xiv. 22. "Look "unto me, and be ſaved." Thus a look of a ſtung Iſraelite brought healing to his wound. So Peter's look to Chriſt healed him of apoſtacy. Hence Chriſt ſaid to ſeveral diſeaſed perſons, *Thy faith hath made thee whole.* So here, when once faith applies Chriſt's blood, the guilt of ſin is cured, its reigning power ſubdued, and the ſtrength of the diſeaſe is broken, it will not prove mortal.

Queſt. How ſhall I know whether I have got this healing faith, faith which hath made me whole?

Anſ. See whether it hath the evidences of a healing faith? 1. Hath thy faith brought thee to a peremptory reſolution to ly at the Phyſician's door, and look to him alone for healing, ſaying, If I die, it ſhall be at Chriſt's door, for there is no other name given under heaven, nor among men, whereby I can be healed.—2. Hath thy faith made thee fall heartily in with the goſpel method of healing, and to approve it as a beautiful contrivance, and ſay, "God's covenant of grace "is well ordered in all things, and ſuitable to all my "maladies; Chriſt the Mediator of it is a noble Phy"ſician, and complete Saviour, and therefore I chuſe "him in all his offices, and accept of all his preſcriptions "for my diſeaſed ſoul: I accept of his blood to waſh "me, his righteouſneſs to cover me, his Spirit to ſanc"tify me, his word to direct me, and his laws to go"vern me."—3. See whether thy faith hath determined thee to open frankly to thy Phyſician, and entertain him in the beſt rooms of thy ſoul. When Chriſt knocked by his Spirit, did thy faith make thee willing to yield and ſurrender all thy powers and faculties to him? Didſt thou bring the keys of all the rooms of thy ſoul to Chriſt, and particularly of thy will, ſaying, "Lord, come chuſe where thou wilt lodge, where thou "wilt lie, and what thou wilt have, for all I have is "devoted to thee, and at thy command." Now, O man, if thou haſt got ſuch a faith as this, then thy faith hath made thee whole, the healing balm is applied, the cure begun, and ſhall aſſuredly be perfected at length.

III. Another ſtep of the ſoul's cure is by the renewing and ſanctifying work of the Spirit. Aſſoon as the Phyſician gives faith to apply the balm, he takes the ſoul into his hoſpital, places him among his patients, whoſe diſeaſe is broken, and who are on the way of recovery. He takes every believing ſoul under his ſpecial care, he kindly viſits and attends them, and carries on their cure by his Spirit's renewing and ſanctifying work: And this he doth by degrees, for the wounds which ſin hath given our natures are ſo deep, that, they take long time to heal; nay, it will take all our days before the cure be finiſhed. But though the cure be ſlow, it is ſure.

Queſt. By what ſteps or degrees doth the Phyſician carry on the cure in believers?

Anſ. 1ſt, By his Spirit in regeneration; he cures the *mind* of its blindneſs, the *heart* of its hardneſs, the *nature* of its perverſeneſs, the *will* of its backwardneſs, the *memory* of its ſlipperineſs, the *conſcience* of its benumbedneſs, and the *affections* of their diſorder; all this according to his gracious promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. *I will take away the ſtony heart, aud give you an heart of fleſh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes.* It is by his Spirit within us that the cure is carried on.

2dly, He heals his people by intimating peace and comfort to their diſquieted ſouls, and aſſuring them that God's anger is turned away from them. As the grant of pardon cures the guilt of ſin, ſo the Spirit's intimation of it pacifies the troubled conſcience, and brings healing to the bones which were broken by ſin. The believer's ſore ſtill *runs in the night* until this doth come. Now when the Phyſician is pleaſed to quiet his people's minds, comfort their drooping ſpirits, and deliver them from the apprehenſions of God's wrath, he doth remarkably advance his healing work in them, according to Pſal. xxx. 2, 3. *&c.* Pſal. vi. 2. Hoſ. xiv. 4.

3dly, He carries on the cure of his people by ſanctifying their natures, infuſing grace and holineſs into all the faculties of their ſouls, and adding new meaſures and degrees thereof from time to time. Increaſe of grace and progreſs in ſanctification is a continual healing of the diſeaſe of ſin, according to Mal. iv. 2. *The Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe with healing in his wings, and ye ſhall grow up as calves in the ſtall.* Healing and growing are there joined together. The more we grow in ſanctification, the more our cure doth advance. This growth indeed is often inſenſible in believers, yea ſometimes they will be ſeized with new diſtempers, and be getting new wounds, ſo that the work will ſeem to go back; yet notwithſtanding, the virtue of Gilead's balm will infallibly prevail in order to the perfecting of the ſoul's cure.

4thly, He carries on his healing work by cheriſhing weak grace in his people, and bleſſing the means of grace, for ſtrengthening and increaſing it; and ſo he makes good his gracious promiſe and character, Matth. xii. 20. *A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoking* *flax ſhall he not quench.* We have an inſtance of this in the caſe of Thomas: How tenderly did he blow on his ſmoking flax and cheriſh his weak faith! John xx. 27. *Then ſaith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide, and be not faithleſs but believing.*

5thly, He advances the cure by weakening indwelling ſin and corruption, and removing thoſe diſtempers which hinder the growth of grace; he looſes their bonds, and frees them from their fetters and ſtraitnings in duty, and ſets them at liberty to *walk before the Lord in the land of the living*, and even to *ſing in the ways of the Lord*, Pſal. cxxxviii. 5.

6thly, He cauſes his *north and ſouth wind* with their healing influences to *blow upon their gardens and ſpices*, and ſo puts life in their graces, and draws them forth to exerciſe in performing of duty. Thus he quickens faith to embrace and reſt on a crucified Jeſus, and kindles love to entertain him; and he ſharpens the ſoul's appetite after its food.

7thly, He carries on the cure in his people, by giving them new diſcoveries of Chriſt and of his fulneſs and ſuitableneſs to their needs, to draw out their faith and love to him. This was one great deſign in ſending the Spirit into the world, John xvi. 14. *He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine and ſhew it unto you.* Now how doth he glorify Chriſt, but by ſhewing them his fulneſs and excellency, and making them willing to part with all things for Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and content to borrow all they want out of Chriſt's fulneſs, and to make Chriſt their All in juſtification, and in ſanctification, and in glorification. The more the ſoul makes uſe of Chriſt and lives near him, it is ſtill ſo much the nearer to perfect health.

8thly, The Spirit carries on the cure in his people by cauſing them to breathe after a full conformity to Chriſt and his image, that their ſanctification may be completed, and they freed of all complaints of indwelling-ſin and imperfect ſervices. Hence they are made to cry with David, Pſal. cxix. 5. *O that my ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes!* And with Paul, Rom. vii. 25. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* The ſtronger the ſoul's breathings are of this kind, the nearer it is to perfect health and cure.

IV. The laſt and finiſhing ſtep of the diſeaſed ſoul's cure is at death; it is only then that the ſoul is made perfectly whole. Then it is that our great Phyſician by his Spirit pulls up all the roots and ſeeds of the diſeaſe, and makes the ſoul perfect in holineſs, and meet for entering into heaven, where only a ſtate of perfect health is enjoyed. It is in heaven only that ſin and miſery, diſeaſes and complaints can find no place, and all pain, ſorrow and crying ſhall paſs away. There, all Chriſt's recovered patients ſhall have perfect and uninterrupted health thro' all the ages of eternity. May we then have grace to be always looking out and longing for that happy ſtate and healthful place, where the inhabitants ſhall never ſay they are ſick, being all forgiven and healed of their ſin and iniquity! May our bleſſed Phyſician fit us for that place, by beginning, carrying on, and completing our cure from the diſeaſe of ſin, by all thoſe ways and means of healing which he hath appointed, that to his name may be aſcribed glory in the higheſt, thro' endleſs ages. *Amen.*

SERMON VI.

On Jerem. viii. 22. *Is there no balm, &c.*

I NOW proceed to the laſt thing propoſed in the method I laid down, *viz.*

The APPLICATION.

I. This doctrine ſerves to inform us of the amazing riches of divine love in providing a Phyſician for our diſeaſed ſouls, and ſuch a Phyſician as Jeſus Chriſt the eternal Son of God! One that hath infinitely more knowledge and ſkill than all the angels in heaven: One that hath infinite compaſſions wrapt up in human bowels: One that hath both a tender heart and a tender hand, Pſalm cxlvii. 3. One that ſuffered his ſide to be opened and his heart to be pierced, that his blood might become balm for our wounds. Behold an aſtoniſhing cure! a matchleſs Phyſician! Other phyſicians are prodigal of their patients blood, but ſparing of their own; but our glorious Phyſician ſaves his patient's blood, and pours out his own: And of it he makes an incomparable balm for our wounds.

Again, we may ſee what cauſe we have to bleſs God for his diſtinguiſhing goodneſs to Adam's diſeaſed family in general, and to our diſeaſed land in particular. The angels that ſinned, had no phyſician ſent to them, but we have a matchleſs one ſent to us the ſons of men. There are many opulent nations in the world who never heard the news of this Phyſician, and his healing balm! but they are proclaimed in all corners in Scotland. Theſe have the gold and riches of the Indies, but want the balm of Gilead, which is of infinite more value, than all they have.

II. We may improve this doctrine in an uſe of lamentation for the ſick and diſtreſſed caſe of our land, and multitudes of ſouls therein dying of their wounds, notwithſtanding the goſpel-offers of the glorious Phyſician and his excellent balm which they have in plenty. Need I to ſay any thing to inſtruct our diſtreſſed and mournful condition? Surely if the abounding of infidelity and immorality, exceſs and extravagance, error and ſchiſm, diviſions and breaches, jealouſies and animoſities, complaints and grievances; if divided minds and disjointed hearts; if reelings and ſtaggerings, if altar againſt altar, if doctrine againſt doctrine, if worſhip againſt worſhip, if poſt by poſt, and threſhold by threſhold, be ſymptoms of a diſeaſed land and church that needs the balm of Gilead; then may we conclude our caſe is bad, and our need great. Ah, now it is a ſickly time with the land, and multitudes are ſo diſtreſſed, every corner is like an hoſpital or infirmary, and few of them are cured. How many are languiſhing and dying around us, of one diſeaſe or another, either of the plague of unbelief, the ſtone of the heart, the giddineſs of the head, the gangrene of error, the falling ſickneſs of apoſtacy, the palſy of unſteadineſs, the lethargy of ſecurity, the tympany of pride, the frenzy of paſſion, the cancer of envy, the leproſy of vice, the dropſy of drunkenneſs, the fever of luſt, the running ulcer of outbreakings, inward decays, conſumption of ſpiritual ſtrength, or ſome other ſpiritual diſtemper! Ah, our diſeaſes are paſt reckoning. What numbers about us are ſeized with feebleneſs of knees and weakneſs of hands, ſo that they can neither bow down the one nor lift up the other in prayer, to their Maker, and yet never are ſenſible of their miſery, nor enquire for the balm of Gilead, or the Phyſician there.

We may take up a lamentation over the ſick and dying among us, as the prophet did over the Jews, in the verſes following my text, Jer. ix. 1. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the ſlain of the daughter of my people." Oh! what ſlaughter doth the plague of ſin make in houſes and families both in city and country! There is reaſon for a greater cry among us, than that in Egypt, when their firſt born were ſlain: Of which it is ſaid, Exod. xii. 30. "And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a houſe where there was not one dead." But ah! Our caſe is worſe for we have many houſes, where there is not one alive, but all dead ſpiritually, and ready to die eternally. This alas! is the caſe of this poor land, notwithſtanding the ſovereign balm that abounds in it.

Queſt. Whence is it that ſo few are healed, when the balm and Phyſician are ſo near?

Anſw. The cauſe is ſurely in us: For 1*ſt*, Many are not ſenſible of their diſeaſes, nor feel their wounds: They want a principle of ſpiritual life, and have no ſenſe of pain; and hence they complain of their inward plagues or ill hearts. The dead have no feeling, no care, no fear. And therefore many ignorant people ſay, they have good hearts to God, and do thank God for it. Alas! the moſt part are dead, ſee no need of this balm, and will not apply it.

2*dly*, Many are in love with their diſeaſe, more than with the Phyſician. They may perhaps ſpeak againſt ſin, and even pray againſt it, but in their hearts they deſire not that God ſhould hear them. God may ſay to them as in Pſal. lii. 3. *Thou loveſt evil more than good.* And how can ſuch expect to be healed?

3*dly*, Many neglect the ſeaſon of healing, and do not ſeek after the Phyſician and his balm in due time. They ſlight Chriſt and his goſpel-offers in the days of youth and health, and never begin to enquire for him till it be too late.

4*thly*, Many will not truſt Chriſt wholly for healing, but have a ſquint eye to other phyſicians, as to their duties, prayers, tears, *&c.* But, my friends, either Chriſt muſt have the ſole honour of your cure, or he will not be your Phyſician.

5*thly*, Many will not ſubmit to Chriſt's preſcription for healing; they will not take the bitter potion of ſelf-ſearching, or repentance, of contrition, or godly ſorrow; nor ſwallow the pill of mortification, or ſelf-denial: and therefore they remain unhealed. O that we could lament over them, and bewail their caſe before the Lord.

III. A 3d uſe of this doctrine may be of conſolation: And ſurely the news it brings of the incomparable balm of Gilead, and the phyſician there, may afford comfort to the ſick church and land wherein we dwell, however diſtreſſed her caſe be. Tho' it is our duty to bewail it, yet we are not to mourn as thoſe who have no hope. Her wounds indeed are deep, and her breaches wide, yet her caſe is not deſperate while there is balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there. Surely the balm hath not loſt its virtue, nor the Phyſician his compaſſion towards us; nay, we ſtill have pregnant inſtances of his mercy and pity, amidſt the wrath-like diſpenſations towards Scotland, which are ſigns that our good Samaritan hath not paſſed by us on the other ſide, like the Levite, but keeps in the way where we are, and looks with pity on our wounds, willing to apply his balm to them. Yea, his bowels do ſtill yearn to us, as of old to Ephraim, and make him ſay, *How ſhall I give thee up, O Scotland? How ſhall I deliver thee? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.*

Object. Seeing it is notorious that the Phyſician hath given up many famous churches, when their diſeaſes were deſperate; what ground have we under ſuch dangerous ſymptoms to expect he will pity us, and apply this balm for our recovery?

Anſ. We have ſtill ſeveral grounds of hope; ſuch as,

1*ſt*, Seeing the Lord hath begun to pour out his vials upon Antichriſt, we may conclude he will not ceaſe till they be all poured out; and ſeeing thereby Antichriſt hath been in a deadly conſumption theſe 200 years paſt, he muſt ſurely expire at length. And tho' ſometimes he may ſeem to recover a little, yet the Lord aſſures us, that he will at length "conſume him with the ſpirit of his mouth, and deſtroy him with the brightneſs of his coming." 2 Theſſ. ii. 8. By which he means his coming in the brightneſs of goſpel-light, attended with the down-pouring of his Spirit. Now when we hear of the Lord's cauſing his goſpel ſun-ſhine to ariſe and ſpread in any place, with the out-pouring of his bleſſed Spirit, for convincing and converting of ſouls, the Lord encourages us to look out for the coming of his kingdom, and the downfal of Antichriſt.

2*dly*, We have encouragement to hope from that prophecy in Rev. xvii. 16. which foretels that the ten horns or kingdoms which formerly ſupported Antichriſt ſhall be inſtruments of his deſtruction: it is ſaid, *They ſhall hate the whore, and make her deſolate.* Now the Lord hath made Britain one of thoſe ten kingdoms that hate her, and therefore he will ſtill preſerve (as formerly he hath done in the moſt perilous times) a goodly remnant that ſhall be the prevailing party there, to accompliſh that grand deſign. And ſeeing the Lord is raiſed up out of his holy habitation, and hath already begun the work, he will ſurely carry it on, finiſh it at laſt, however it be interrupted, and things appear unlikely for a time.

3*dly*, We may draw hope from the ſecond pſalm, and other ſcripture texts, in which God the Father promiſeth to *give his Son the uttermoſt parts of the earth for a poſſeſſion, and that the iſles ſhall ſee his ſalvation, and wait for his law*, which places do take in Scotland, a nation, (tho' remote and deſpiſed) to which the Lord hath ſhewed a diſtinguiſhing reſpect, by ſending the goſpel early to it, advancing reformation to a great pitch in it, pouring out his Spirit remarkably on it, taking it ſolemnly into covenant with himſelf, appearing often for the intereſt of religion when almoſt ſunk in it, and raiſing up deliverers for it when oppreſt by enemies. Now theſe ſignal proofs of our Redeemer's kindneſs, give us ground to hope he will not give up the land that from eternity was given him by his glorious Father, and that in time was ſo ſolemnly ſurrendered to him by our fathers, who are now at their reſt.

4*thly*, There is a mourning and praying remnant in the land, who are greatly affected with the want of God's Spirit and preſence in ordinances, who deſire to lament after the Lord, and to ſigh and cry for all the abominations found among us. And tho' the glory of the Lord be gone up from the cherub, yet it ſeems ſtill to hover and ſtand over the threſhold of the door, and many are pleading and proteſting againſt his departure: And God hath regard to the prayers and tears of a faithful remnant, Pſal. xii. 5. Pſal. cii. 13, 14.

5thly, It is a hopeful token for the land, when there is a ſtir and noiſe among the dry bones of the young generation, when theſe are awakened, and brought under convictions, and perſuaded to turn from their old cuſtoms and companions, and to look towards Chriſt and heaven. Bleſſed be God for what is to be ſeen of this in ſome places: O that it were general, and over all! This would be a pledge of God's continuing of his abode with us; for he will not forſake the work of his own hands, nor abandon the pledges of his grace. Wherefore let us earneſtly wiſh and pray to ſee more of the Spirit's work among the young in our day.

6thly, Many of God's worthies, who are now in glory, have gone off the ſtage in the belief and perſuaſion, that God would yet ariſe and have mercy on his Zion in this land, that he would ſignally build her up, and appear in his glory, yea, that there would be more glorious goſpel-days ſeen in Scotland, than they or their fathers had beheld; and we are encouraged to hope that God will not let the words of his dying ſaints fall to the ground.

7thly, The accounts we have lately got of the effuſions of God's Spirit, and the diſplays of ſovereign grace in the converſion of ſouls, through the Engliſh plantations in America, and other parts of the world, give us ground to hope that God is about to accompliſh his promiſes to his church in the latter days, when the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Now if the King of Zion hath already begun his circuit, as if he deſign'd to ride in triumph through his churches, can we think he will paſs by Scotland, where he hath a waiting and wreſtling remnant, looking out, and ready to ſtop him with their cry, and even to caſt forth a flood of tears in his way? O! will not ancient kindneſs then revive, and his heart warm to his covenanted land, where his dwelling hath been, and his goings ſeen in the times of old! O! may not poor Scotland alſo plead for a viſit, according to the multitude of his tender mercies? Indeed the diviſions of Reuben, and our long degeneracy, may occaſion great thoughts and ſearchings of heart about our caſe: yet the foregoing conſiderations may encourage us to wait and pray in hope, however dark and cloudy the day be, eſpecially ſeeing our bleſſed Phyſician hath not taken away his healing balm from us, but doth ſtill preſerve it pure in the land.

Queſt. Seeing there is balm in the land, and the Phyſician willing to apply it, why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? How is it that Scotland's wounds are ſo long a healing?

Anſ. I. God in his wiſdom may order it ſo, that our wounds may be more laid open, and the corruptions thereof better diſcovered for our deeper humiliation. So God kept Iſrael wandering *forty years in the wilderneſs to humble them and prove them, and to know what was in their heart:* Deut. viii. 2. The continuance of wounds and grievances is needful for the trial and diſcovery of many; for thereby ſuch who were under covert are made known, and the corrupt diſtinguiſhed from the ſincere: the falſeneſs and rottenneſs of many had not been made evident, if wounds had not been ſo long kept open, and grievances continued.

II. The cure may be poſtponed to take our hearts wholly off from the creatures, and to convince us of the inſufficiency of all other phyſicians beſide the Phyſician in Iſrael. We do not naturally come to God, until we ſee there is help for us no where elſe: while there is any view of relief from creatures, we go firſt to them; ſo we find when *Ephraim ſaw his ſickneſs, and Judah his wound,* the firſt phyſician they ſought to, were the Aſſyrians, and king Jarib, who could not heal them, Hoſ. v. 13. Upon which account we ſee the judgment is not only continued, but increaſed; for the Lord ſaith in the following verſes, that he *will not tear, but go away* from them; and his deſign therein is to make them turn to himſelf as their only Phyſician, which at length they are brought to, for Hoſ. vi. 1. They ſay, *Come and let us return to the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up.* It would be a happy effect, if our diſappointments from the creatures would humble us for our ſin and folly, and bring us off all things, to look to God himſelf only for healing.

III. Diſeaſes continue unhealed when the cauſes thereof are ſecret and undiſcovered. We ſee Iſrael continued in a diſtreſſed caſe, as long as Achan's accurſed thing lay hid in his tent. All the humiliation and prayers of Joſhua and the elders of Iſrael, Joſh. vii. could not heal them, till the accurſed thing was laid open and diſcovered. And this ſhould put us on to try and ſearch more narrowly, if there be not ſome ſecret ſin of this land undiſcovered, ſome Achan in the camp, ſome Jonah hid under deck, which makes the ſea to work, and grow more tempeſtuous; ſo that let mariners row as they will, there is no getting into the harbour of peace. Surely ſome accurſed thing is overlooked by us, ſuch as our old covenant-breaking, perſecution, bloodſhed, our contempt of the Lord Jeſus, our giving the world his room, *&c.* May theſe hid evils be diſcovered; which continue our ſtorm, and perpetuate our diſeaſes, ſo that there is no healing for us.

IV. Our wounds are ſo long a healing, becauſe we do not ſubmit to the Phyſician's directions; we will not abſtain from things which inflame our wounds, ſuch as the invading of the rights of Chriſt and his church; nor humble ourſelves for old and late ſins; we will not put honour upon free grace, nor make uſe of the balm of our Phyſician's blood: we decline to ſet about extraordinary faſting, humiliation and prayer, and ſay, what a wearineſs is it? We do not cry and wreſtle for the down pouring of the Spirit, that only can apply the balm, and heal our land, but look to other medicines. Many, alas! tho' they complain of their diſeaſe, are not willing to part with it, but have a ſecret liking to it. Were we once brought to ſee our diſeaſe, to value our Phyſician, to be wholly reſigned to his will, and to ſay with Paul, *Lord, what wilt thou* *have us to do?* there would be hope in Iſrael concerning us.

IV. A *4th* uſe of this doctrine may be of examination. And I would exhort every one to try if they be yet healed of the diſeaſe of ſin; I mean, if they have yet come to Chriſt, and got his healing balm applied to them. For though believers are not perfectly cured in this life, yet when they come to Chriſt by faith, they ſhare of the healing virtue of his blood, and are put in the way of healing: The force of their diſeaſe is broken, and the Spirit takes them under cure. Examine yourſelves then, if the healing work be begun in you. I offer you ſome marks of it, ſee if you can apply them to yourſelves.

1. Were you ever brought the length to have ſuch a ſenſe of your ſores, and ſuch a feeling of your wounds, as to be content to give all the world for the balm of Gilead to them? Such a lively feeling where it is, is a hopeful token; whereas thoſe who are ſtill eaſy about ſin, never ſaw it ſo as to hate it, or make ſerious enquiry for the Phyſician, their wound is unhealed.

2. Is your drought abated, I mean, your thirſt after ſin and the world; are you now out of love with them? this ſaith, the ſtrength of your diſeaſe is broken. But if you be ſtill in love with the world, or any predominant ſin, or go on in ſin without remorſe, your diſeaſe continues.

3. Have you a better appetite for your food than formerly? do you reliſh the ordinances and means of communion with God more than before? it is a good ſign. But if you have no liking to theſe, your diſtemper remains.

4. Have you got a high eſteem of your Phyſician, and a heart affection to him: it is a good token: for it is natural for people to eſteem and love thoſe who have cured their diſeaſes, and ſaved their lives; ſo was it with the blind man, John ix. that was cured by Chriſt: he had a great eſteem of him, and all the reproaches caſt upon him by his enemies, could by no means alter his thoughts of him.

5. It is a good ſign if you make your Phyſician kindly welcome to your heart and houſe; if you give him the beſt entertainment you have, and guard againſt every thing that would offend him. But thoſe who ſhut their doors againſt the Phyſician, and refuſe acceſs to precious Chriſt, they are ſtill under their diſeaſe.

6. Can you abide the light better than before? Are you brought the length to love ſearching ſermons, and thoſe miniſters that would ſearch to the bottom of your wounds, in order to a more thorough cure? Are you more deſirous than ever to have ſin diſcovered? Then it is a good ſign. But if you ſhun the light, and deſire, like ſick perſons, to have the curtains drawn upon you; or if you love thoſe prophets beſt who would heal your wounds ſlightly, and only ſkin them over to you, ſaying, *Peace, peace, when there is no peace*; as thoſe in Jer. vi. 14. then your diſeaſe ſtill remains.

7. Do you now ſee more and more of the vanity of all other medicines beſides the balm of Gilead? If you now ſee the utter inſufficiency of the balm of your convictions, reſolutions, prayers, tears, reformations, duties, &c. to heal your wounds, it is a good token; but if you are ſtill truſting to any of theſe, you remain unhealed.

8. Have you attained to the frame of the thankful leper, who when he was healed, turned back, fell down at Chriſt's feet, glorified God, and gave him thanks? as in Luke xvii. 15, 16. Have you got humble and thankful hearts? Do you deſire with the Pſalmiſt to bleſs the Lord with your ſouls, and all that is within you to bleſs his holy name, for healing your wounds and diſeaſes: as in Pſal. ciii. 1. 3. then it is a good ſign.

9. Are you more able for labour and ſervice than formerly? Do you find more ſtrength and willingneſs to run on God's errands, fight his battles, and perform commanded duties? It is a ſign of recovery: for we ſee what is foretold concerning the happy effects of this balm of Gilead in goſpel times, Iſa. xxxiv. 5, 6. *Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the lame man ſhall leap as an hart.*

10. Have you a holy jealouſy and fear of every thing that may occaſion a relapſe, and bring back the diſeaſe upon you? Do you watch againſt the temptations of ſatan, and the ſnares of evil company or any thing that might entangle you, or draw you into ſin? That is ſurely a good ſign. We ſee what Chriſt ſaid to the impotent man whom he had healed, John v. 14. *Behold thou art made whole, ſin no more.* As it is the duty, ſo it will be the inclination of every healed ſoul to guard againſt wounding itſelf any more. It will be the earneſt deſire of that ſoul that it may not go back to the houſe of Jonathan, and its former diſtreſſed condition again. Now if you can apply one or more of theſe marks to yourſelves, then you may conclude that Chriſt hath taken you under cure: his balm is applied to you, and the work of healing is begun. May we all feel this in ourſelves, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

Exhortation to come to Chriſt for healing.

SERMON VII.

On JER. viii. 22. *Is there no balm in Gilead?* &c.

V. HAVING improved the doctrine in ſeveral uſes, I proceed to a *5th* uſe, namely, of exhortation. And here, in the name of the Lord, I exhort and beſeech all poor diſeaſed ſouls to come to the bleſſed Phyſician Jeſus Chriſt, who hath excellent balm for healing all their wounds and diſeaſes, be they never ſo deſperate. O ſick ſouls, why are you ſo unwilling to come and be healed? If your bodies be ſick, and a famous phyſician near, there is no ſmall ſtir in riding and travelling to him for help. But though your ſouls be deadly ſick, and in immediate hazard of eternal death, and the great Healer juſt at hand; how little motion is there amongſt you towards him! How amazing is the ſtupidity of the world, which is no better than a common hoſpital! Though every man in it be like the man that fell among thieves, Luke x. 37. robbed, and deadly wounded; yet very few are groaning for this good Samaritan to come and bind up their wounds. How deſirable would it be to ſee diſeaſed ſinners come flocking to Chriſt with their ſoul maladies, like the inhabitants of Genezareth with their bodily ailments, when

Chriſt landed among them, Mark vi. 55. 56. there it is ſaid, *They ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds thoſe that were ſick, where they heard he was. And whitherſoever he entered into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the ſick in the ſtreets, and beſought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment, and as many as touched him were made whole.* Well, did Chriſt refuſe liberty to any of theſe ſick perſons to touch him? No, they were all welcome, whatever their ſickneſs was, be it never ſo deadly or deſperate. And this our bleſſed Jeſus cauſed to be recorded here for your encouragement to come to him with your ſoul diſtreſſes. O to ſee ſuch a ſtir among you about your ſouls, as was among that people about their bodies! Where elſe can you go with them, but to Jeſus Chriſt the only Phyſician of ſouls? If you go to the other phyſicians, it will juſt befal you as it did that poor woman which had an iſſue of blood twelve years, Mark v. 26. 27. *She went to many phyſicians, and ſpent all that ſhe had, and was nothing better, but grew worſe, till at laſt ſhe came to Chriſt, who cured her for nothing.*

In proſecuting this exhortation, I ſhall addreſs myſelf to ſeveral ſorts of diſeaſed ſouls. I. The inſenſible and ſecure. II. The ſenſible and feeling. III. Thoſe who are in the way of healing and recovery.

I. I begin with the inſenſible, thoſe who know not their diſeaſes, nor feel their wounds, and therefore ſee no need of the balm of Gilead, or the Phyſician there. As there are multitudes killed by ignorance, ſo great numbers are undone by ſelf-flattery. Many apprehend themſelves to be ſound and whole, who in the mean time are mortally ſick and dying. Solomon ſaith there is a generation of ſuch ſelf-conceited perſons, Prov. xxx. 12. In ſuch a caſe was the church of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. How fooliſhly did that proud Phariſee flatter himſelf? Luke xviii. 11. 12. He thought himſelf perfectly well, ſound and whole, when his ſoul was deadly ſick, and ready to drop into hell. In like manner do many deceive themſelves. Ah! they never communed with their own hearts, never took their ſouls aſide to enquire if they be yet under the mortal diſeaſe wherewith they were born; or if they have gone to the ſoul-phyſician for his healing balm. In order to awaken ſuch ſecure thoughtleſs ſouls, conſider theſe few things:

1. While you are inſenſible of your diſeaſe, your caſe is highly dangerous and miſerable. Why? 1. You are unconverted, unſanctified, and dying in your ſins, John viii. 24. To die in your ſins is infinitely worſe than to die in a dungeon among ſerpents; for theſe curſed ſerpents, your ſins, will go to the grave with you as your companions, and to the tribunal with you as your accuſers, and to hell with you as your tormentors.——2. Your ſouls while diſeaſed, are moſt lothſome to God; for you are not only without the image and Spirit of God, but you are ſwarming with the vermin of ſin and filthy luſts.——3. You are ſlaves to the devil, drudging night and day at his work, grinding at his mill, and feeding on his huſks; he hath you in fetters, but you are inſenſible of it: Satan deals with you as the Philiſtines with Sampſon, puts out your eyes that you may not ſee your chains.——4. Your whole actions, natural, civil, and religious, are all an abomination to God. Not only your eating and drinking, buying and ſelling; but alſo your praying and communicating are abhorred, as being without faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Beſides the leproſy of ſin which overſpreads you, defiles all your beſt performances.——5. Your diſeaſe is ſtill the more dangerous, that you are not ſenſible of it; for while it is ſo, you are out of the way of healing, according to Mat. ix. 12. The whole ſee no need of the phyſician. Awake therefore, O ſecure ſoul, conſider thy caſe, and flee to the great Phyſician for help; until you ſee your miſery, you will not prize the remedy.

2*dly*, Conſider though you be moſt miſerable and diſtreſſed by ſin, yet you have the balm of Gilead freely offered to you in the goſpel, that can heal and ſave the moſt diſeaſed ſoul, Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me,* (ſaith Chriſt) *and be ye ſaved.* And though ye have been ſtout-hearted againſt God, yet, ſaith he, *Hearken unto me, I bring near my righteouſneſs to you,* Iſa. xlvi. 12. 13. It is a pleaſure to him to bring his balm near to you, and to ſee poor ſinners willing to make uſe of it; for, ſaith he, Ezek. xviii. 32. *I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth, wherefore turn yonrſelves, and live ye.* See alſo Ezek. xxxiii. 2.

3*dly*, Conſider how long you have ſlighted this balm already; wherefore if you neglect it any longer, your day of grace may come to end, and your healing time go over; ſo that when you would be healed, the balm may be far from you. Wherefore improve your day like that people, in Capernaum, Luke iv. 40. *Now when the ſun was ſetting, all they who had any ſick with divers diſeaſes, brought them unto him, and he laid his hand on every one of them, and healed them.* Go you, O diſeaſed ſouls, and do likewiſe. Many of you have delayed till *the ſun is at the ſetting*, the ſun of the goſpel, the ſun of your life, the ſun of your health and ſtrength. O then make haſte before the ſun ſet, to bring your ſick ſouls to Chriſt to be cured: For *now is the accepted time,* 2 Cor. vi. 2. Now is your healing day. And if you ſhould loſe this day of your healing, to-morrow may be the day of your eternal wounding.

Queſt. But what ſhall we do to attain to a ſenſe and feeling of our wounds in order to healing?

Anſ. Take this advice:

1. Be diligent in the uſe of all outward means: read the ſcriptures, and get the knowledge of your loſt ſtate in Adam, and the way of ſalvation thro' a Surety's righteouſneſs. Attend the preaching of the word, which is the uſual mean of converſion: be not abſent from the ordinary occaſions of it, leſt you miſs that ſermon that was moſt ſuitable to your caſe, and might have been the means of ſaving your ſouls. The devil is at pains to keep you from ſome ſermons, for he may know what miniſters are preparing before-hand, and when he ſees any thing coming that is likely to touch you, he will contrive ſome temptation to keep you back from hearing it.

2. Study to affect your hearts with what you hear of your mortal diſeaſe, the ſinful natures you brought into the world, their pollution, rebellion, and enmity againſt God. Think upon the many acts of rebellion you have broke out into againſt heaven. Think alſo how near you are, while unhealed, to everlaſting burning. yea every moment on the brink of the fiery furnace, and kept out of it only by the thread of life, which may be broke by any bit of bread you eat, by

ſlipping of a foot by ſtumbling of a horſe, and by hundreds of diſtempers, which like ſo many lighted candles, are ready to burn the thread, and let your diſeaſed ſouls drop into the pit for ever.

3. When God ſhoots the arrow of conviction into the conſcience, do not ſeek to ſhake it out till it reach the end for which it was ſent. Be not like thoſe who go to their callings to work it out, or to their cups to drink it out, or to their beds to ſleep it out, or to their games to divert it out. But go rather to your knees, and pray that the wound may be medicinal and ſaving, that it may be as deep as needful, and the power of the Lord may be preſent to heal you, apply to Jeſus your Phyſician, that he may take out the arrow with his own hand, and bring the balm of Gilead to the wound.

4. Apply to the holy Spirit, who is the author of ſaving convictions, and implore his gracious influences, for the dry bones ſtir not till he breathe upon them. It is the office of the Holy Ghoſt to apply Chriſt's purchaſe to you, and ſaving convictions are the firſt part of that purchaſe he makes you partake of. Plead then with him, "Lord come and do thine office, art thou not as willing to apply as Chriſt was to purchaſe? Is not the Spirit the applier as freely promiſed as Chriſt the Phyſician! Is not that a free promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. *I will put my Spirit within you?* It depends upon no condition in us, only it is ſaid, ver. 37. *I will be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael to do it for them.* And now, Lord, I am enquiring for it as I can, O do it for me."

II. I come next to addreſs thoſe diſeaſed ſouls who are ſenſible and feeling, ſick ſinners, who are convinced of their diſtreſſed caſe by nature, and their need of the phyſician; you are the proper objects of his care, Mat. ix. 12, 13, and xviii. 11. Luke xviii. 13, 14. I exhort all ſuch to come and employ Chriſt the only Phyſician of Iſrael to heal your wounded ſouls. Delay not; for your diſeaſe is mortal; your wound is deep; the ſooner you come, the better. Loſe not the ſeaſon when Chriſt is dealing with you by his Spirit; but when the waters are ſtirred, ſee that you preſently ſtep in, that you may be made whole.

Queſt. How ſhall we improve the ſeaſon, ſo as to be cured of our diſeaſe?

Anſ. Obſerve theſe directions:

1. As you ought to be concerned about your diſeaſe, ſee that your trouble and concern be of the right kind. Be grieved for it, not only becauſe it brings ruin upon yourſelves, but mainly becauſe it unfits you for glorifying God, and enjoying communion with him. Be troubled both for the general corruption of your natures, and for the particular plagues of your own hearts; point out thoſe to your Phyſician which are moſt grievous to you, whether it be hardneſs, blindneſs, unbelief, backſliding, pride, earthly mindedneſs, *&c.* Every man that would have acceſs to God, muſt *know the plague of his own heart*, 1 King viii. 38. Chriſt would have every man to point forth his ailment to him, with the blind man, Luke xviii. 41. *What wilt thou that I ſhall do unto thee?* Let your anſwer be ready like his, *Lord, that I may receive my ſight*, Lord, that my unbelief may be removed, that my hardneſs may be cured, my backſliding healed, *&c.* Lay open all your ſores, and hide nothing from your Phyſician.

2dly, Come to Chriſt with a firm belief and perſuaſion of his power and ability to heal you. This is the thing he demands of every ſick ſoul, as of thoſe two blind men that followed him crying for help, Matth. ix. 28. *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* Believe ye that I have all fulneſs in me to anſwer all your wants, to cure all your diſeaſes, and ſuit all your caſes! O for a ſtrong faith in Chriſt's power! This doth greatly glorify him.

3dly, Plead importunately with your Phyſician for a cure; he allows you to do it, and to fill your mouths with arguments for that end.

1. Plead the ſovereign efficacy of his blood, that it is a remedy of infinite virtue, and can heal the moſt deſperate diſeaſe; ſay with the leper, Mat. viii. 2. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean;* as if he had ſaid, Thou mayſt do with me as thou wilt, but one thing I am ſure of, thou canſt heal me: So ſay you, Lord, I am ſure thy blood can cure and cleanſe me, tho' I were as vile with ſin as the leper was with his diſeaſe, ſo that if I die in my ſins, it will not be for want of virtue in Chriſt's blood, the balm of Gilead is all-ſufficient. As the leper's argument prevailed with Chriſt to cure him, ſo a ſtrong faith and perſuaſion of the virtue of Chriſt's blood will engage him to heal you.

2. Plead the freeneſs of his balm to all diſeaſed ſouls, that the fountain of his blood runs freely to the worſt of lepers, that he ſhuts out none from it, but invites all to come; that thoſe who had the deepeſt wounds and moſt dangerous diſeaſes, have come upon the invitation, and been made whole, as Manaſſeh, the woman of Samaria, Mary Magdalene, the penitent thief, Paul, the Corinthians, *&c.* Say, Lord, I come with the reſt upon thy call, O do not ſhut me out.

3. Plead your inability to do any thing for your own healing, as the impotent man did with Chriſt at the pool of Betheſda, John v. 6, 7. In like manner ſay, "Lord, I have been many years at the ſide of the pool, near the healing balm, but I am impotent, and unable of myſelf to move one ſtep towards it, far leſs to apply it: no man or angel can cure my lameneſs; Lord if thou do not pity and help me, I muſt even die and periſh within view of the balm."

4. Plead with Jeſus Chriſt, that he alone is the only qualified perſon in heaven or earth to be your Phyſician. "Lord, thou haſt infinite knowledge and ſkill to diſcern my diſeaſe with its ſymptoms and cauſes, and to preſcribe the proper remedies. Thou haſt infinite compaſſions to pity me, and infinite power to relieve me when I cry for help. Yea, thou haſt human bowels and tenderneſs of heart alſo to ſympathize with me in diſtreſs. Nay, thou haſt a commiſſion from heaven to heal ſuch diſeaſed ſouls as mine, which thou didſt chearfully accept. And thou haſt come a long journey from heaven to earth to viſit the ſick, and proclaim thy commiſſion to them. Thou haſt aſſumed my nature, and taken a human body that it might be pierced to ſend forth a precious balm for my wounds; and haſt graciouſly promiſed to apply this balm to all who come to thee, Hoſ. xiv. 1. 4. John vi. 3. Rev. xxii. 17. Yea, thou haſt come to thoſe who never ſought thee for healing, Iſa. lxv. 1. Luke x. 33, 34. And ſhall not I get healing when I am earneſtly ſeeking it."

5. Plead the glory of his name and the credit of his blood, ſay, "Lord, both theſe will ſuffer if a poor wounded creature, that relies upon the faith of thy word, and the virtue of thy blood ſhould be diſappoint-

“ ed and periſh.” This was Moſes's argument with God for pity to the Iſraelites, Numb. xiv. 15, 16. *The nations will ſpeak, ſaying, Becauſe the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land, which he ſware unto them, therefore he hath ſlain them in the wilderneſs.* So do you plead, “ Lord, what will the devils and atheiſts ſay?” Will they not blaſpheme thy name and reproach thy blood, and ſay, becauſe thy power and blood were not able to heal theſe diſeaſed ſouls, thou letteſt them periſh.

6. Plead the mercifulneſs of his nature, with David, Pſal. xli. 4. *Lord, be merciful to my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee.* Thou art a merciful as well as ſkilful Phyſician. O let not a ſick ſoul that depends on the mercy of thy nature and merit of thy blood for healing, go away diſappointed.

But poor ſenſible ſinners have many objections againſt themſelves.

Object. I. I know (ſaith one) Chriſt is a great Phyſician, but I am not worthy that he ſhould come under my roof to heal ſuch a one as me.

Anſ. 1. There was never one healed becauſe of his worthineſs, for it is only the unworthy that Chriſt came to heal and ſave, 1 Tim. i. 15. Rev. iii. 17, 18. Matth. ix. 12. 13.—2. The more ſenſible a ſoul is of unworthineſs and humbled for it, the more welcome he is to that Phyſician, Pſal. x. 17. Iſa. lxvi. 2. Mat. v. 3. Luke xviii. 14—3. If you come not to be healed till you be worthy, you will never come, for where can a poor worthleſs ſinner get any worthy or deſirable qualification but from Chriſt only? You muſt come to Chriſt for every thing that is valuable.—4 Seeing Chriſt doth expreſly call the moſt unworthy to come to him for healing, Rev. iii. 17, 18. 1 John iii. 23. this ſhould encourage you to do it. It was his call that encouraged the blind man to come to him, Mark x. 47. *Be of good comfort, riſe, he calleth thee.* Chriſt's calls and commands ſhould be obeyed by the unworthy as well as others.

Object. II. But I fear (ſaith another) I am not within Chriſt's commiſſion, and how then can I expect healing from him?

Anſ. It is high preſumption for any man to intrude into God's ſecret decrees, which no angel dare do: This ſuggeſtion then is not from God, but from the devil, to drive ſinners into diſpair, or to keep them away from Chriſt: For the Spirit of Chriſt tells us that “ ſecret things belong unto God, and the things which are revealed belong unto us,” Deut. xxix. 29. Now ſeeing it is revealed to you that Chriſt was ſent to ſave and heal the loſt and ſick, the bruiſed and broken hearted, the halt and maimed, the wretched and miſerable, the poor and blind, and calls ſuch to come to him for healing, Mat. xviii. 11. Luke iv. 18. Luke xiv. 21. Rev. iii. 17, 18. And ſeeing you cannot but own that ſome of theſe characters belong to you; this ſhould encourage you to come to Chriſt with expectation.

Object. III. But my wounds are very deep, my diſeaſe is of a deſperate nature.

Anſ. All diſeaſes are alike to Chriſt's blood; it can as eaſily cure the greateſt as the ſmalleſt, 1 John i. 7. What diſeaſe more deadly than that of the three thouſand who imbrued their hands in Chriſt's blood, Acts ii. and yet they were all healed by it.

Object. IV. But I am ſick of many diſeaſes at once.

Anſ. The balm of Chriſt's blood can as ſoon cure many diſeaſes as one.

Object. V. But my diſeaſes are old and inveterate, and my ſores have run many years.

Anſ. Chriſt hath cured many ſuch, the thief on the croſs had an old feſtering diſeaſe, and ſo had Zaccheus, for he had wronged many, yet this mighty Phyſician cured them both. He cured many old diſtempers in mens bodies, to aſſure us of the virtue of his blood to cure old diſeaſes in our ſouls. Therefore he cured the woman's iſſue of blood that had run twelve years. He looſed a woman that Satan had kept bound eighteen years. He cured the impotent man at Betheſda that had an infirmity thirty eight years. All which is recorded for our encouragement to come to Chriſt with our old ſores.

Object. VI. I have relapſed into the ſame diſeaſe, and can I expect healing?

Anſ. Relapſes indeed are moſt dangerous, yet Chriſt doth undertake to heal thoſe who relapſe, Hoſ. xiv. 2, and he actually healed Peter, tho' he relapſed into the ſame ſin.

Object. VII. But I fear I have no right to Chriſt's blood.

Anſ. Seeing all the ends of the earth are bid to look to it for healing, and Chriſt hath appointed his goſpel to be preached, and his balm to be offered to every creature, you have a full and ſufficient warrant to come and make uſe of it.

Object. VIII. But I have long ſlighted the offers of this balm.

Anſ. The more heinous thy ſin, or deep thy wound be, thou haſt the greater need of this ſovereign medicine: And go not to make thy wound deeper by a new refuſal.

Object. IX. I have eſſayed to go and apply this balm, but find I have no ſtrength to do it.

Anſ. If you have ſincere deſires to accept and uſe it, you have ſome beginnings of faith, and therefore improve theſe deſires by making frequent eſſays to receive Chriſt and apply his blood. Believing is a duty you ſhould be oft eſſaying and aiming at, even before you find God's Spirit effectually concurring: This you do in other duties; for tho' you cannot pray or praiſe, communicate, meditate, or ſanctify the ſabbath aright without the Spirit, yet forbear you not to aim at theſe duties, even when you find not the Spirit at work; and neither ſhould you in this caſe. Tho' you have no power to believe ſavingly, yet ſtill be aiming at it, and believe as you can. The Spirit will pity your weakneſs, when you are making honeſt attempts to do his will; therefore be aiming to approve the device of redeeming love, to part with your own righteouſneſs, to ſay *Amen* to the well-ordered covenant, to take a crucified Chriſt for your All, and venture your all in his hand. And tho' you often fail in your attempts, yet ſtill try it again, and at length the Spirit will help you to ſtretch out faith's hand, and faſten it on Chriſt and his wounds to your comfort.

Object. X. But I am afraid Chriſt is not willing to apply his blood to heal me.

Anſ. What more evidences of willingneſs can you aſk from Chriſt? You have both the word and writ of him that is faithful and true, and his oath alſo, John

vi. 37. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And to all theſe he adds outward ſigns and ſeals which are viſible to your bodily eyes in the ſacraments, to aſſure you of his willingneſs. Alſo his frankneſs to heal all the bodies of men that came to him while on earth, is given you as a pledge of his willingneſs to cure your ſouls; for you cannot imagine he would be more compaſſionate to mens bodies than to their ſouls, ſeeing it was his great errand to ſeek and heal ſouls, and to ſhed his blood for that end. May we all have faith in that blood, for Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

Advices to thoſe who are recovering.

SERMON VIII.

On Jerem. viii. 22. *Is there no balm in Gilead,* &c.

III. IN proſecuting my exhortation from this doctrine, there is a third ſort I propoſed to addreſs; namely, Thoſe who are already in the way of healing and recovery, through the Phyſician's applying the balm of his blood to them for removing the guilt of ſin, and renewing of their natures, whereby the force of their diſeaſe is broken, and they in the way of recovery. To theſe I offer ſome advices.

1. Thankfully admire the generous kindneſs and free love of your Phyſician, in diſtinguiſhing you from the reſt of the world. He hath done that for you which he hath not done for thouſands, nay, for millions of your fellow-creatures, and even for many in thoſe very families and congregations where you dwell. He hath healed your natures when they were ſick unto death; he hath pardoned your ſins, when they are ſinking under guilt. O bleſs and praiſe him with David, Pſal. ciii. 1, 2, &c. Chriſt expects a tribute of praiſe from healed ſouls, and obſerves how they pay it, as in the caſe of the lepers, Luke xvii. 18. *Were there not ten cleanſed* (ſaith he) *but where are the nine?* There he counted their number, and found nine healed who returned him no thanks. And this he cenſures as baſe ingratitude to God.

2dly, Be earneſt with God for thorough and perfect healing, that the diſeaſe of ſin may be wholly ſubdued. Let the work of ſanctification be ſtill carried on; for this is a continued healing of your nature, till at laſt the cure be completed at death.

3dly, Pity your relations and neighbours who are ſtill ſick unto death, and do what you can for their cure. Eſpecially pity and pray for your children who are ſick of the plague you conveyed to them Recommend to them the balm of Gilead, and the Phyſician there. Tell them your experience of the Phyſician's ſkill and tenderneſs, and the virtue of his balm. "O "come and ſee; he hath cured me of a deep wound, "an old diſeaſe of a hard heart, of dreadful atheiſm, "unbelief, blindneſs, earthlineſs, pride, paſſion," &c.

4thly, Take proper means to preſerve health when reſtored; ſuch as, 1. Live in a good and wholeſome air, that is, in the ſociety of God's people. 2. Keep good hours, and a wholeſome diet, that is, ſtated times every day for the ſoul's refreſhment, by reading, meditation and prayer. 3. Uſe proper exerciſes, ſuch as the exerciſe of faith, prayer, hearing, communicating and Chriſtian converſe; for ſpiritual ſloth and idleneſs greatly prejudice the ſoul's health.

5thly, Beware of whatever may occaſion a relapſe into your diſeaſe, ſuch as the temptations and ſnares which ſatan will lay in your way to draw you into ſin; carefully avoid them, and pray for ſtrength againſt them. And particularly beware of unneceſſary going into infected company, leſt you catch the diſeaſe from them, for ſin is moſt contagious.

6thly, Let all thoſe be the objects of your ſpecial love, who have got their natures healed, and the image of God reſtored to them. Love them, though they be poor and low in the world, and even though they differ in ſeveral things from you: for if you love them only who are of your way of thinking in all things, that is liker a ſectarian, or party love, than a true Chriſtian love. For it would ſay, you love ſaints more for their likeneſs to you, than for their likeneſs and relation to Chriſt. Now the true motive of Chriſtian love is a manlikeneſs and love to Chriſt more than to you. And ſurely, all theſe being members of the ſame body, and children of the ſame family, who will ſpend a whole eternity together in admiring and praiſing the Lamb, ſhould love one another while ſojourning in the wilderneſs below. Chriſt gives this as a mark of his diſciples, and thoſe who are healed by him.

7thly, Rejoice and bleſs God, when you hear of many ſick ſouls flocking to the balm of Gilead and the Phyſician there, and when there are hopeful ſigns of their healing and recovery. Look upon theſe as the moſt refreſhing news that can be brought to your ears.

8thly, Learn patience under the diſtreſs of your bodies, ſeeing you have got healing to your ſouls. Do not murmur at it, ſeeing God ſees it needful for your ſoul's health.

Laſtly, Be concerned for the diſeaſed land wherein you live. If you have got healing to yourſelves, you ought to have public ſpirits to be affected with the caſe of a ſick land and church, eſpecially at a time, when it may be ſaid of her, as of Judah, Iſaiah i. 5, 6. "The whole head is ſick, and the whole heart is faint; from the ſole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs in it, but wounds, and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores: they have not been cloſed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." So alas, it may be ſaid of our land, The whole body politic and eccleſiaſtic is ſadly diſeaſed, our kings and princes, nobility, gentry, magiſtrates, miniſters, burgeſſes, commons, and all ranks are full of wounds and ſores.

Queſt. How is it we are to ſhew our concern for the land in ſuch diſtreſs?

Anſ. Two ways, 1. By earneſt prayer for it. 2. By uſing the means in our power to heal it.

I. Spread out the caſe of the land in prayer before the great Phyſician of Iſrael, and plead that he may look on it with an eye of compaſſion; yea, humbly expoſtulate with God about the church's caſe, like Jeremiah, Jer. xiv. 9. *Haſt thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy ſoul loathed Zion? Why haſt thou ſmitten us, and there is no healing for us?* Alas, no Phyſician nor balm on earth can heal us; no ordinance, ſermons, nor ſacraments can cure us. All the warnings, reproofs, and judgments in the world cannot heal our wounds. O, if Iſrael's Phyſician would come and do it himſelf! The Lord hath juſtly ſmitten us for our ſins, and is threatening to ſmite us more. Now what can we do in that caſe but look to him for pity, and plead that the hand which hath ſmitten us, may alſo heal us; for nothing will heal us till he come with the balm of Gilead, his blood and Spirit, to our wounds. This balm can heal nations and churches, as well as ſingle perſons. O then look earneſtly to that blood that quencheth the fire of wrath for us, and purchaſeth every thing that is good to us, and plead for the ſake of that blood, that God would revive his work in the land, breathe upon the dry bones and make a ſtir amongſt them, pour out a ſpirit of converſion and of reformation upon men of all ſtations, magiſtrates, miniſters, elders, parents, and teachers of youth, as well as the young generation, that they may turn to the Lord, and exert themſelves for bearing down vice, and promoting Chriſtian knowledge and piety in the land. Let all cry to God to rebuke the winds of error and diviſion, that truth may triumph, and breaches may be healed; that miniſters and people may have one heart and one mind, to *ſerve the Lord with one conſent*. And thus would the health of the church and nation be recovered. I might adduce many motives to preſs you to plead for repentance and healing to the whole land; I ſhall mention a few.

1. This has been the commendable practice of God's people in all ages, as of Moſes, David, Iſaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, &c. as in Exod. xxxii. 11. 12. Pſal. li. 18. Iſa. lxii. 1. Jer. ix. 1. Dan. ix. 17. And this is what the Lord requires of every one, Pſal. cxxii. 6. Joel ii. 17.

2. Prayers put up for a ſick church or nation are moſt agreeable to God, and have a ſort of commanding power with him, Iſa. xlv. 2. He puts great honour upon ſuch prayers, and makes them means of producing marvellous effects and deliverances, as in Exod. xvii. 11, 13. and xxxii. 14. And we read of the Lord's ſeeking out ſuch wreſtlers that he may honour them, Ezek. xxii. 30. *And I ſought for a man among them, that ſhould make up the hedge, and ſtand in the gap before me for the land, that I ſhould not deſtroy it.* Theſe are the men that God delights to honour.

3. The conſideration of the hand you have had, by your ſins, in bringing on diſeaſes upon the church and land, ſhould excite you to wreſtle and plead for healing to her. The laws of common humanity ſhould even oblige you to this duty.

4. They who pray moſt for Zion in her diſtreſſed and wounded caſe, ſhall be the largeſt ſharers in her comforts when God brings healing to her. Theſe ſhall reap moſt plentifully of her joys when the harveſt comes, who now ſow moſt of the ſeed of tears for her in her trouble.

II. In the 2d place, I ſaid every one ſhould uſe all the means in their power for healing the church and land. God has appointed men in different ſtations and capacities, to be as under-phyſicians to bring a kind of balm to a diſeaſed land, ſuch as magiſtrates, miniſters, elders, *&c.* Theſe by wholeſome laws, inſtructions, and examples may contribute very much, thro' the divine bleſſing, to the healing of our diſeaſe. Nay, private Chriſtians who are in the meaneſt ſtations, if they do what is incumbent upon them, may have ſome ſhare in this bleſſed work of healing a ſick land. As ſometimes we have heard of great cures, effectuated by mean and obſcure perſons, when learned phyſicians had given over the caſe as deſperate; ſo private Chriſtians may be inſtrumental in bringing about our cure, when thoſe of greater power and ſkill look on our caſe as hopeleſs. They may be of great uſe to recommend religion to the world, by conforming their practice to its rules, and adorning their profeſſion with ſhining holineſs and Chriſtian virtues, and alſo by avoiding all diſhoneſty and injuſtice, pride and paſſion, malice and revenge, bitterneſs and evil ſpeaking, and every thing that may beget prejudice in the carnal world againſt Chriſtianity, who are too ready to impute the faults of its profeſſors to the religion itſelf. Private Chriſtians alſo may bring their healing prayers and tears, and pour them out before the Lord in behalf of the diſeaſed land. They may act faith on the blood of Chriſt, our ſovereign balm, and plead it with God, "Lord, was not this blood ſhed for the wounds of the church, as well as of particular believers! Is it not by Chriſt's ſtripes the church muſt be healed, as well as every individual member? Lord, thou haſt a tender ſympathy with every member in diſtreſs, and wilt thou not much more regard the whole body! Lord, ſhe whom thou loveſt is ſick, and nothing can ſave her life but the balm of Gilead: This, thou alone haſt, and none elſe can apply it. Make haſte unto her, O God of Zion, thou art her help and deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying, let thy power be preſent to heal her." Thus we ſee men of all ranks may be uſeful as under-phyſicians for healing a ſick land.

Object. But, ſay ſome, the caſe of the church and land ſeems deſperate, and her wounds incurable, and what then can be done by us for her?

Anſ. However dangerous her caſe may be, yet it is not quite ſo deſperate, as to make us give over all hopes and endeavours. I ſhewed before what grounds of hope we have yet left us. And tho' the caſe were more deſperate than it is, we ought ſtill to be in the uſe of appointed means, and never diſtruſt God in any ſtrait whatſoever. We ought always to look to him, who is *wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength,* Job ix. 4. And remember the Lord's queſtion to Abraham in a deſperate caſe, Gen. xviii. 14. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord!* Unbelief ſtumbleth at God's power, when it ſeeth no viſible means or inſtruments for bringing events about, not conſidering how eaſy it is for God, when he doth not find means, to create them; and when he pleaſeth, even to work without them. It is the property of true faith not to make haſte, or preſcribe to God as to means or times of working, but to wait his leiſure, and depend upon him in the greateſt extremities.

It puts honour upon God, to truſt him when our caſe ſeems moſt hopeleſs, and even to make the deſperateneſs of our caſe an argument in prayer to God, and a ground for faith to faſten upon, ſo as to plead with him the more earneſtly and confidently for help, and to ſay, 'Lord, it will be the more for thy honour and glory, to undertake the cure of our diſeaſe, when matters are come to this extremity, that all beſides are giving over our caſe as hopeleſs and deſperate.' The news of the balm of Gilead, and the Phyſician there, ſhould ſtrengthen our faith, and ſupport our hopes under the moſt deadly diſeaſe, and make us lift up our head, and look out for him. As old Jacob when he was juſt a dying, yet at the news of his ſon Joſeph's being near, he ſtrengthened himſelf and ſat up on his bed expecting him; ſo ſhould we, when ready to faint on the bed of our languiſhing caſe, endeavour to lift up our hearts at the good news of the balm and Phyſician of Iſrael, and ſay, Is not Jeſus Chriſt the great Phyſician commiſſioned by the Father to heal a poor wounded church and land! This is the time of her need and great ſtrait, and a proper ſeaſon for him to ſtep in for help. Both in ſcripture and experience we find the time of the church's extremity is God's uſual opportunity of working and appearing for her, as in the caſe of Iſaac when at the point of being ſacrificed, and alſo in the caſe of the Jews when ready to be cut off by Haman's bloody plot. When there was but an hair's breadth betwixt them and deſtruction, God ſtept in and ſaved them. It is in the mount that the Lord will be ſeen; ſo the text may be rendered, Gen. xxii. 14.

Queſt. Why doth God let the diſtreſs of his church and people come to ſuch extremity, before he interpoſe for them?

Anſ. He doth it for glorious and wiſe ends: 1. To glorify his wiſdom in finding out a remedy when we can ſee no appearance of it. The Phyſician's ſkill is beſt diſcovered in maſtering a diſtemper when it is become moſt inveterate and hopeleſs.

2. To ſhew his pity and compaſſion to his people, when their condition is moſt deſtitute. David depended upon God's pity in ſuch a caſe, Pſalm xxvii. 10. ‘When my father and mother forſake me, then the Lord will take me up.’ So when enemies think God hath forgotten his church, and men have caſt her off, and they begin to ſcoff at Zion, and call her an outcaſt, then God ſeeth meet to ſhew his pity, to take her under his care and heal her wounds, Jer. xxx. 16. 27.

3. To excite the ſpirit of prayer in his people. It was for that end the Lord ſuffered his people to be brought to great extremity at the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 10. *The children of Iſrael lift up their eyes, and behold the Egyptians marched after them, and they were ſore afraid, and cried unto the Lord.* When they were in great diſtreſs they cried to the Lord, but not before. So Chriſt ſlept in the ſhip, and let the tempeſt riſe to a great height, to bring his diſciples to their knees, Mat. viii. 24. 25 *They came and awoke him, ſaying, Lord ſave us, we periſh* At ſuch a time their prayers are doubled, and moſt fervent, as in Pſal. cxxiii. 3. *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.* And it is to be obſerved when ſuch a ſpirit of fervent prayer is poured out upon the church, it is a ſure preſage of her adverſaries ruin; ſo we ſee it was in Zech. xii. 9. 10. ‘I will ſeek to deſtroy all the nations that come againſt Jeruſalem; and I will pour upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications.’ If this ſpirit were poured out upon the inhabitants of Scotland, it would be a good preſage of the Lord's appearing for her.

4. God puts off to extremity, to draw out his people's faith and dependence wholly upon himſelf. He cuts off the branches of earthly ſupports to make them claſp to the body of the tree, even to him who is the everlaſting God; and to bring them to reflect upon what he hath done for them in former extremities, and to act faith upon his power and pity, which he exerted for them in days of old. Thus did Jehoſhaphat in his great ſtrait, 2 Chron. xx. 7. 12. ‘Art thou not our God, who didſt drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people? We have no might againſt this great company that cometh againſt us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.’ God would have the deliverances he hath given us in former ſtraits, to draw out our faith upon him in new trials, and hence he ſays to Iſrael when under fears of the Canaanites, Deut. vii. 18. *Thou ſhalt not be afraid of them, but ſhall well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh and all Egypt.*

5. To humble his people and bring down the pride of their hearts. God brought his people to great extremities in the wilderneſs, and his great deſign therein was to humble them, as he tells them, Deut. viii. 2. There is a woful root of pride in mens hearts that muſt be broken and ſubdued, before they can be meet for heaven. This root is oft breaking out in diſcontent, murmuring, quarrelling, bitterneſs, paſſion, and backwardneſs to ſubmit to God's will. Now it coſts much labour and pains to bring down ſuch proud hearts to the will of God; they muſt even be reduced to great extremities, before they be ſufficiently humbled, and brought calmly to ſubmit, without any riſing of heart againſt God. Hence it is ſaid, Pſal. cvii. 12. *He brought down their heart with labour.* And indeed it is a happy preſage and fore-runner of God's gracious appearing for his people, when the proud ſwellings of their hearts are quelled, and they are brought to a ſilent ſubmiſſion under his hand, Pſal. lvi. 10. *Be ſtill and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the Heathen,* &c.

6. To take his people off from all creature confidences and lying refuges, which they are prone to look to in ſtraits and difficulties. Great extremities drive men from truſting in the arm of fleſh, and cauſe them to flee to the arm of Jehovah with whom is everlaſting ſtrength. In ſuch caſes they are made to cry, as in Pſal. lx. 11. *O God give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man.* Then it is we are beſt qualified to receive help from God, when we are brought to own the inſufficiency of creatures to relieve us and ſupply our needs. The man that had the lunatic child in ſad diſtreſs, was in a fair way of getting a cure to him from Chriſt, when he came to be humbled by his diſappointments, to have his eyes turned away from all human help, and was glad to apply to Chriſt as his laſt refuge, Matth. xvii. 14, 15. *&c.* There we ſee he came and humbly kneeled down before him, ſaying, *Lord have mercy upon my ſon for he is lunatic and ſore vexed,* &c. *And I brought him to thy diſciples, and they could not cure him.* As if he had ſaid, Lord, the caſe is deſperate and incurable as to human help, and therefore I muſt look to thee alone for a cure; I have now none elſe to go to but thyſelf. Well then, ſaid our Lord, ſince that is the caſe with thee, *Bring him hither to me,* ver. 17. and he preſently cured him. O that every one would bring their deſperate diſeaſes, in like manner, ſtraight to Chriſt, with hearts humbled by diſappointments, weaned from creature confidences and depending on Chriſt as their only Phyſician, and all ſufficient help. Were we

once brought to this frame, Chriſt would in mercy ſtep in and ſay, *Bring the diſeaſe hither to me.* It is ſurely owing to our not coming off from ourſelves, and from all creature help, and to our not bringing our caſes to Chriſt immediately, that our diſeaſes are ſo long continued.

From all which the wiſdom of God doth manifeſtly appear in letting his church and people be brought to great extremities before he interpoſe for their help and relief. But ſeeing theſe extremities are Chriſt's opportunities for manifeſting forth his glory, we ought not to deſpair in the darkeſt caſe, but always "to look to "and wait upon him that hideth himſelf from the "houſe of Jacob." Nay, we ſhould do it, even then when we ſee every man with his hands on his loins in the utmoſt anguiſh and agony, as women in travail, like thoſe in Jer. xxx. 6, 7. where we ſee a moſt ſurprizing inſtance of God's mercy to Jacob, even then when his trouble comes to that extremity, that nothing in the world could match it; he pities him, and ſubjoins that merciful word, *But he ſhall be ſaved out of it.*

And it ſhould encourage us the more to look to and wait upon God in this dark day, when we hear of his mercy and goodneſs in pitying other nations and countries when in melancholy circumſtances, by granting a down-pouring of his Spirit on them for reviving his decayed work, and for convincing and converting multitudes of periſhing ſouls by the preaching of the goſpel; making them cry, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* and giving them no reſt till they cloſe with Chriſt their Surety, and become new creatures. And it is to be remarked that God has been graciouſly pleaſed to begin this work in New England, and other parts of America, at a time when they abounded with complaints of darkneſs and deadneſs, decay of religion, backſliding, woful errors and diviſions, as it is in Scotland at this day. Theſe late ſurprizing and well atteſted inſtances of God's mercy and ſovereign grace, do ſhew us how eaſy it is for God to bring his balm to a diſeaſed land, when in the moſt hopeleſs caſe; and to qualify and raiſe up inſtruments to preach his goſpel with ſuch energy and power, as to rouſe multitudes of ſecure ſouls, and make them "fly to Chriſt in clouds, and like flocks of doves to "their windows." He can take away the "ſins of a "land in one day, and make a nation to be born at "once. He can ſhew wonders to the dead, and make "the dead ariſe and praiſe him." So that none ſhould diſtruſt him in the moſt deſperate condition.

Well then, ſeeing Chriſt is a Phyſician ſo full of power and alſo full of compaſſions, whence is it that our diſeaſed land is unhealed, and multitudes are daily dying of their wounds! Surely the blame is not to be laid upon Chriſt, but upon ourſelves, and our unwillingneſs to come to him. Ah! we chuſe death, rather than healing from Chriſt. He may take up that complaint againſt us, as he did againſt the Jews in the days of his fleſh, *Ye will not come to me that ye might get healing, and live: How oft would I have gathered you to be healed, but ye would not?* And thus he complained of their fathers alſo, Pſ. lxxxi. *My people would not hearken to my voice, Iſrael, would have none of me!* Oh! my dear friends, are you to follow their curſed example, to reject your healer? or what are you reſolving to do? What think ye of Chriſt the Phyſician? Do you believe our report of him, or no? The people of other nations are giving ear and believing our report of him, and flocking to him to be healed, and why do you ſit ſtill? Are they yielding and ſubmitting to Chriſt as their Saviour and Lord? Are they putting the crown on his head, and doing him honour? Why then ſhould ye be the laſt to bring back the King to his houſe? Will ye be the laſt that will do him honour as a King, or give him employment as a Phyſician? Have ye not as much need of him, and as many wounds and diſeaſes as others? O come then alſo, take the goſpel balm, and glorify the Phyſician of Iſrael. *Amen.*

The Glory of the Miniſtration of the Spirit.

SERMON IX.

On 2 Cor. iii. 8. *How ſhall not the miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious?*

IN this chapter the apoſtle runs a compariſon between the Old Teſtament and the New, the law of Moſes and the goſpel of Chriſt, and ſhews the excellency of the latter above the former. He calls the Old-Teſtament diſpenſation, or law of Moſes, the *miniſtration of death and condemnation;* becauſe it diſcovered ſin and denounced curſes againſt it, and the law was given with thunder, lightening and much terror. Yet at the ſame time (he ſays) this diſpenſation was in ſome reſpects glorious, ver. 7. Why? It was glorious in the miniſter of it, Moſes who had a ſhining glory in his face when he brought the tables down from the mount. Glorious in regard of the glorious manifeſtation of God at the giving of the law: Glorious in reſpect of the goſpel diſcoveries which were made by the types and ſacrifices of the Old Teſtament. But then the apoſtle ſhews that the goſpel diſpenſation did far excel it in glory, and on that account calls it the *miniſtration of life,* becauſe it pointed out the way to life and ſalvation in a plainer manner: And the *miniſtration of righteouſneſs,* becauſe it diſcovered a perfect righteouſneſs for ſinners to reſt upon. Alſo he calls it in the text the *miniſtration of the Spirit,* becauſe of the great effuſion of the Spirit that attended the goſpel diſpenſation, eſpecially in the firſt ages. The Holy Spirit did then remarkably *bear teſtimony to the word of his grace,* by his inward operations upon the hearers of it. And this was it that made the miniſtration of the goſpel far more glorious than that of the law; for under the law, there was but little of the Spirit let out for the converſion of ſouls, in reſpect of what was given under the goſpel. The out-letting of the Spirit in ſuch an abundant manner, made the goſpel diſpenſation far more glorious than that of the legal; which gives ground for the following obſervation.

Doctrine, The effuſion of the Spirit with a preached goſpel makes a very glorious diſpenſation. Which I ſhall handle in the following method.

I. Premiſe ſome things concerning the nature and office of the Holy Spirit.

II. Shew when the goſpel may be ſaid to be a miniſtration of the Spirit to the hearers of it.

III. That there are ſome remarkable ſeaſons when a preached goſpel may be called the *miniſtration of the Spirit* in an eminent way.

IV. Enquire in what reſpects the miniſtration of the Spirit is a glorious diſpenſation.

V. Make application.

I. The firſt thing propoſed is, to premiſe ſome things concerning the nature and office of the holy Spirit. And, 1*ſt*, The word Spirit, in the Hebrew RUACH, in the Greek PNEUMA, ſignifies *wind, air,* or *breathing*. It is ſometimes uſed to point forth the nature and eſſence of *God* abſtractly, as in John iv. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.* But moſt commonly it doth ſignify, as in the text, the third perſon of the *holy Trinity*. And ſometimes he is called the *Spirit of the Father*, and ſometimes the *Spirit of the Son*, which ſhews their *oneneſs*, and that he proceeds from both.

2*dly*, Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by his undertaking in the covenant of redemption, and his ſacrifice on the croſs, obtained the *miniſtration of the holy Spirit* to an elect-world. This great gift and bleſſing which is of ineſtimable value, is our dear Lord's purchaſe and legacy to his people, which he deſigned for to ſupply his bodily abſence from them when he went to heaven; John xvi. 7, 8. *If I depart I will ſend him unto you, and when he is come, he will reprove,* &c. The Spirit being Chriſt's legacy and donation, ſhould much endear the gift to us. Some would rejoice to poſſeſs a relique or any thing that belonged to our Saviour in the days of his fleſh. The Papiſts boaſt of ſome bits of the tree whereon he ſuffered, tho' Chriſt left no ſuch things for our uſe or devotion: But here is a precious relique and legacy, which Chriſt in love to his peoole left them when going away, even his holy Spirit, as his reſident, to abide with them for ever.

3*dly*, The church under the Old Teſtiment had a certain meaſure of the Spirit given her upon Chriſt's account. But the great effuſion of the Spirit was reſerved to the New Teſtament times, and given after Chriſt's aſcenſion, according to his bleſſed compact with the Father, Acts ii. 33. This promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt is called *the promiſe*, by way of eminency, as including all the reſt. And this effuſion was frequently foretold as the great privilege of goſpel times, Iſa. xxxv. 6, 7. and xliv. 3. Ezek. xi. 9. and xxxvi. 27. Joel ii. 28, 29. So that let men reproach the Holy Spirit with his influences and operations as they will, he was propheſied of and expected of old, as the great bleſſing under the goſpel: And mens deſpiſing him now as they do, is but a fulfilling of Chriſt's word, John xiv. 17. *Yet the world cannot receive him, becauſe it neither ſeeth nor knoweth him:* That is, they have no experience of his work in them. But for us not to own and avow the Spirit of God in his work and operations, is in effect to be aſhamed of Chriſt's precious promiſe and legacy which he left us, and to be guilty of the baſeſt ingratitude to our dear Redeemer.

4*thly*, The great office of the Holy Spirit in elect ſouls is to be the applier of Chriſt's purchaſe to them, which he doth by *teaching them and guiding them into all truth,* John xiv. 26. and xvi. 13. *By convincing and reproving them of ſin,* John xvi. 7. *By renewing and ſanctifying their ſouls,* Tit. iii. 5. 1 Pet. i. 2. *By mortifying* and ſubduing ſin in them, Rom. viii. 13. *By helping their infirmities in prayer, and interceeding for them,* Rom. viii. 26. By *comforting* them and *witneſſing* to their adoption, John xiv. 16. Rom. viii. 16. Wherefore ſeeing the Holy Ghoſt is the applier of Chriſt's purchaſe, and is promiſed by Chriſt to ſupply his abſence to us, he ought to be received and valued as the great bleſſing of the goſpel-church.

5*thly*, Chriſt hath taught us to make the giving of his Holy Spirit the chief petition and principal bleſſing we ſhould aſk of God, Luke xi. 9, 10. and ii. 12, 13. There he enjoins us to be importunate for this bleſſing, to aſk, to ſeek, to knock; and for our encouragement he promiſes, ver. 13. that *our heavenly Father ſhall give the holy Spirit to them that aſk him.* So the apoſtle prays for the inward operations of the Spirit to the Epheſians, as the greateſt bleſſing he can ſeek for them, Eph. iii. 16. For it is he that works faith, love, joy, peace, meekneſs and all other graces in us, Gal. v. 22.

II. The ſecond thing in the method, is to ſhew when the goſpel may be ſaid to be the miniſtration of the Spirit to the hearers of it. And it is ſo when the Holy Spirit doth concur with the preaching of the word, for making ſaving impreſſions upon mens hearts and conſciences, and gracious changes in their lives and converſations. As for inſtance,

1. When he is pleaſed to make cloſe and particular application of the reproofs and threatenings of the word to the ſinner's conſcience, ſaying as Nathan to David, *Thou art the man,* thou art the guilty ſinner that is threatened, curſed and condemned by the law. Thy life is unholy, thy nature is polluted, thy heart is full of plagues; yea, thy ſoul is black with ſin and hateful in the ſight of a holy God! And what wilt thou do to be ſaved?

2*dly*, When the arrows of conviction are ſo faſtened in the conſcience, that the man cannot ſhake them out; he hath got ſuch diſcoveries of ſin's evil and the ſoul's danger, that his mind cannot be eaſy: No earthly comfort or enjoyment can ſatisfy him while he is within the flood-mark of wrath. He becomes anxious and inquiſitive after the way of ſalvation, as thoſe, Acts ii. 37. and xvi. 30. His queſtions are not, What ſhall I do for health to a ſickly body? Or for bread to a pinched family? But what ſhall I do to be ſaved from the wrath that is to come?

3*dly*, The goſpel is the miniſtration of the Spirit to the hearers, when they are brought to deſpair of help and deliverance by any courſe or contrivance of their own; and are driven from all other refuges beſides Chriſt. When they are made to ſee, that no ordinance, no duties nor performances, no frames, no righteouſneſs nor attainments of their own, can ſkreen from wrath, nor yield any reſt to the ſole of their foot. When they are convinced they are in a ſhipwreck'd periſhing ſtate in the firſt Adam, and that they have no other plank of ſalvation to truſt to but Jeſus Chriſt the ſecond Adam. When they ſee themſelves ſinking upon the broken bottom of the old covenant, and that there is no way to be ſaved but to leap from it to the rock of ſalvation Chriſt, and only to truſt to and hang by the clefts of that rock.

4*thly*, The Spirit concurs, when the flinty rock is turned into a water pool, as in Pſal. cxiv. 8. that is, when the hard heart is ſoftened and melted down into ſtreams of penitential tears for ſin both original and actual, and particularly for wounding and piercing of Chriſt by ſin, and for long ſlighting him and keeping him at the door of the heart: and when the ſoul is brought to be deeply humbled for miſpent time, miſimproved ſabbaths, offers of free grace, days of health and precious opportunities of ſalvation.

5thly, The goſpel is the miniſtration of the Spirit, when thereby light doth ſhine into the underſtanding, diſcovering the excellency of the remedy provided for loſt ſinners, the ability and fullneſs of Chriſt, the ſufficiency of his righteouſneſs, and the ſuitableneſs of his offices and covenant for all our wants and miſeries. And when the ſoul's deſires are excited after Chriſt and ſalvation through him, and made to cry, *O that I knew where to find him! O ſaw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?* And when the ſoul is brought to ſtrong purpoſes and reſolutions to venture to Chriſt and caſt itſelf at his feet, ſaying, *I will go into the King, if I periſh, I periſh.*

6thly, When convinced ſinners are determined to fall in with the goſpel device of ſalvation through Chriſt, heartily to approve of it, renounce their own righteouſneſs for a Surety's righteouſneſs, accept of Chriſt in all his offices, and ſurrender themſelves unto the Lord. And when they are brought to hate ſin as the enemy and murderer of Chriſt, and to be willing to cut off a right hand and pluck out a right eye for Chriſt, and to ſay with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols?* and with David, *Depart from me, ye evil doers, I will keep the commandments of my God.*

7thly, The goſpel is the miniſtration of the Spirit, when the hearts of hearers are looſed from the world and carnal things, and brought to ſome meaſure of ſpirituality and fixedneſs in God's ſervice, and to find more delight and ſatisfaction therein, than in all temporal enjoyments, and to ſay, *A day in God's courts is better to us than a thouſand elſewhere. Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe.*

8thly, When they find life and vigour put in all their graces, their faith ſtrengthened, and their love warmed to Chriſt above all things; the wind blows on their gardens, and the ſpices flow out. They have ſenſible liberty and looſing of bonds in their approaches to God; their clogs and ſtraitenings are removed, and they are raiſed above their ordinary frame in prayer. Their hearts indite good matter, their tongue is like the pen of a ready writer concerning the King; their own hearts melt into tears of love and affection to Chriſt, and their words reach others about them with a pleaſant perfume, and warm their hearts too.

9thly, When goſpel-hearers do find the ordinances bleſſed means of communion and intercourſe with God, ſo that they get ſweet diſcoveries of the beauty of Chriſt and holineſs, they are enabled to plead and feed upon the promiſes, they have peace and joy in believing, their doubts are removed, and they approach to the aſſurance of God's favour, of pardon of ſin, and future glory: They breathe after a full conformity to Chriſt and his image, that holineſs may be pefected in them, and the top ſtone put upon the work of grace. That they may have no more complaints of indwelling ſin, and imperfect ſervices. And under a ſenſe of God's love in Chriſt, they endeavour to walk tenderly and circumſpectly, to make their light ſhine before men, and to glorify God upon the earth. Then it is, and in the other caſes above mentioned, that the goſpel may be ſaid to be the miniſtration of the Spirit to the hearers of it. And ſurely ſuch a concurrence and effuſion of the Spirit with the preached word, would make it a very glorious diſpenſation. O to ſee ſuch remarkable ſeaſons of grace!

III. The third head propoſed, was to mention ſome of thoſe ſeaſons when the preaching of the goſpel hath in an eminent way been the miniſtration of the Spirit. Of which take theſe inſtances:

1ſt, In the apoſtles times, after Chriſt's aſcenſion, there was a wonderful effuſion of the Spirit with the goſpel for the firſt planting of Chriſtianity in the world, according to Chriſt's promiſe, Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8. Then the goſpel was a glorious miniſtration of the Spirit, when poor illiterate men were helped to preach with ſuch powerful convincing energy, that their words pierced the conſciences, and changed the minds and lives of thouſands of their hearers at once. And though their doctrine was levelled againſt the pride and corruption of mens hearts, and tended to aboliſh the Pagan idolatry, as well as the Jewiſh ſacrifices and ceremonies; and though it was derided by the learned men of that age, and oppoſed by the civil powers with the greateſt violence; yet under all theſe diſadvantages it ſpread with amazing ſucceſs, ſo that in twenty or thirty years time, and before the apoſtles died, the goſpel made its way through Judea, Syria, Greece, Aſia, Europe and the whole vaſt Roman empire; ſo that every province in it had plenty of its profeſſors. It was the holy Spirit that directed the arrows of the word into the conſciences of men, with clear and convincing evidence of the truth thereof, and confirmed them ſo in the belief of it, that no trial nor temptation could ſhake them. It was the effuſion of the Spirit with the goſpel that gave the apoſtles and firſt preachers ſuch extraordinary reſolution, courage, and hardineſs to encounter all difficulties, to bear up under the greateſt miſeries of life, and joyfully to ſacrifice their all for Chriſt, and ſeal their doctrine with their blood.

2dly, The goſpel was a glorious miniſtration of the Spirit at our *reformation from Popery* above 200 years ago, whereby our reformers were aſſiſted and carried through the greateſt difficulties and oppoſition as in the apoſtles days. It was a ſmall mean that God made the riſe of his great work, to wit, Luther's appearing againſt Texellius for preaching up and ſelling his indulgences. Yet from this ſpark ſuch a fire kindled, that ſet all Europe in a flame, and enlightened many nations, that were covered with the thick darkneſs of idolatry and ſuperſtition, in the knowledge of the truth. Such was the out-pouring and efficacy of the Spirit at that time, that the goſpel made a ſwift progreſs in a ſhort ſpace by very mean inſtruments. The preachers employed were none of thoſe who were famed in the world in that age for learning, honour, power or greatneſs, but men that had lived in obſcurity, and were loaded with reproach by their adverſaries; ſuch as Luther, Zuinglius, Melancton, Bucer, Calvin, Knox, Wiſhart, *&c.* yet theſe mean men went forth to confront thoſe powers, which then made the earth to tremble, to wit, the Pope and his conclave (whoſe power was then moſt formidable) with the emperor of Germany, and the reſt of the kings of Europe who then gave their power to the *beaſt*. Theſe inſtruments had no outward encouragement at firſt, none to ſupport them, but all the world ſeemed to combine againſt them; yet in ſpite of all oppoſition the light of reformation brake up more and more; the goſpel was preached with ſuch power, that it prevailed againſt all the powers of the earth, and ſpread from city to city, ſo that in a few years many cities, ſtates and countries became ſubject to the truth, and that notwithſtanding the bloody ſword and flames of martyrdom which raged againſt thoſe who owned it. O what a miniſtration of the Spirit did at that time attend Mr George Wiſhart when he preached in this town of Dundee, and through Angus, Lothian, and ſeveral places of the weſt of Scotland! how wonderfully were the ſpirits of men then raiſed and affected with the word of God!

3dly, In the church of Scotland, not only at her reformation from Popery, but alſo frequently ſince, there have been ſolemn times of the out-pouring of the Spirit upon the land, and ſeveral places thereof, as in the year 1596, when the general aſſembly renewed the national covenant in the little kirk at Edinburgh, and ſynods and preſbyteries did the ſame after their example. Calderwood tells us how this practice was countenanced by God's Spirit, and attended with a general melting of heart and many tears.——About the year 1625, in the weſt of Scotland where the perſecution from prelates and their agents was hotteſt for non-compliance with Perth articles, *&c.* God was pleaſed to countenance and ſupport them with an extraordinary out letting of his Spirit. This began in the pariſh of Stewarton, and hence was called by the profane of that time, the Stewarton ſickneſs, but afterwards it ſpread through that country, and was very remarkable at Irvine under the miniſtry of Mr David Dickſon, which was accompanied with many convincing proofs of God's power, and many converſions——We have a famous inſtance of that power in the ſolemn communion that was at the kirk of Shots 20th June 1630, when there was an extraordinary down-pouring of the Spirit attending the work, and eſpecially the ſermon on the Monday 21ſt of June by Mr John Livingſton, that made a great and unuſual motion among the hearers, (who were there conveened in great numbers of divers ranks;) ſo that near 500 had a diſcernible change wrought upon them, and moſt of them proved lively Chriſtians afterwards.—Again, in the year 1638, God gave a general effuſion of the Spirit, which rouzed up all ranks from their ſecure backſlidden ſtate, and made them agree to renew the national covenant. Then the ſpirits of men were greatly raiſed and wrought upon by the word, the ordinances were lively and longed after, both perſonal and national reformation were ſeriouſly ſet about. And this for ſeveral years was followed with a large harveſt of ſouls brought in to Chriſt; many thouſands flocked to him, like doves to their windows.——Likewiſe in the late perſecuting times under K. Charles II. there were many gracious effuſions with the preaching of the goſpel in the fields.—Alſo at and after the late happy revolution, the goſpel was remarkably the miniſtration of the Spirit in many places of Scotland. Now ſurely, when we conſider the days of old, and the years of ancient times, we ſhould excite ourſelves to thankfulneſs for mercies paſt, and ſet our hope in God for mercies future; and likewiſe humble ourſelves deeply before the Lord for thoſe ſins which have long made our heavens as braſs, and withheld thoſe bleſſed ſhowers which were wont to fall upon our land.

4thly, We have very late and well-atteſted accounts of glorious effuſions of the Spirit in ſeveral parts of America, and particularly New-England; and ſome of them I have ſeen dated within theſe few months, bearing, "That their land which was formerly dry and parched, is now like a watered garden; that Chriſt is riding in triumph by a preached goſpel, and the inhabitants by thouſands are ſubmitting to him; that converts are numerous like the drops of dew from the womb of the morning. Yea, (ſay ſome letters) the work is ſo unexpreſſibly glorious, that it is impoſſible by words, to make one who is not an eye-witneſs have juſt conceptions thereof." The reverend Meſſrs. Edward, Whitefield, and Tennent have been honoured to have been very inſtrumental by their labours under God to give a beginning to this bleſſed work, which I hope will continue and ſpread to the praiſe and glory of free grace. And ſeeing God ſent one of theſe inſtruments lately to Scotland, may his labours in it be followed with the ſame bleſſed effects. Theſe ſhowers of the Spirit which are falling juſt now on ſeveral places do encourage many to hope they are forerunners of God's giving a general revival to his work, and of his bringing about the glory of the latter days, which he hath promiſed to his church, when he will make his goſpel every where a glorious miniſtration of the Spirit. Let us all cry for it, and for poor Scotland, that it may not be paſt by when other places are watered. May the Lord bleſs his word. *Amen.*

In what reſpects this Miniſtration is glorious.

SERMON X.

On 2 Cor. iii. 8. *How ſhall not the miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious?*

IV. IN the method I laid down for handling this ſubject, the *4th* head was, To ſhew in what reſpect the miniſtration of the Spirit is a glorious diſpenſation. By *the miniſtration of the Spirit*, we are to underſtand his gracious influences upon the hearers of the goſpel, or his ſpecial operations and workings in their ſouls, together with the word, for their converſion and ſalvation. Now, theſe are glorious in ſeveral reſpects.

1ſt, They come from a glorious Author, namely the Holy Ghoſt, the third perſon of the glorious Trinity, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, and who with them is the only true God, being the ſame in nature and eſſence, and equal in power and glory.

3dly, They coſt a glorious price. However the influences and operations of the Spirit be ſlighted and reproached by men, they are the dear purchaſe of our glorious Redeemer's blood.

3dly, They are promiſed and beſtowed to ſupply the room and abſence of a glorious perſon: even the room of our Emmanuel, while the heavens do receive him, and keep him from his people's view.

4thly, The miniſtration of the Spirit is glorious, in regard it is granted to believers as the earneſt and pledge of a glorious inheritance, Eph. i. 13, 14. And alſo for qualifying and making them meet to dwell in the ſame for ever.

5thly, In regard it is neceſſary to diſplay to us the glory and excellency of the perſon and offices of Chriſt, and his infinite fulneſs: And alſo doth open our eyes to diſcern all the glorious perfections of God in him.

6thly, The Spirit's miniſtration gives a glorious luſtre to the ſouls of believers, and makes them ſhine with true beauty and ſplendor. Hence the King's daughter is ſaid to be *all-glorious within, and their beauty to be as the olive-tree*, &c.

7thly, The miniſtration of the Spirit with a preached goſpel makes a glorious diſpenſation; chiefly upon the account of the glorious and ſurprizing changes which it makes upon the hearts and lives of men at their converſion. How marvellous were theſe changes upon the firſt pouring out of the Spirit after our Lord's aſcenſion! Thoſe firſt fruits of his purchaſe and promiſe were indeed very glorious. Then the miniſtration of the Spirit, like a mighty current, did carry all before it, and conquered thouſands at one ſermon, yea, it made the moſt obſtinate and inveterate enemies to ſtoop before the word, tho' preached by poor deſpiſed men. This made the world to wonder, as if ſome univerſal enchantment had fallen upon men, and the more they ſought to ſuppreſs and bear it down, the more it increaſed and ſpread. It made the rich chuſe poverty, the ſenſual quit their pleaſures, thoſe who dwelt in fine houſes to betake themſelves with chearfulneſs to dens and caves of the earth; yea, and ſometimes thoſe who were violent perſecutors of Chriſtians one day, become joyful martyrs with them the next. But not only at that time, but many times ſince, the miniſtration of the Spirit with the goſpel hath produced wonderful changes on its hearers.

As 1. When thereby the dead in ſins and treſpaſſes have been raiſed from the grave of corruption, and made alive to God: Thoſe who were profane and vitious have changed the whole courſe of their lives, and turned as remarkable for good as before they were for ill. The leopard hath changed his ſpots, and the Ethiopian his colour, and ſuch who were accuſtomed to do evil, have learned to do well. And all this change hath been occaſioned by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, and ſometimes by one word in a plain goſpel-ſermon; which could not be brought about by twenty years moral diſcourſes, and the moſt ſublime ſtrains of human eloquence. And ſometimes weak gifts have been owned and bleſt, when the greateſt gifts have been unſucceſsful.

2. Hereby ſuch particular application of the word hath been made to the conſcience, as hath filled the ſecure ſoul with terror, and humbled the proud man to the duſt, and made him cry, *Wo's me I am undone, I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes*. Thoſe who before were puffed up with pride and a conceit of themſelves, have been ſoon laid low under a ſenſe of their guilt, and ill-deſervings before God. Thoſe who have been mounted upon an imaginary throne of their own righteouſneſs, and have been at great pains to prop and ſupport it, have of a ſudden come down from it, tumbled it to the ground, and ſubmitted humbly to a borrowed righteouſneſs, ſaying, Away with all my filthy rags, give me Chriſt who is the *Lord our righteouſneſs*: None but Chriſt.

3. It is a wonderful change to ſee mens natures quite altered; to ſee thoſe who were like ravening wolves become like meek lambs; thoſe who were formerly acted by hatred and envy, malice and revenge againſt enemies, brought to love all men, even their greateſt enemies, with a love of benevolence, to avoid revenge, to forgive them, to pray for them, and do them good when in their power. Again, to ſee covetous men that were great lovers of the world, and hugged it as their beloved idol, abandon it with diſdain, *ſeek thoſe things which are above*, and delight in converſe about them; to ſee them made willing to forſake all the world as loſs and dung for Chriſt and things above, is a change above the power of nature, and is an evident proof of the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit.

4. By the Spirit's miniſtration, thoſe who hated ſerious godlineſs, derided it as a fancy, mocked and reproached godly perſons; have been made to own there is a reality in religion, and to love and commend that which they hated and cried down, and to honour religious perſons as the excellent ones of the earth, and to delight more in their ſociety than ever they did in their old companions in ſin. This ſurely is the finger of God.

5. Hereby thoſe who have been violent adverſaries of the truth, have become eminent inſtruments to maintain and promote that which they once deſtroyed, and more zealous to promote and advance God's glory and kingdom in the world, than ever they were to oppoſe it. Yea, thoſe who have been very active in perſecuting the profeſſors of religion both with tongue and hand, have ſo far changed their courſe, as to join themſelves to thoſe whom they perſecuted, and voluntarily choſe to ſuffer reproach and affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.

6. Hereby thoſe who formerly were wandering after the riches, honours, preferments and vanities of the world, and placed all their happineſs in them, and ſpent all their cares and thoughts about them; have been brought to be mainly taken up in wondering at the love of God in ſending Chriſt to the world to ſatiſfy juſtice for our ſins, and bear that wrath and curſe we ſhould have borne; and have been made to take more pleaſure in thinking and ſpeaking of Chriſt, and in ſpiritual exerciſes, than ever they had in all their worldly enjoyments; and willingly to reſign all theſe to God's diſpoſal, ſaying, If my main portion be ſecured to me, let God do with theſe external things as he pleaſeth. Theſe ſurely are glorious changes.

7. The Spirit's miniſtration appears the more glorious in this, that ſometimes theſe changes are made on thoſe who had not the benefits of good example or education, but were brought up in families where they neither ſaw nor heard any thing to the advantage of religion, but on the contrary, much to fear and diſcourage them from it; ſuch as bitter invectives againſt it, and cruel mockings and ſcoffs at thoſe who owned it: And yet in the face of all diſcouragement, danger,

and perſecution, they have been brought to embrace religion, take up the croſs and follow Chriſt.

8. By the Spirit's miniſtration many weak and feeble ſouls have been wonderfully ſtrengthened and encouraged, power hath been given to the faint, and ſtrength increaſed to them who had no might. The feeble have been made like David, and all their diſcouragements and complaints removed. They who could perform no duty, bear no burden, encounter no danger; have been wonderfully ſtrengthened both for work and warfare, duty and difficulty; and fortified againſt all fears, corruptions, temptations, afflictions and perſecutions, and made to ſay with David, Pſal. xxvii. 3. *Tho' an hoſt ſhould encamp againſt me, my heart ſhall not fear; tho' thouſands riſe up againſt me, I will not be diſmayed.* And with Paul, Phil. iv. 13. 'I can do all things thro' 'Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me.' Hereby thoſe who have been oppreſt with doubtings and waverings about the truths of God, have been confirmed and eſtabliſhed, and made to ſay with Nathaniel, John i. 49. *Rabbi, thou art the King of Iſrael, thou art the Son of God.* And with unbelieving Thomas, John xx. 28. 'My 'Lord, and my God.' And like the Iſraelites in Elijah's time, when the Lord manifeſted himſelf by fire, an uſual emblem of the Spirit, 1 Kings xviii. 39. they were made to fall on their faces, and cry out, *The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God.*

Laſtly, The miniſtration of the Spirit is glorious in regard of the glorious intercourſe and communion with God, which ſouls thereby attain to in the ordinances. Then he makes good that word to them, Jer. xxxi. 25. *I have ſatiated every weary ſoul, and repleniſhed every ſorrowful ſoul.* Then he puts more gladneſs in their hearts, than when corn, wine and oil abound. Then he makes their doubts and unbelief to vaniſh, and all their clouds and darkneſs, fears and jealouſies to flee away. Now, they attain to this bleſſed intercourſe, when he gives them ſuch diſcoveries of a crucified Jeſus, and his infinite fulneſs and ſuitableneſs to their caſe, as fills them with peace and joy in believing, and in laying the ſtreſs of their ſouls, and burden of their guilt upon him. He helps them to embrace and apply the promiſes of the covenant, and to lay claim to them as their own, and ſay, This and that promiſe is mine, and plead with David, Pſal. cxix. 49. *Remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* And the pleading and feeding on a promiſe doth afford much inward ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction to the ſoul. He alſo affords them ſuch delight in God's work, ſuch ſtrength in performing of duty, that it is their meat and drink to do his will, and they reckon a day in his courts better than a thouſand elſewhere. So that tho' ſometimes they have come to duties with deadneſs and ſtraitenings of ſpirit, yet they have got ſuch relief, that with Hannah they have been helped to pour out their hearts to God in prayer, and have gone away *with their countenance no more ſad.* He gives them ſuch diſcoveries of God's love to their ſouls thro' Chriſt, as fills them with inward hope and conſolation; yea ſometimes ſuch a ſtrong aſſurance of God's favour and of the pardon of their ſins, and of the glory to be revealed, that their ſouls are made to overflow with joy. This communion and fellowſhip with God by the miniſtration of the Spirit, God's people in all ages have found, and they declared it to be the greateſt reality, when ſtepping over the threſhold of time into eternity, and they have died with the high praiſes of God in their mouths for it.

APPLICATION.

Infer. 1. See hence what thanks and praiſe we owe to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who purchaſed the miniſtration of the Spirit to us by his blood. Hence days of the Spirit's influences are called *days of the Son of Man*, Luke xvii. 22. All our nearneſs and intercourſe with God is by the blood of Jeſus, Eph. ii. 13. So that it is with a great ſum we obtain this freedom.

Infer. 2. See then from whence it is that goſpel-ordinances have their glory, even from the miniſtration of the Spirit. Without this, ordinances are dead and lifeleſs, and dead things have no beauty. We muſt look to the Holy Spirit then, to put life in ordinances, and make goſpel-days glorious. Alſo it is to be regreted, that ſo many look to the language and outward ornaments of ſermons, more than to the miniſtration of the Spirit for their beauty and excellency.

Infer. 3. How dreadful a crime muſt it be for any to ridicule or mock at the miniſtration of the Spirit, or to call it all fancy, whim, or enthuſiaſm! Oh, what is this but to reproach and do deſpite to the Spirit of grace! How provoking muſt it be for me to ſcoff at that which is the glory of ordinances and the glory of any land? Surely they are real objects of pity, and expoſed to great judgments, who are ſo far left and given up, as to glory in their ſhame, be aſhamed of their glory, and mock at that which is the greateſt bleſſing of heaven! O if they would ſtand in awe of this ſin, and remember that word, Iſa. xxviii. 22. *Now therefore be ye not mockers, leſt your hands be made ſtrong.*

II. A ſecond uſe of this doctrine may be of exhortation; and here let me exhort all the hearers of the goſpel to pray earneſtly to God that he may be pleaſed to make the goſpel the miniſtration of the Spirit to them, as it hath been to our anceſtors in this land in former days, and as it is this day in other countries. Let us cry with the church, Lam. v. 21. *Renew our days as of old;* And with David, Pſal. lxiii. 3. Let us *ſee thy power and glory in the ſanctuary, as in former times.* And with Iſaiah, Iſa. li. 9. *Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord; Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.* Let us plead with the church, Pſal. xliv. 1, 23, 26. *We have heard with our ears, O God; our fathers have told us what works thou didſt in their days, in the times of old. Awake, why ſleepeſt thou? Ariſe for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies ſake.* So let the people of Scotland ſay; "Lord, our fathers have told us what "glorious goſpel days they had by the miniſtration of "the Spirit, when the Captain of our ſalvation took to "him his great power, and rode in triumph in the chariot of ſalvation; his arrows were ſharp in the hearts "of his enemies, and hundreds dated their converſion "from one ſermon. Ah! we have ſinned away Chriſt "and his Spirit from the land." O if all ranks would join to pray him back again; and cry, "Ariſe, O Lord, "and have mercy upon Zion; let the time to favour "her, yea, the ſet time be now come" It is commonly obſerved when the ſet time for favouring Zion with the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit is at hand. God uſeth to pour out a ſpirit of prayer upon his people; for he loves to bring about his glorious deſigns by means of their prayers, that he may put honour upon them. I might add many motives to frequency and fervency in ſuch prayers.

As, 1. Conſider the excellency and uſefulneſs of the miniſtration of the Spirit. It would beautify the church and her aſſemblies, make her beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jeruſalem, fair as the moon, clear as the ſun, and terrible as an army with banners. It would make both miniſters and people to ſhine, our congregations to look with another face, and ordinances to have a new luſtre —It would put life and ſtrength in the members of the church, give life to their bones, vigour to their withered graces, and ſtrengthen them to run on God's errands and fight his battles. It would enable them to trample on ſatan, and triumph over ſin, wax valiant in battle, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. It would be as wind to the ſails and oil to the wheels, and make ſouls to run the ways of God's commands without fainting or wearying. It would looſe bonds, enlarge hearts, and give freedom from ſatan's temptations, and ſtrong luſts: It would revive drooping ſouls, turn their water into wine, their ſorrow into joy, their fears into holy confidence, their doubts into godly aſſurance, their complaints into praiſes, and make them to ſing in the ways of the Lord. —It would ſatisfy their ſouls, and all their faculties, as with marrow and fatneſs, bring light to the mind, freedom to the will, ſtrength to the memory, peace to the conſcience, and life to all the graces. Yea, it would make the ſoul to grow in graces, and ripen apace for heaven. It would make profeſſors of religion grow more ſincere in duties, more fervent in prayer, more attentive in hearing, more frequent in meditation, more practical in knowledge, more edifying in converſe, more humble for defects, and more thankful for mercies.

2. Conſider the melancholy caſe of the church for want of the miniſtration of the Spirit. Her beauty is quite marred, her gold becomes dim, and her moſt fine gold is changed. Her womb is barren, her breaſts dry, and her ordinances dead and lifeleſs. Satan reigns and prevails, and precious ſouls are an eaſy prey to his teeth. And believers themſelves fall under ſad languiſhings and decays. Whereas the Spirit's miniſtration would ſoon change the face of affairs, and roll away the reproach of barrenneſs under goſpel-means, wherewith enemies are apt to upbraid us, ſaying, *Where is your God?* Where is the fruit of your many ſermons, faſts and prayers, and ſolemn communions? This was like a ſword in David's bones, Pſal. xliii. 10. when they ſaid unto him, *Where is thy God?*

3. Take a view of the largeneſs of ſatan's kingdom in the world: How great is the number of his ſubjects! And will not every loyal ſubject of Chriſt be concerned and troubled to ſee the devil poſſeſſing ſuch large territories, when their Redeemer has but a little flock? Oh! can you ſee your King's country overſpread with enemies as thick as graſhoppers, when Chriſt's army are pitched before them like two little flocks of kids, and not be affected and grieved for it? Now the only remedy for it is, to pray for the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit. This would ſoon make a mutiny and deſertion in ſatan's camp, diminiſh his followers, and increaſe the army and kingdom of our dear Jeſus. But to ſum up all:

4. A day of the miniſtration of the Spirit would bring many rare and rich bleſſings along with it, ſuch as diſcoveries of the Redeemer's glory, convictions of the evil and vileneſs of ſin, many crowns of victory and triumph to Chriſt, great additions to his friends and followers. Then goſpel-light would ſhine clear, ſaving knowledge increaſe, ignorance and error vaniſh, riches of free grace would be diſplayed, and ſatan be bound up. Then miniſters and ordinances would be lively, ſecure ſinners would be awakened, dead ſouls would live, hard hearts would be melted, ſtrong luſts ſubdued, and many ſons and daughters born to God. Such a day would heal diviſions, cement breaches, make us all of one heart and mind, and bring down heaven to earth. This would redreſs our grievances, remove our complaints, and unite Chriſt's ſcattered flock. It would make true religion and holy perſons to be in eſteem, vice to be in diſgrace, and iniquity as aſhamed to hide its face. Then ſabbaths and communions would be days of heaven. Prayer and praiſe, ſpiritual converſe, talking of Chriſt and redeeming love would be our chiefeſt delight. O then pray for ſuch a time.

Queſt. What ſhall we do that our prayers may be prevalent for the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit to the church and land?

Anſw. Take theſe directions:

1. Let us lament after a departed God, as the penitent Iſraelites did, 1 Sam. vii. 2. *All Iſrael lamented after the Lord.* They were ſenſible of their loſs, confeſſed they had ſinned him away, and wreſtled for his return.

2. Search out the Achan in the camp, old or late ſins, which may provoke God to withhold his Spirit from us. Mourn bitterly for it; apply to the blood of Jeſus for pardon; abhor and put it away.

3. Be thankful for the leaſt droppings of the Spirit, entertain them kindly, and plead that they may be the forerunners of a greater ſhower.

4. Uſe arguments in prayer for the miniſtration of the Spirit: Plead the multitude of dry bones, which are ſcattered up and down the valley of viſion. How general is the deadneſs both among miniſters and people! And nothing can revive them but the breath of the Lord. Cry, with the prophet, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. *Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain that they may live.*—Plead your inability to do any ſpiritual good thing without the Spirit; Lord, we can neither pray, praiſe, mourn, believe, repent, meditate, read, hear, or communicate without the miniſtration of the Spirit; we can do nothing ſpiritually: all we do is in a natural, carnal way, which cannot be pleaſing to thee.—Plead alſo the promiſes of the new covenant, which are free and abſolute concerning the giving of the Holy Spirit; ſuch as thoſe in Iſa. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. God would have us to turn theſe his promiſes into prayers, if we would ſhare in them; for he ſaith after making them, that he will be *enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael to do it for them,* Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

Object. But, ſay ſome diſcouraged ſouls, we have ſo grieved and vexed the Holy Spirit, when dealing with us, that we fear he will return to us no more.

Anſ. 1. Many of God's people have grieved him, and yet he did not leave them finally.—2. Have you a ſenſe of guilt in this matter? Is it the grief and trouble of your heart that you have ſo grieved the Holy Spirit? Are the breathings of your ſouls after his return? then ſurely he is not wholly withdrawn; for if he were, you would be without ſenſe and feeling.—3. Remember that Chriſt ſtill invites you to come to him for every thing, and for the Spirit among the reſt. He hath purchaſed the Spirit for all that come to him; and thoſe who come to him for the Spirit, he will in no wiſe caſt out. May we all have grace to depend upon his word, and both to live and die by faith upon it, that his name may have the glory for ever. *Amen.*

A prophecy of the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom.

SERMON XI.

On John iii. 30. *He muſt increaſe*——

THeſe are the words of John Baptiſt concerning Jeſus Chriſt, upon the occaſion of his diſciples complaining of Chriſt's baptizing, which drew great multitudes to him, whereby they feared their maſter might come to be darkened or deſerted. But the humble man, inſtead of reſenting it as his diſciples did, falls a commending Chriſt and abaſing himſelf; yea, he profeſſeth the greateſt ſatisfaction in the advancement of Chriſt and his intereſt in the world, and compareth himſelf to a friend of the Bridegroom, ver. 29. that rejoiceth in the ſucceſs of the match, which he had been labouring to promote: It being honour enough for the moſt eminent miniſter of Chriſt, to be an inſtrument to recommend his glorious Maſter, and to court and make ready a bride for him.

In ver. 30. where my text is, 1. John foretels the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory, as a thing highly juſt and equitable in itſelf, and moſt agreeable and ſatisfying to him, and all other friends of the Bridegroom, *He muſt increaſe;* that is, his intereſt ſhall grow in the world, his name ſhall ſpread, his throne be raiſed, his crown ſhall flouriſh, his dominions be enlarged, and his ſubjects multiplied. You think he hath gained a great deal already, but that is nothing to what he will gain: And all this in conſequence of the decree of God, and the prophecies recorded concerning the Meſſiah in Pſal. ii. & lxxii, &c. ſo that there is a neceſſity for it, *He muſt increaſe.*

2. John foretels the conſequent of this increaſe to himſelf, *I muſt decreaſe*; that is, I muſt be darkened and diſappear. He is not at all diſpleaſed to ſee himſelf obſcured and outſhined by the bleſſed Meſſiah whoſe ſervant and forerunner he owned he was No, no, ſays he, Let him ſhine forth as the *riſing ſun,* and let me diſappear like the *morning ſtar;* Let his name be raiſed and mine depreſſed, I cheerfully ſubmit to it, I am content to be any thing, or to be nothing, ſo that Chriſt may be All.

Doct. The increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory in the world is abſolutely certain and neceſſary. It muſt infallibly be, for God hath ſaid it, Jer. xxiii. 5. *A king ſhall reign and proſper in the earth.* Pſal. lxxii. 8. *He ſhall have dominion from ſea to ſea.* Pſal. cxxxii. 18. *Upon himſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh.*

In diſcourſing from this ſubject, I ſhall,

I. Enquire what is that increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory, which we may warrantably look for?

II. What are the times and ſeaſons of this increaſe?

III. What are the reaſons, why Chriſt muſt thus increaſe?

IV. Make application.

I. As to the firſt, What is the increaſe here meant?

1. Negatively, it is not to be underſtood,

1ſt, Of any increaſe of Chriſt's eſſential glory as God; for this is impoſſible, he being infinite, and therefore the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever, without any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning.

2dly, It is not meant that Chriſt's kingdom ſhall increaſe or flouriſh in outward ſplendor and greatneſs, like one of the kingdoms of this world. No, Chriſt's kingdom being not of this world, its glory is of a ſpiritual and heavenly nature, and peculiar to itſelf alone.

3dly, Neither is it to be thought that the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom is to be conſtant or alike at all times, or without decay or diminution at any time. No, no, for ſometimes it ſeems to be brought very low, yea ſo low was it brought under the Antichriſtian apoſtacy, that it was ſcarce viſible.

2. Poſitively, the increaſe ſpoke of in the text is to be underſtood of the flouriſhing of Chriſt's mediatory kingdom, and of the ſpreading of his manifeſtative glory in the world, which doth conſiſt chiefly in theſe things:

1ſt, In the increaſe and ſpreading of goſpel-light thro' the world, ſo that the dark places of the earth ſhall be enlightened with the knowledge of Chriſt; and thoſe places which had but twilight diſcoveries of him, ſhall attain to brighter views of his excellency and uſefulneſs, and to a clearer inſight into the goſpel myſteries, and the way of ſalvation thro' Chriſt and his righteouſneſs imputed to the ſons of Adam. Then the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe with more powerful beams of light and heat upon his churches than before, and at length with ſuch clearneſs and efficacy, as to ſcatter Antichriſtian darkneſs, error, idolatry, ſuperſtition, dead forms and ceremonies of man's invention. For how is it elſe that the man of ſin ſhall be conſumed by the Spirit of Chriſt's mouth, and deſtroyed by the brightneſs of his coming, 2 Theſſ. ii. 8. but by the outpouring of his Spirit with his word preached, and by the bright and convincing appearances of the Redeemer in the glory of goſpel light? Then is it that Chriſt ſhall increaſe, and his kingdom be enlarged, when *the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea,* according to the prophecy of Habakkuk, Hab. ii. 14.

2dly, This increaſe takes in the Lord's furniſhing his church with many *burning and ſhining lights, able miniſters of the New Teſtament,* to be eminent inſtruments of diſplaying his glory in the world. When he is ſignally to increaſe his kingdom, he will raiſe up and qualify miniſters for the work; who ſhall be men of large hearts, fluent tongues, and public ſpirits; ſhining holineſs and piety; undaunted courage and zeal for God; inſpired with a burning love to Chriſt and the ſouls of men; inclined to prefer the good of Jeruſalem to their chiefeſt joy; and willing to run all hazards by ſea and land; to venture all that is dear to them in the world, their reputation, life, and all the comforts of it, for Jeſus Chriſt; and chearfully content to ſpend and to be ſpent for the increaſe of his kingdom and glory, and the gathering of ſouls to him. And particularly, it is a pledge and forerunner of this happy increaſe; when the Lord ſends down his Spirit upon ſtudents and expectants of the miniſtry; graciouſly touches their hearts, and works an inward change upon their ſouls; animates them with ſincere principles and ends, and gives them ſuch impreſſions of the weight of the paſtoral office and the charge of ſouls, that they will not run thereto unſent, nor have an active hand in thruſting themſelves into it, or do any thing to beget prejudices to mar their ſucceſs; but will wait patiently upon the Lord, till he ſhall open the door, and clear their call to enter into his vineyard.

3dly, It imports the increaſe of the number of Chriſt's ſubjects and followers. *As the king's honour is in the multitude of his people*, Prov. xiv. 28. ſo Chriſt is glorified in the multitude of his ſubjects. Thus ſhall Chriſt's kingdom and glory increaſe in the latter days, when the kingdoms of the earth ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord; then the Jews themſelves ſhall gather to Chirſt's ſtandard lifted up in the goſpel, together with the fulneſs of the Gentiles; they ſhall fly to it in clouds, like doves to their windows, according to theſe promiſes, Iſa. ii. 2. Micah iv. 1. 2. Iſa. lx. 8. Rev. ii. 15. Rom. xi. 25. 26. Pſal. cii. 15. 16. 22. Now what is it that will bring about this glorious increaſe, but the miniſtration of the Spirit with the goſpel? It is this that opens a great and effectual door, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. a door of utterance in miniſters mouths, and a door of entrance in hearers hearts. Then miniſters ſpirits ſhall be enlarged, and their tongues looſed in preaching; and hearers appetites will be ſharpened and their hearts melted in hearing. When the Lord comes with his Spirit, and gives teſtimony to the word of his grace, then the arrows of the word ſhall pierce the conſcience; the wounded ſhall cry, what ſhall we do to be ſaved? And multitudes ſhall fall under Zion's King, Pſal. xiv. 5.

4thly, Then Chriſt's kingdom doth increaſe when truth triumphs over error, and pure doctrine and worſhip prevail againſt ſuperſtition and deluſion. There are happy ſeaſons when the Lord doth magnify his power in binding up the winds of hereſy and falſe doctrine, and making pure ſcripture truths to be reliſhed and preferred to the vain opinions and falſe reaſonings of men. Then he cauſes Infidelity, Deiſm, Socinianiſm, Arianiſm, Popery, and Arminianiſm to be rejected and abhorred: And makes men willing to ſubject their own reaſon to divine revelation, and to fall in with the plain truths of the word, and the goſpel ſcheme of ſaving loſt ſinners by the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and thro' his death and purchaſe only. Then he brings men to ſee their own natural impotency and inability to do any thing for their own recovery and happineſs: ſo that inſtead of aſcribing their good actions and attainments to the good uſe of their own natural powers, they are willing to acknowledge God in every thing that is good in them, and to aſcribe all to the praiſe and glory of his free grace, who for Chriſt's ſake works in them both to will and to do. O that Chriſt and his truth may thus increaſe in the world!

5thly, This bleſſed increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom includes the downfal of its enemies, and eſpecially the overthrow of Mahomet and Antichriſt, the ruin of Babylon, and the binding up of ſatan, that grand enemy which excites all the reſt. This is foretold, Rev. xx. 2. Now when once that time comes, that ſatan ſhall be reſtrained and bound up from influencing rulers to perſecute or oppreſs the church: from inſtigating ſeducers to propagate errors; and from exciting ſchiſmatical and ſeditious perſons to ſow diſſenſion among the followers of Jeſus; then the kingdom of Chriſt will greatly increaſe in the world.

6thly, It imports the increaſe of true piety and holineſs among the ſubjects of Chriſt's kingdom; when they ſhall ſtudy an univerſal conformity to their holy Lord and Maſter, and, like him, make it their meat and drink to ſerve God, and do his will: When their minds and affections ſhall be greatly diſengaged from the world, and the ſtrain of their converſations ſhall be ſpiritual and heavenly: Their lives ſhall ſhine in holineſs and good works; and their great ſtudy ſhall be to have their ſpirits and tempers, their walk and carriage in all reſpects ſuch as becomes the goſpel of Chriſt: When they ſhall be juſt, righteous and true in all their dealings, words, and actions; when they ſhall be meek and lowly, ſober and temperate, patient and peaceable, loving and forgiving, harmleſs and inoffenſive in all the parts of their converſation: and at the ſame time ſhall abhor and depart from all lying and diſſembling, injuſtice and intemperance, pride and ambition, ſlandering and back-biting, malice and revenge, diſcord and ſtrife, and whatever elſe is contrary to true godlineſs, and the pattern of the holy Jeſus: then it is that Chriſt's kingdom ſhall greatly increaſe.

7thly, There is in it the increaſe of zeal and public-ſpiritedneſs for promoting true religion, and of Chriſtian courage and magnanimity in owning and avowing of Chriſt and his cauſe before the world. When Chriſtians ſhall not be aſhamed of a crucified Jeſus, or of his truths, ordinances or people, but ſhall openly profeſs him, glory in him, and whatever belongs to him; and alſo bear teſtimony againſt every thing that he hates or forbids: and when a ſpirit of reformation ſhall be poured upon all ranks and degrees of men: ſo as every one in their ſeveral ſtations and capacities ſhall do their utmoſt to ſuppreſs ſin and recommend Chriſt and his ways to all around them: then it is that Chriſt's kingdom and glory will increaſe in the world.

The ſecond head. II. I propoſed next to enquire into the times and ſeaſons of this glorious increaſe. God hath his ſet-times for Zion's increaſe and glory, which none can ſtop, Pſal. cii. 13. The apoſtolic age was the moſt remarkable ſet-time for it that ever was, when every ſermon made new conqueſts, and additions to the church, till every city and corner of the vaſt Roman empire was ſtored with Chriſtians. But beſides this, we have promiſes of a more full and ample increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom in the latter days, or towards the end of the world; of which Daniel ſpeaks in his prophecy, Dan. ii. 28, 44. and Dan. vii. 27. There he tells us, that in theſe latter days God will ſet up a great, large and flouriſhing kingdom which will break all others in pieces, and ſtand for ever. That he means the flouriſhing ſtate and glorious increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom toward the end of the world, is clear from this, that he makes the latter days he ſpeaks of, to be the days of the kings which ſhould divide the fourth monarchy or Roman empire among them. This empire was to be divided into ten kingdoms, called in the Revelation ten horns, and repreſented in Dan. ii. 41. by the ten toes of the feet of the image. Now the ſtone cut out of the mount, which is the kingdom of Chriſt, is ſaid to ſmite the image upon its feet and break them in pieces, ver. 34. which ſignifies Chriſt's conquering the Roman empire when divided into ten kings or kingdoms called ten horns, Rev. xvii. which diviſion hath happened in the latter days. And theſe horns, or kings and kingdoms, being joined together in giving their power to the beaſt or Roman Antichriſt as their head, do preſerve ſome ſhadow of the ancient Roman empire or monarchy, ſeeing Antichriſt's power is almoſt as extenſive, as the emperor's once was. Hence Antichriſt is ſometimes called the image of the beaſt, and is ſaid to exerciſe the power of the firſt beaſt, Rev. xiii. 12. 14. as being ſet up at Rome in place of the Roman empire in the weſt, and as bearing the likeneſs of the then emperor that reigned there. For at the time the ſaid empire lay dead and wounded by the ſword or invaſion of the Goths and Vandals, and in effect was not, the Pope got up and mounted the beaſt, which the emperor had rode upon before him, namely, the Roman ſtate, for that is the body of the beaſt, and ſo ſet up a new image of the old Heathen empire at Rome. The papal power may be well called its image, as being like it in largeneſs of dominion, in form of government, and in tyranny and idolatry.

When Chriſt's kingdom was firſt ſet up in the apoſtles time, the Roman empire was in its iron legs, as repreſented in Nebuchadnezzar's image, that is, it was in its greateſt ſtrength. But in the latter days, which Daniel ſpeaks of, Dan. ii. 28. 44. when Chriſt's kingdom is wonderfully increaſed, the empire is in its feet and toes, that is in ten kingdoms ſubject to the beaſt, as they are explained, Rev. xvii 12, 13, 17, 18. Now, as Daniel tells us, it is upon theſe that the ſtone ſmites, and ſo it is among them that Chriſt will make his glorious conqueſts in the latter days. For it is ſaid, Theſe kings ſhall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb ſhall overcome them, not only their power and armies, but he ſhall at length overcome their hearts, ſo that they ſhall be brought to hate the whore and make her deſolate, Rev. xvii. 14, 16. which time is yet to come.

Then it is that Chriſt's kingdom will receive a glorious increaſe, and the kingdoms of this world become his, as in Rev. ii. 15. Then the great river Euphrates will be dried up for preparing the way of the kings of the eaſt, Rev. xvi. 12. Then the blindneſs of the Jews ſhall be removed, and the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall come in, Rom. xi. 1. 25. 26. Theſe and many other famous prophecies about the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory do remain to be accompliſhed in the latter days, at leaſt in the extent; ſuch as thoſe that foretel, That every thing in Jeruſalem ſhall be holy: the people ſhall be all righteous: the ſanctuary ſhall be cleanſed, and purity be both in the worſhip and worſhippers in the temple, and no more a Canaanite in the houſe of the Lord: all nations ſhall be gathered to ſee his glory: there ſhall be no more war betwixt nations: the Jews ſhall be gathered out of all the countries where they are diſperſed, and brought to their own land: they ſhall be no more ſeparate kingdoms, *&c.* For which ſee Iſa. ii. 2, 3, 4. Iſa. xxvi. 2. Iſa. lii. 1. Iſa. lx. 5, 10, 12, 13, 21. Ezek. xxvi. 24, 28. Ezek. xxxv. 21. to 28. Dan. viii. 14. Zech. xiv. 21. Rev. xi. 1. *&c.* Now what a glorious increaſe muſt it bring to the Mediator's kingdom and glory, when all theſe prophecies and promiſes ſhall be fulfilled concerning the overthrow of Babylon and Antichriſt, the deſtruction of the Turkiſh empire, the in-bringing of the Jews, with the fulneſs of the Gentiles?

In regard the fall and deſtruction of Antichriſt, or the papal power, is the great mercy promiſed to the church in the latter days, and with which all the other bleſſings promiſed are connected; and that the ſcripture is more particular about the time of its being fulfilled, than any other; it is fit to enquire what is there ſaid about it. And *firſt*, let us view the forgoing ſigns and forerunners of Antichriſt's fall, and of Chriſt's coming to deliver his people from his tyranny, which point out the times as near; ſuch as,

Firſt, Previous thereto, there will be a great defection among all the churches of Chriſt. Among God's people deadneſs and formality ſhall ſo increaſe, that all the virgins ſhall ſeem to fall aſleep. Errors and falſe doctrines ſhall greatly abound, the luminaries ſhall be darkened, and the ſtars ſhall withdraw their ſhining. Many miniſters ſhall ſuck in corrupt principles about the glorious doctrines of the goſpel, particularly, that of juſtification; by which means the earth ſhall be turned into blood and ſlaughter. Yea, in theſe laſt days, there ſhall be falſe teachers, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them. There ſhall be many infidels, and profane ſcoffers who ſhall make a mock of ſerious godlineſs, and the Holy Spirit's operations; and ſcoff at the goſpel revelation, and the way of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt and his righteouſneſs imputed to us. Alſo they will deride the promiſes of his coming to deſtroy Antichriſt, to deliver his people, and to judge the world, ſaying, *Where is the promiſe of his coming? for all things continue as they were from the beginning.* Of theſe things the apoſtle Peter ſpeaks in the 2*d* and 3*d* chapters of his 2*d* epiſtle. Nay, ſo general ſhall the defection and infidelity of the world at that time be, that our Lord himſelf tells us, that when he cometh, he ſhall ſcarce find faith upon the earth, Luke xviii. 8. that is, he will find few that have the firm belief of the goſpel-truths, and few that have faith concerning Chriſt's coming. So great have been the reelings of the world, ſo long the delays of Chriſt's coming, and ſo frequent their miſtakes who have prefixed times for it, that there will remain but little faith in any about his glorious appearance for his church, when behold he is juſt at the door. As Atheiſts, Deiſts and adverſaries of the truth have been much hardned in their infidelity, by the miſtakes of thoſe who have been too particular and peremptory in timing future events: ſo the godly themſelves may be ſadly ſhaken, and tempted to deſpair of Chriſt's coming, when he ſo long paſſetht heir reckoning. Therefore, ſaid he, *When the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?* But glory to his name, *He is faithful and true*, and will come at the appointed time, and the unbelief of man ſhall not make the promiſe of God of none effect.

2*dly*, There ſhall be great troubles in the world, and very great fear and diſtreſs in the church, before help ariſe to her, Dan. xii. 1. Daniel is certified, that when Chriſt is to ſtand up for the church, "there ſhall be "a time of trouble, ſuch as never was, ſince there was "a nation, even to that ſame time, and at that time thy "people ſhall be delivered." So in Mat. xxiv. and Luke xxi. Chriſt ſaith, that before his coming, there ſhall be ſtrange ſigns in the heavens, and in the earth, earthquakes, wars, and rumours of wars, the ruſhing of nations one againſt another, and ſuch univerſal diſtreſs, that mens hearts will be failing them for fear; and even then ſhall deliverance be at hand.

3dly, Chriſt will appear when his church's enemies are moſt confident and ſecure, and particularly when the Romiſh harlot is lifted up with pride by her ſucceſs in this or that kingdom, and begins to ſay, "I ſit as a queen and ſhall ſee no ſorrow." But then it is that her plagues ſhall come as in one day, Rev. xvii. 7, 8. How confident was that cruel perſecutor Diocleſian, of his ſucceſs againſt the church when he erected pillars with that inſcription, *Deleta Superſtitione Chriſtiana?* Then he thought he had got Chriſtianity extirpated, and the church ruined; when behold her glorious deliverance under Conſtantine the Great was juſt at hand.

4thly, Before Antichriſt's fall, one of the ten kingdoms which ſupported the beaſt ſhall undergo a marvellous revolution, Rev. xi. 13. "The ſame hour there "was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the "city fell." By which tenth part, is to be underſtood one of the ten kingdoms into which the great city Romiſh Babylon was divided: this many take to be the kingdom of France, it being the tenth and laſt of the kingdoms as to the time of its riſe, and that which gave Rome the denomination of the beaſt with ten horns, and alſo it being the only one of the ten that was never conquered ſince its riſe. However unlikely this and other propheſied events may appear at the time, yet the almighty hand of the only wiſe God can ſoon bring them about when leaſt expected. Tho' the church ſhould be wrapt about with the blackeſt clouds and thickeſt darkneſs for a time, that will be no ſtop to God's great deſigns. As a little before the break of day is the darkeſt time of all the night; ſo uſually it is a dark hour before the day-break of the church's deliverance. Let us not then be ſhaken in our minds, whatever ſtorm blow, but firmly believe the word of a true and faithful God, That all his promiſes to his church ſhall be exactly accompliſhed, That he will riſe in due time and ſcatter all his enemies; and that the ſet time to favour Zion will certainly come. May we then be helped to look to heaven, and cry for a ſteady, fixed and perſevering faith, that we may never be ſhaken, nor carried away by the prevailing torrent of infidelity, but may ſtill be eſtabliſhed upon the firm rock of truth for Chriſt's ſake! *Amen.*

Of the Increaſe of Chriſt's Kingdom.

SERMON XII.

On John iii. 30. *He muſt increaſe.*——

IN the preceding diſcourſe, I was ſpeaking of the times and ſeaſons of the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory; and ſeeing this increaſe in the latter days is very much connected with Antichriſt's fall, I was enquiring a little into the time of that fall, and mentioning ſome fore-runners of it. But to get a more certain view of it, it is fit to enquire into the ſcripture account of the time and length of Antichriſt's reign; which, according to Rev. xi. 2, 3. and xii. 6, 14. and xiii. 5. doth amount to 1260 years, as is generally agreed to. Now if we could hit upon the time when theſe years began, we ſhould certainly know when his reign would end. But God, for our trial and exerciſe, hath left us much in the dark when to begin them. Thus alſo dealt God with his people in ancient times; for tho' he told them their bondage in Egypt would be 400 years, their captivity in Babylon would be 70 years; and from the commandment to rebuild the temple to the Meſſiah's death, there would be 70 weeks of years, or 490 years: yet ſtill the preciſe time when to begin theſe computations was much queſtioned among them. So that they never were perfectly certain about the exact times of the church's deliverance, until the glorious events happened; and then every one ſaw clearly when they ſhould have dated the beginning of theſe predicted years. Now the ſame is the caſe with reſpect to Antichriſt's reign and downfall. Tho' now we be not certain when to begin the 1260 years, which is the duration of Antichriſt's reign; yet, after the event of his fall, the time of its commencement will be ſo plain, that after ages will be apt to wonder that we fell into ſuch miſtakes about it. Some in their calculations have begun Antichriſt's reign too early: others again perhaps begin it too late. Some of which I ſhall mention, with the grounds of their opinion.

I. Becauſe Antichriſt is called the beaſt with ten horns, Rev. xiii. 1. and the ten horns or kings receive their power one hour with the beaſt, and give their power and kingdom to the beaſt, Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 17. Many therefore did begin Antichriſt's reign, as ſoon as the Roman empire was broken and divided into ten different kingdoms; to wit, when the tenth or laſt horn appeared, which was the kingdom of the Franks, now called the French, under Childericus their king, in the year of our Lord 456; to which if we add 1260 years, the time of Antichriſt's reign, the end of it was to have been in the year 1716, and accordingly many did expect it that year: But the event hath ſhewed that they began Antichriſt's reign too ſoon. And indeed the ſcripture doth not ſay that his reign (tho' contemporary with the ten horns) ſhould begin as ſoon as the laſt of them appeared; and in the year 456, Antichriſt was ſcarce diſcernible in the church. But yet, in the year 1716, Antichriſt got a ſevere blow, when the Lord bro[illegible] his intereſt in Britain, by defeating the rebellion there in his favour, and ſecuring the Proteſtant ſucceſſion to the crown in the houſe of Hanover.

II. Others did begin Antichriſt's reign 20 years after, *viz.* in the year 476; becauſe till then ſome ſhadow of the old Roman empire remained. For it was not intirely diſſolved, nor did the ten horns appear formally in its room, till the depoſition of Auguſtulus, who was the laſt of the Roman emperors that reigned over both eaſt and weſt. Now he was depoſed in the year 476, after which time the very name of the Roman empire in the weſt, became extinct. Thoſe of this way of thinking did alſo ſtrengthen their opinion from that text, in 2 Theſſ. ii. 7. 8. *He who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then ſhall that wicked one be revealed;* that is, Antichriſt, who then was working under ground, would not formally appear until the removal of the Roman emperor, whoſe power in the weſt did greatly hinder the papal tyranny and grandeur. Now, according to this opinion Antichriſt's reign ſhould have ended in the year 1736, but the event alſo hath diſcovered they began it too ſoon. For tho' the biſhops of Rome, upon the fall of the empire, made great progreſs in their projected uſurpation, yet Antichriſt was not formally revealed ſo ſoon as 476. Neither doth the ſcripture ſay that he would be immediately revealed, and begin his reign upon the removing of the Roman emperor. But tho' the Lord did not overturn Antichriſt in the year 1736, as ſome expected, yet I hope he hath taken a remarkable ſtep toward it, and for the increaſe of his own kingdom, in or obout that year, by raiſing up eminent inſtruments for ſpreading his glorious goſpel thro' the world, ſuch as the Moravian brethren, and Oxford methodiſts; and particularly by ſending forth the Rev. Mr Whiteſield, that very year to preach the everlaſting goſpel with wonderful ſucceſs. And now both he and others whom God hath excited, have, ſince that time, made a noble progreſs in this work, both in Europe and America, by preaching in the demonſtration of the Spirit, and with power, the doctrine of free grace, of original ſin, of regeneration by the holy Spirit, and of juſtification by Chriſt's righteouſneſs alone; which doctrines had been ſadly buried before. And I verily believe, that it is by the effuſion of the Spirit with the goſpel and the bright convincing appearances of Chriſt, and free grace in the glory of goſpel light, that Antichriſt will be conſumed and deſtroyed; and Chriſt's kingdom increaſed and enlarged.

III. Some there are who are very late in beginning Antichriſt's reign, not before the biſhops of Rome turned groſly idolatrous, and ſet up for the worſhip of images, and for excommunicating and depoſing the emperors of Conſtantinople, their civil rulers, becauſe they oppoſed them in their idolatry. This was firſt attempted by Pope Conſtantine againſt the emperor Philippicus in the year 713; and afterwards practiſed with greater boldneſs and ſucceſs by Pope Greogry II. againſt the emperor Leo in the year 726. According to this opinion, Antichriſt's reign will not end before the year 1973.

IV. But the moſt probable time for commencing Antichriſt's reign ſeems to be when Boniface III. got himſelf declared univerſal biſhop and head of the church, and aſſumed the title of Pope, which was in the year 606. And in this uſurped ſupre[illegible]acy he was then owned and ſubmitted to by the ten horns or kings who gave their power to him. Then it was the Pope became Chriſt's declared oppoſite by uſurping his peculiar office and titles, and ſo appeared formally to be Antichriſt. Now if we add to 606, the time of Antichriſt's reign, 1260 years, his dominion will not end till the year 1866, which is 124 years hence. Tho' none now living will ſee this, yet we may comfort ourſelves as once a godly man did, *I have had a longing deſire*, ſaid he, *to ſee or hear of the fall of Antichriſt: but I check myſelf, I ſhall go to heaven, and there the news of it ſhall quickly arrive, for both angels and ſaints will rejoice at it*, Rev. xviii. 20. Why, that will be the happy time of the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory. May God haſten it for Chriſt's ſake,

The third head. III. I propoſe next to give ſome reaſons why Chriſt muſt increaſe as above;

1ſt, Becauſe of the decree and promiſe of God which cannot fail. He hath promiſed this not only to the church, Jer. xxiii. 5. but alſo to Chriſt himſelf, Pſal. ii. 8. and cx. 1, 2. And ſurely *he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips, he will not lie unto David*, Pſal. lxxxix. 34, 35.

2dly, Becauſe it is for the ſake of the kingdom of Chriſt, and its increaſe, that God hath made the world, and hath given the adminiſtration of the kingdom of providence to Chriſt himſelf in order to ſecure the accompliſhment of all the glorious promiſes made to him, the reins of government are put in his own hand, Mat. xxviii. 18. Eph. i. 22. And to be ſure the great Mediator will ſee to his own intereſt.

3dly, Becauſe Chriſt is the darling of heaven, dearly beloved of God for undertaking the redemption of a loſt world, a work whereby God is highly glorified. In this tranſaction he chearfully complied with the divine will, became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, and therefore his name muſt be exalted above every name, and every knee muſt bow before him, Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10.

APPLICATION.

I. Uſe may be of information.

1. We here ſee what encouragement we have to pray as we are taught, *Thy kingdom come*, and that it may be increaſed and enlarged; ſeeing we pray for what God hath decreed, promiſed and foretold, and muſt certainly come to paſs.

2. It muſt then be great folly to oppoſe the flouriſhing of Chriſt's kingdom, they who do it have a ſtrong party to fight againſt, even the omnipotent God, who hath ſaid of Chriſt and his kingdom, *He muſt increaſe.*

II. Uſe may be of reproof and warning to all who would hinder the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory in the world; ſuch as,

1. Thoſe who perſecute and oppreſs his people.

2. Thoſe who promote the violent ſettlement of miniſters contrary to the will of congregations, and thereby put a ſtop to the converſion and edification of ſouls.

3. Thoſe who promote infidelity, error, or any doctrine in the church, contrary to the ſimplicity and purity of the goſpel, and the ſcripture-ſcheme of ſalvation by Chriſt and his ſurety-righteouſneſs, whereby free grace is exalted and ſelf debaſed.

4. Thoſe who refuſe to ſubject themſelves to the laws of his kingdom, and will rather obey their own paſſions and luſts, ſaying in their hearts, *We will not have this man to reign over us;* if Chriſt be a King, let him be a King without a kingdom, ſubjects, or laws; if we could, he ſhould have none. O ſinners, take heed what ye are doing; you directly oppoſe the will of that God, who ſaith, *He muſt increaſe.*

III. Uſe of lamentation. We may here take occaſion to bewail the ſtate of Chriſt's kingdom in divers places, in which it once flouriſhed and increaſed, but now, alas! decreaſeth, as in France, Germany, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Piedmont, and other foreign parts, and likewiſe in Britain and Ireland, and particularly in our mother church of Scotland! Oh! what a dreadful flood of infidelity, atheiſm, irreligion, damnable hereſies, looſeneſs of principle and of practice, contempt of God and religion, ſcoffings at the truths of God and ſerious godlineſs hath broke out in this age, and ſwelled to a greater height than at any time ſince our bleſſed reformation. Our holy Chriſtian religion, in its firm foundations and infallible proofs, hath been openly attacked and ridiculed by profeſſed infidels and pretenders to reaſon amongſt us, and that notwithſtanding the ſtrong obligations they ly under by their baptiſm and education to adhere to it. And many pretended friends have been undermining and deſtroying it, by promoting opinions and practices inconſiſtent with its purity and intereſt. Yea, all ranks of us, whether magiſtrates, miniſters, nobility, gentry, citizens and commons, are ſadly chargeable with the prevailing defections and declenſions of the age. Alas, we have left our firſt love, and have wofully degenerated from our anceſtors piety, zeal, and ſolemn engagements to the Lord! How lamentable is our neglect of family-worſhip, ſecret prayer, ſabbath-ſanctification, and goſpel-holineſs! As alſo our loſing our former livelineſs and ſpiriuality in God's worſhip and ſervice, and letting our devotion dwindle away into a dead formality, and mere bodily ſervice! And, finally, how ſtrong is the propenſity of the preſent generation to vanity, lightneſs, plays, comedies, romances, idle diverſions, contempt of ordinances, lying, cheating, perjury, and all ſorts of immoral practices.

Upon account whereof God is provoked to forſake his ordinances, and ſmite our church with ſore judgments, ſuch as a ſpirit of diviſion, a miſcarrying womb, and dry breaſts, impenitency and hardneſs of heart, ſuſpending the Spirit's influences, ſo as hearts are not melted by the word. The angel deſcends not to trouble the waters, and the diſeaſed ſtep not in to be healed as in former days. Our hearts do not burn while Chriſt is talking with us; the times of refreſhing come not from the preſence of the Lord. And, alas! we who are in the miniſtry want not reaſon to fear that we have a hand in bringing on the judgments, by our undertaking the miniſtry for carnal ends, and without experimental knowledge of the Spirit's work in regeneration; helping in lax men to the miniſtry, and diſcouraging the more ſerious; little reading and ſtudying the ſcriptures, want of zeal and concern for the converſion and edification of ſouls: Seeking ourſelves in our public apperances, more than the glory of our bleſſed Maſter, not looking to him for furniture, and depending on his preſence and Spirit for ſucceſs: Not labouring more earneſtly, and preaching more rouzingly for awakening and convincing of ſouls: laying ſtumbling-blocks before hearers, by ſinful ſtrifes, untender walking, and wrong ſteps, whereby they are tempted to abhor the offerings of the Lord, not acting as faithful ſtewards, by rightly dividing the word of truth, and ſpeaking to the different caſes of the converted and unconverted, ſaints and ſinners; and not making it the great end of our ſermons to convince loſt ſinners of their miſery, to exalt a crucified Chriſt as their only remedy, and to lead poor ſouls to him. O that all ranks were brought to acknowledge their guilt, and to lament the hand they have had in ſtopping the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom!

IV. Uſe may be of conſolation to all the friends of Chriſt. Tho' you have cauſe of fear and trembling, becauſe of the melancholy view you have of the church's caſe at preſent, her groans and grievances, defections, and backſlidings, and the power and ſucceſs of enemies; yet rejoice in the tidings my text brings, ***Chriſt muſt increaſe.*** The church ſhall ariſe and ſhine, her light ſhall come, and the glory of the Lord ſhall riſe upon her. It ſhall not be in the power of all her enemies, tho' hell and Rome be joined with them, to hinder this increaſe. Antichriſt muſt fall: He hath been in a deadly conſumption theſe 200 years, and will expire at length. Whatever be the oppoſition, Chriſt muſt overcome, triumph, and increaſe at laſt. His church will certainly outlive all her enemies. And tho' ſometimes ſhe may decreaſe in ſome places, yet we ſhould mind that Chriſt's kingdom is like the ſea, what it loſeth in one place it gaineth in another. If it loſe in Europe, and gain in America, Chriſt loſeth nothing. And tho' his church in our land be brought low, yet her Head and King lives, and many of his worthies have lived and died in the faith of it, that he would not leave her, but return and revive his work in her with a powerful arm, and ſpreading glory.

V. Uſe, of exhortation. And here I exhort and obteſt all ranks, high and low, to do what they can in their ſtations, by their prayers and endeavours, for the coming and increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom, as Chriſt directs, Mat. vi. 10. O how concerned was David this way! Pſal. xxv. 22. and li. 18. And ſo were Aſaph, Iſaiah, Daniel, Nehemiah, Paul, *&c.* Pſal. lxxx. 14. Iſa. lxii. 1. Dan. ix. 16. *&c.* Neh. ii. 3. Rom. x. 1. Conſider alſo the woes and judgments denounced againſt thoſe who are unconcerned for the intereſt of Chriſt's kingdom, Amos vi. 1. 6. Eſther iv. 14. Likewiſe take a view of the bleſſings which would attend the increaſe of it. The Redeemer's glory would be magnified, the church would become a fruitful mother of many children, and many ſons and daughters would be born to God. Then light would ſpread, knowledge be increaſed, ignorance vaniſh, error be abhorred, ſatan reſtrained, vice forſaken, virtue eſteemed, love and peace cultivated. Then the lives of Chriſtians would ſhine, ſabbaths would be days of heaven, ſermons and ſacraments would be longed for, the friends of Chriſt valued as the excellent ones of the earth, and all wiſdom's ways would be pleaſant and delightful. And what happy times would theſe be?

Queſt. What are theſe means and endeavours we ſhould uſe for the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory in the world, according to our ſeveral ſtations and capacities?

Anſ. 1. Let magiſtrates contribute to this noble end, both by their authority and example, diſcountenancing the immoral and vicious, and putting reſpect upon the virtuous and godly. Let them with zeal and impartiality execute our good laws for ſupreſſing open vice, ſuch as *drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, profaning of the Lord's name, and of the Lord's day*, &c. Let them in their own lives be patterns to others in juſtice, ſobriety, family religion, and attending upon public ordinances: and no doubt their good examples would have great influence upon thoſe around them.

2dly, Let miniſters eſpecially lay out themſelves for this increaſe, by making it the great ſcope and end of their ſermons to awaken ſecure ſinners, and lead them to Chriſt; by diligent catechizing of them, and dealing particularly with young perſons in private about their ſouls, and taking great pains with them at their firſt admiſſion to the Lord's table. Let them be careful to keep back the ignorant and ungodly from that holy ordinance; and depend on the miniſtration of the Spirit for all the ſucceſs of their endeavours. Let them beware of licenſing or ordaining any to ſacred functions, who are not of good report for true piety and ſoundneſs; and of impoſing paſtors upon congregations without their conſent or good liking. Let them preach to their flocks by their good lives, as well as their lips; and in all things behave as true friends of the Bridegroom, deſiring (like John Baptiſt) that their bleſſed Maſter may increaſe, tho' they ſhould decreaſe; that his name may be great, tho' theirs ſhould ſink to nothing.

3dly, Let elders in their ſphere contribute all they can to the flouriſhing of Chriſt's kingdom, by their fervent prayers for it, and ſtudying to be exemplary in family religion, ſobriety and holineſs of life: by reproving and admoniſhing of thoſe who walk diſorderly, informing miniſters about them, and faithfully aſſiſting them in the exerciſe of diſcipline, and in ruling and governing of the church.

4thly, Let teachers of youth aſſiſt in this work, by labouring to inſtill the knowledge of God, and the way of ſalvation thro' Chriſt, very early into their ſcholars minds; and to perſuade men of the neceſſity and advantage of prayer, a new heart, godlineſs, meekneſs, chaſtity, ſobriety, and juſtice. And likewiſe to train them up in the abhorrence of vice in all its kinds, and of every thing that may prove an inlet or encouragement to it.

5thly, Let parents and heads of families do what they can to ſet up and increaſe Chriſt's kingdom in their families, by maintaining the worſhip of God in them; ſanctifying the ſabbath in all their dwellings; catechizing and inſtructing children and ſervants, and requiring an account of the ſermons they hear; reproving and curbing ſin whenever it appears; and earneſtly recommending Chriſt and the new birth, prayer, reading of the Bible, and holy living to all within their gates; and eſpecially to children when their hearts are young and tender, for theſe are the hope and ſeed of the next generation. Let us follow the example of the Jews in Nehemiah's time, who repaired the walls of Jeruſalem, every one againſt their own houſes, Neh. iii. 10, *&c.* If every one would ſweep before their own door, it would ſoon make a clean ſtreet. And if all, whether in public or private ſtations, would diligently apply themſelves to that part of reformation-work that lies neareſt to them, and within their reach, there would ſoon be a happy change among us.

6thly, Let thoſe whom God hath bleſſed with worldly ſubſtance, employ part of it for the increaſe and enlargement of Chriſt's kingdom, by ſupporting charity ſchools, and encouraging miniſters, preachers and catechiſts to travel in dark places of the world, both at home and abroad, for propagating Chriſtian knowledge, and bringing precious ſouls to Jeſus Chriſt: ſurely, there is no better uſe that money can be put to; many of our fellow Chriſtians have done worthily this way before us, and the good effects thereof are notorious; which ſhould excite others to the like acts of charity and beneficence, which have ſuch an evident tendency to ſave periſhing ſouls, and increaſe our dear Redeemer's kingdom and glory.

Object. But (ſay ſome) we are poor and in low ſtations, what can we do for Chriſt's kingdom?

Anſ. There are ſeveral things incumbent on you for this noble end, be what you will.

1ſt, Let every man, whatever his ſtation be, receive the goſpel revelation with a firm unſhaken faith, as the very truth of God, and the way of bringing men to eternal life, which God himſelf hath deviſed. Abhor the impious cavils of infidels againſt it, and receive goſpel-truths with warm love and affection. Love and bleſs God, who in his infinite love and wiſdom contrived this ſcheme of ſalvation, and Jeſus Chriſt that executed it, by ſhedding his blood on the croſs. Let each one by faith put his finger in the print of the nails, and cry with Thomas, *He is my Lord, and my God.*

2dly, Let every man ſtudy to recommend this excellent religion to the world, by conforming his practice to its rules, and adorning his life with ſhining holineſs and virtue; and by guarding againſt all injuſtice and diſhoneſty, pride, paſſion, revenge, evil ſpeaking, and every thing that may ſtumble and beget prejudices in men againſt Chriſtianity, who are too apt to impute the faults of its profeſſors to the religion itſelf. If every profeſſed Chriſtian would contribute by perſonal reformation to mend one, then we ſhould all be mended, and the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom would be glorious.

3dly, Let every one be ſearching diligently into the time prefixed for the church's being in ſackcloth, *viz.* the 1260 years. And when (like Daniel) we underſtand by books that the time of finiſhing them is near, let us with him, Dan. ix. 2, 3. ſet our faces unto the Lord God, to ſeek by prayer and ſupplications, with faſting, that he may remove all hindrances, and haſten the time of the church's liberty and increaſe. If you can do no more for it, pour out earneſt prayers to God for fulfilling his promiſes of the downfal of Antichriſt and Mahomet, the inbringing of the Jews, with the fulneſs of the Gentiles. And that he would pour out a ſpirit of mourning and repentance upon the church of Scotland, and other reformed churches, for their decays and backſlidings, put a ſtop to infidelity and error, maintain purity of doctrine and worſhip, remove the cauſes of diviſion and contention, heal breaches, and reſtore peace. And that God may grant a ſpirit of reformation, and of zeal for Chriſt's kingdom, to all men of power and influence, that they may exert themſelves for the enlargement of Chriſt's dominions, and the diminiſhing of ſatan's: and that he would ſend a large effuſion of his Holy Spirit to qualify inſtruments for ſpreading his goſpel thro' the world.

We are apt to be diſcouraged, when we ſee not likely inſtruments to carry on the Lord's work, and bring about the glorious things he hath promiſed; and to cry, *By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe?* Not minding that God can raiſe up children from ſtones, and inſtruments to ſerve him where they were not expected. Tho' we be oft at our wit's end, we ſhould never be at our faith's end. God can never be at a loſs to carry on his work, while he hath enough of clay and ſpirit to form inſtruments for his purpoſe. When the arm of the Lord doth once awake for his church, no impediment can ſtop him, he makes out that pleaſant word in Pſal. lxviii. 11. *The Lord gave the word, great was the company of thoſe that publiſhed it.* The pouring out of God's Spirit from on high doth anſwer all objections, overcome difficulties, provide ſupplies, and afford remedies in the moſt deſperate caſes.

O how deſperate like was Luther's attempt in the year 1517, when he, a poor monk, ſet himſelf againſt the torrent of idolatry and corruption that prevailed under Antichriſt at that time! It ſeemed as ridiculous, as if a man had ſet his ſhoulder to a great mountain on purpoſe to remove it. And ſo it was in the reckoning of the wiſeſt of that age; and hence, when Luther opened his deſigns to a great doctor who diſapproved of the Romiſh corruptions as well as he, he bade Luther retire to his cell, and pray, *Lord have mercy on us;* as if there was no remedy. Yet how wonderfully did the purity of doctrine and worſhip break forth and prevail to amazement among ſundry nations, ſo as to ſhake the foundations of Antichriſt's throne, and give him a deadly wound, under which he hath been languiſhing ever ſince! There had been ſeveral attempts for reformation made by others long before Luther, as by Wickliff, Huſs, and Jerom of Prague; but all were ineffectual, becauſe God's time of reformation was not then come. But we ſee when once that time cometh, no man is able to hinder it more than ſtop the ſun from breaking out under a cloud. It becomes then all the Lord's ſervants and people to keep in the way of duty, and wait patiently till his ſet time to favour Zion doth come.

How patiently did Joſhua and the prieſts wait for the downfal of Jericho! Amidſt the inſults of enemies they continued in their dutiful obedience to God, encompaſſing the city every day, and blowing with trumpets of rams horns, carrying the ark ſtill alongſt with them. This they did ſix days, once every day; and ſeven times upon the ſeventh day. All the ſix days the walls ſtood firm, not a ſtone moved, nor a pinning in it looſed; nor was there any alteration for the moſt part of the ſeventh day, until the evening, when God's ſet time was come; and then, without difficulty, all came tumbling down at one. In like manner let us perſevere with patience in the way of duty, looking to God, and blowing with the goſpel-trumpet, which by many is deſpiſed as the ſound of a ram's horn: but if we hold on carrying Chriſt (the bleſt antitype of the ark) along with us, we ſhall come off with triumph at laſt. One thing is ſure, Antichriſt *muſt decreaſe*, and Chriſt *muſt increaſe*. Jericho muſt fall, and Zion muſt be built up. And however dark and cloudy the preſent time be, we are well aſſured from Pſalm cii. 16. *When the Lord ſhall build up Zion, he ſhall appear in his glory.* The Lord in mercy haſten that time in Scotland, and in all parts of the earth, for Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.* Even ſo come Lord Jeſus. *Amen* and *Amen*.

SERMON XIII. Being a Faſt-day's Sermon before the LORD's SUPPER.

Of God's Withdrawings from his People, and their Exerciſe under them.

Jerem. xiv. 8. *O the hope of Iſrael, and Saviour thereof in time of trouble; why ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land; and as a way-faring man, that turneth aſide to tarry for a night?*

THIS chapter was penned in time of a great dearth in the land of Judah, occaſioned by a grievous drought and want of rain, which fell out about the latter end of king Joſiah his reign: which calamity the prophet pathetically laments, and takes as a token of God's withdrawing his gracious preſence from them; whereupon, ver. 7. he makes a moſt humble confeſſion of ſin, in name of the church, diſclaims any thing of worth or merit in themſelves, and pleads only the glory of God's name.

The prophet's ſcope in the text and context, is to deprecate God's judgments, and particularly that terrible one, of his withdrawing his preſence from his church and people. *Why* (ſays he ver. 8.) *ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land?* and ver. 9. *Leave us not.* So that he ſeems to paſs from the conſideration of the ſtroke of drought to that of God's withdrawing his preſence from them. Whence we may obſerve, that God's people dread and deprecate the withdrawing of his gracious preſence more than the removal of all their creature-comforts, or any other judgment whatſoever.

More particularly, in the text we have, 1. The gracious titles he gives to God, as the grounds on which he pleads for his gracious favour and preſence, *O the hope of Iſrael!* i. e. the object of Iſrael's hope, whoſe word and promiſe is the only foundation of their hope: *the Saviour of Iſrael in the time of trouble*, i. e. the helper and deliverer of Iſrael in former times of diſtreſs. And then from theſe grounds he doth, in the ſecond place, humbly plead and expoſtulate the matter with God in a twofold queſtion. 1. *Why ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land?* i. e. Why ſhouldſt thou behave to us at this time as a ſtranger, in keeping at a diſtance from us, and inclining, as it were, to drop all acquaintance and correſpondence with us: 2. *Why ſhouldſt thou be as a way-faring man, that turns aſide to tarry for a night?* i. e. Why ſhouldſt thou ſeem unconcerned about our intereſt and welfare, like a traveller that comes into an inn, and never inquires into the affairs of it? Or why ſhouldſt thou pay ſuch ſhort and tranſient viſits, as if thou waſt weary of us, and ready to depart for good and all.

DOCT. *That as ſometimes it pleaſeth God to withdraw himſelf, and behave as a ſtranger to his church and people: ſo there is nothing in the world that will be ſuch matter of exerciſe and trouble to the ſerious ſeekers of God, as ſuch a diſpenſation.*

As this is plainly founded on the text, ſo alſo it is evident from many other places of ſcripture, and the practice of the ſaints therein recorded, Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9. Pſal. xiii. 1, 2. Pſal. xxvii. 7.

In handling this doctrine, I ſhall obſerve the following method. *1ſt*, Premiſe ſome things for the better underſtanding of it. *2dly*, Shew when it may be ſaid, that the Lord withdraws from, and behaves as a ſtranger to his people. *3dly*, For what reaſons and grounds he uſeth to do ſo. *4thly*, When it may be ſaid, that people are duly exerciſed about this melancholy diſpenſation. *5thly*, Whence it is, that this diſpenſation is matter of ſuch excerciſe and trouble to the ſerious ſeekers of God. *6thly*, I ſhall make ſome improvement of the whole.

I begin with the *firſt*, *viz.* To premiſe ſome things for the better underſtanding of this doctrine, and for preventing miſtakes.

1. However God doth at any time withdraw from his people, yet we muſt remember, he never takes away his loving kindneſs from them, Iſa. liv. 10.

2dly, However God may withdraw the ſenſible and comforting influences of his Spirit from his people; yet he never withdraws his Spirit from them, as to his real preſence and inhabitation for the preſervation and ſupport of their ſpiritual life, John xiv. 17.

3dly, God's withdrawings from his people are never either total or final, but only in part, and for a time, Heb xiii. 5. Iſa. liv. 7, 8. God never leaves his people altogether, but is ſtill graciouſly preſent with them one way or other; if not in reſpect of comfort, yet he is with them in reſpect of grace, if not in a way of quickening, yet ſtill in a way of ſupport; if not in enlivening their affections, yet it may be in enlightening their underſtanding; if not giving ſenſible enjoyments, yet in giving hungry deſires: ſo that the Lord is ſtill with them ſome way or other.

4thly, There are various degrees of God's withdrawing himſelf from his people; with ſome of them the day is only dark and cloudy; with others it is twilight, neither dark nor light; but with many it is night: with ſome, neither the ſun nor ſtars have for many days appeared; but with others (according to their apprehenſion) it is a total eclipſe.

5thly, We ſhould diſtinguiſh betwixt God's withdrawing from his people in point of comfort, and his withdrawing in point of grace. Theſe two do not ſtill go together: for the firſt may be where the ſecond is not. A believer may be deprived of the ſhinings of God's love and favour, when yet faith may be lively, deſires ſtrong, the heart tender, and grace in a vigorous condition; but oft-times God withdraws in point of grace, as well as in point of comfort: I do not mean in reſpect of the habit of grace, for this can never be rooted out, where it is once planted; but only in reſpect of the exerciſe and ſome particular degrees of grace: Theſe may be loſt, ſo as the ſoul becomes weak, and ſometimes very feeble and languid in duty; the breath grows cold, the pulſe beats low, *and the things that remain ſeem ready to die*, Rev. iii. 2.

II. The ſecond thing propoſed, was to ſhew when it may be ſaid that the Lord withdraws, and behaves as a ſtranger to his people.

1. When he withholds his wonted acts of kindneſs from them; ſees them in trouble, and ſteps not in for their relief, as in former times. Of this the church complains, Iſa. lxiii. 15. *Where is thy zeal and thy ſtrength? The ſounding of thy bowels, and thy mercies toward me, are they now reſtrained?* He ſuffered their enemies to gather ſtrength, to riſe up and oppreſs them, and bring them very low; and did not ſeem to regard their cry, nor ſhew his mercy or power in helping them; but withdrew his hand, and behaved as a ſtranger that was not concerned about them. It was on this account that Gideon reckoned God to be withdrawn from Iſrael, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him, Judg. vi. 12. and ſaid, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." But Gideon was ſo much taken up with the diſtreſſed caſe of the church in general, that he waves the conſideration of his own particular caſe, and ſays, ver. 13. "Oh my Lord; if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of?" *q. d.* If the Lord were not withdrawn, and become as a ſtranger to us, ſurely he would not have ſuffered the Midianites to oppreſs us ſo ſore and ſo long, without appearing for our help. In like manner oft-times reaſons a poor diſcouraged believer, If the Lord were not withdrawn, why ſhould my old luſts (which I once thought were both killed and buried) riſe up and trouble me? Alas! I am left to ſtruggle againſt them alone, and *iniquities prevail againſt me*: I ſtrive to ſtem the tide, but it grows the more: *How long ſhall the enemy be exalted over me?*

2dly, When the Lord threatens to remove the ſigns and ſymbols of his preſence from his people, *viz.* pure ordinances and ſacraments; when he lets enemies combine, and carry on their plots for this purpoſe; when our ſprings are in hazard of being ſtopt or poiſoned, and we put to ſeek our *ſpiritual bread with the peril of our lives, becauſe of the ſword of the wilderneſs*, Lam. v. 9. This hath been the lot of God's people in this land; now indeed we get our bread at an eaſier rate, but alas! we do not prize it, nor grow by it. May not God be provoked then to withdraw it, or ſend us to the wilderneſs to again ſeek it.

3dly, When tho' the Lord continues pure ordinances and ſacraments with his people, yet denies the wonted bleſſing and benefit thereof to them, yea blaſts them; according to that ſad word, Mal. ii. 2. *If ye will not hear and lay it to heart, I will even curſe your bleſſings; yea I have curſed them already.* This we fear is the caſe of many; they have the word and ſacraments in purity and plenty, but do not find them bleſt; God's Spirit doth not concur with them, and their ſouls do not thrive under them. Surely the Lord behaves as a ſtranger to our aſſemblies, when miniſters are ſtraitened in preaching, and people are ſtraitened in hearing; when we that are ſent to you, feel much coldneſs on our own hearts, and have a number of cold hearts to deal with, and a live-coal is not brought from the altar to kindle the fire.

4thly, When the Lord frowns on his people in the courſe of his providence, denies them outward mercies, and denounces temporal ſtrokes and calamities, yea, actually brings them on, whereby his people are brought very low; they look to God for pity, but no relief comes; their diſtreſs is long continued, and their trials lengthened out. So when Zion's captivity was prolonged, ſhe cried out, Iſa. xlix. 14. *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.*

5thly, The Lord behaves as a ſtranger to his people, when he truſts them with dumb and ſilent rods; trials whereof they underſtand not the language, and whereby they reap no benefit. This was the caſe of God's people, Iſa. lvii. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* Tho' God's rod ſhould have let him to ſee his ſin, and lay to heart the cauſe of the controverſy, yet he took no notice of it, but went on in his former courſe: Many, though God's hand be lifted up, they will not ſee. They are not bettered by his diſpenſations.

6thly, When the Lord denies acceſs to his people in duty, and breaks off his wonted correſpondence with them: They come to God's ordinary tryſting places with his people, ordinances both public and private, but he is not there; they ſeek him, but ſtill they miſs him, ſo as they are put to cry with that holy man, Job xxiii. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him.* O that I knew the place, the duty, the ſermon, the ſacrament, where I might find him; there I would go and ſeek him; I try prayer, (ſaith the poor ſoul) but that brings me not to him; *for when I cry out and ſhout, he ſhutteth out my prayer,* as Lam. iii. 8. Alas! I get not acceſs to God as formerly, he carries now to me as an alien; for when I come and knock, I find nothing but a ſhut door and a ſilent God. In a word, the Lord withdraws, and behaves as a ſtranger to his people, when he withholds the manifeſtations of his countenance, the operations of his Spirit, and the ſpecial communications of light and life, which he uſeth to allow to them that love him.

III. The next thing was to enquire into the grounds and reaſons, why the Lord deals ſo with his people. I grant, the Lord may thus withdraw from them out of his abſolute ſovereignty; but commonly he doth it for the correction of ſin, Iſa. lix. 2. As,

1ſt, When they are guilty of groſs ſins and ſcandalous outbreakings, ſuch as caſt a reproach upon religion, and the good ways of the Lord, Iſa. i. 13, 14. This is plain in David's caſe, ſee 2 Sam. xii. 14. compared with Pſal. li. 11.

2dly, When they turn earthly-minded and prefer the delights of ſenſe to precious Chriſt, then he withdraws, Iſa. lvii. 17. They that have a ſtrong reliſh for the fleſh pots of Egypt, are not fit to taſte the hidden manna. When the Gadarenes came that length as to prefer their ſwine to Chriſt's preſence, he turned his back, and departed from their coaſts, Matth. viii. 28.

3dly, When we turn ſlothful and formal in duty, and do not ſtir up ourſelves to ſeek God's face, then he withdraws, as is plain from Iſa. lxiv. 7. Cant. iii. 1. If you put God off with bodily exerciſe, he will put you off with empty ordinances and dry breaſts: If you ſerve him not with your ſpirits, he will deprive you of his Spirit. Wherefore, if you would have the Lord be with you, ye muſt ſhake off ſloth, *Ariſe and be doing*: according to 1 Chron. xxii. 16.

4thly, When we neglect or ſlight the Mediator; by whom we have acceſs and nearneſs to God, we provoke the Lord to withdraw and turn a ſtranger to us. And this we do, *1ſt,* When we do not look to Chriſt for ſtrength to perform duty, but truſt to our own ſtrength for doing it. *2dly,* When we make a ſaviour of our duties, and put them in Chriſt's room: And this we are prone to, eſpecially when we attain to any freedom or enlargement in duty. All is well now, think we, God is well pleaſed, this will render us acceptable to him, and atone for former guilt; and thus the glorious Mediator is forgot, and the idol ſelf is exalted in his place; which is moſt diſpleaſing to God.

5thly, When we miſcarry under ſeveral manifeſtations and pledges of God's loving kindneſs; turn unthankful, remiſs, and untender in our walk, after he hath taken us into his preſence chamber, and ſet us under the banner of his love. We are told how Solomon ſadly miſcarried, 'even after the Lord had appeared to him twice;' for which the Lord was provoked to withdraw from him, 1 Kings xi. 9. And has not the Lord appeared to ſome of you at communion-ſeaſons, oftner than once or twice, and yet grievouſly have they miſcarried after all? Great cauſe have ye to mourn on this account, and beg that the Lord may not plead a laſting controverſy with you for it.

6thly, When we ſin under, and after great afflictions or trials appointed to reclaim us, God is provoked to leave us, Iſa. lvii. 17. Has not God ſmitten ſome of you, and brought you into the furnace, ſo that ye melted under his hand? But when in pity he delivered you again, ye ſoon forgot his dealings, and turned to your old ways. Is it any wonder that he frown and behave as a ſtranger to you?

7thly, God is provoked to leave us, when we do not entertain the motions and kindly touches of his Spirit on our hearts; the ſpouſe neglected theſe, ſo that her beloved withdrew, turned a ſtranger to her, and it coſt her much travel and ſorrow ere ſhe got his countenance again, Cant. v. 2. 3. 6. 7.

8thly, When we grow hardened and impenitent under provocations, ſo as we have neither a due ſenſe of our own ſins, nor of the ſins of the land we live in, Hoſ. v. 15. *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and ſeek my face.* Ah! was there ever more guilt lying on a land, and leſs feeling of it, than amongſt us at this day?

IV. The fourth thing, was to ſhew when it may be ſaid that people are rightly exerciſed under ſuch a diſpenſation, as this of the Lord's withdrawing, and behaving as a ſtranger to them.

1ſt, We may be ſaid to be rightly exerciſed under it, when we are truly ſenſible of our loſs, and of our ſins as the procuring cauſe thereof; and hence are brought heartily to mourn and *lament after the Lord,* as the prophet doth in the text and context, and as Iſrael did in the days of Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 2.

2dly, When we place all our comfort and happineſs in the favour and preſence of God, and are unſatiſfied with all other comforts without this, count all worldly things but loſs and dung; look on ſun, moon, health, wealth, honours, pleaſures, houſes, relations, yea, life and breath, as moſt empty and comfortleſs things without God, ſo did the prophet in the text, when he addreſſes himſelf with this title, *O the hope of Iſrael! q. d.* All our hope is in thee, and we are poor, miſerable and hopeleſs creatures without thee, and ſo did the Pſalmiſt, when he ſaith, Pſalm lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.*

3dly, When we are at pains to engage our whole hearts, and all the powers and faculties of our ſouls, to ſeek after a withdrawing God; 'With my whole heart 'have I ſought thee,' ſaith David, Pſal. cxix. 10.

And becauſe our hearts are deceitful and ready to ſtart aſide from this work, we ſhould be laying ties and engagements on them to be ſincere and fervent about this work, for God takes ſpecial notice of ſuch who do ſo; Jer. xxx. 21. *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me?*

4thly, When we diligently lay hold on all opportunities, and uſe all appointed means for finding an abſent God; like the ſpouſe that ſought her beloved about all the city, both in the *ſtreets and broad-ways,* Cant. iii. 2. In all duties and ordinances, both private and public, our ſouls ſhould *follow hard after him,* and purſue him cloſely, (as it were) from one ordinance to another, Pſal. lxiii. 8.

5thly, When we wreſtle with him in prayer for his gracious return to us, and fill our mouths with arguments in pleading with him, as the prophet doth in the text and context; 1. He pleads the glory of his name, *Do it for thy name's ſake.* 2. He pleads their hopeleſs and helpleſs caſe without him, who was the fountain of all help and comfort; *O the hope of Iſrael and Saviour thereof.* 3. He pleads the former experiences they had of his kindneſs to them in their helpleſs condition; *O Saviour of Iſrael in the time of trouble.* 4. He pleads his power; it was very eaſy for him to relieve them, whatever ſtraits they were in; *Why ſhouldſt thou be as a man aſtonied, as a mighty man that cannot ſave?* 5. He pleads the outward ſymbols and pledges of his preſence he had given them, his temple, his ark, and oracles: *Thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us.* 6. He pleads the covenant relation they ſtood in to him; *We are called by thy name.* Upon all which accounts, we beſeech thee leave us not.

6thly, We are duly exerciſed under God's withdrawings, when we hold on in our cloſe purſuits after him, notwithſtanding of diſcouragements and diſappointments, like Mary Magdalene, John xx. who would not leave the ſepulchre when others left it, but ſearched it over and over again, yea waited on with patience, ſtill looking for him, till at length ſhe found her Beloved. Thus was the Pſalmiſt exerciſed, Pſal. xxv. 15. 16. *Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord.—Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am deſolate and afflicted.*

7thly, When we are unſatisfied with the beſt means and ordinances, unleſs we find God in them; David was not content with his enjoying the tabernacle, the ark, ſacrifices, the paſſover, and others of God's pure ordinances: but in moſt of all, *his heart and fleſh cried out for the living God,* Pſal. lxxxiv. 2. Hypocrites, if they have the outward means, are well ſatisfied; for God's preſence and abſence is all one to them: but ſincere believers will not be put off ſo, if God be not in the ordinances, nothing can pleaſe them, not the moſt powerful ſermons, tho' an angel were to preach them; nor the moſt lively communions, tho' a glorified apoſtle ſhould come and diſpenſe them. The abſence of God is ſuch a great want to them, that nothing in heaven or earth can fill up, but himſelf.

V. The fifth thing is to ſhew, whence it is that the Lord's withdrawing and behaving as a ſtranger to his people, is ſuch a matter of exerciſe and trouble to them.

I. Becauſe of the incomparable ſweetneſs and advantage they enjoy in his gracious preſence, while they have it; for this is the ſum and compend of all bleſſings, and hath all good things wrapt up in it. The divine preſence brings light and life, health and ſtrength, peace and comfort, yea, complete ſatisfaction to the precious ſoul that doth enjoy it; no wonder then, that the people of God ſhould be ſo much concerned for the want of it; for then they may cry out with Micah, and with juſt ground too, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* Judg. xviii 24.

II. Becauſe of the effects and conſequents of God's withdrawings from the ſoul; which being very ſad and melancholy, are matter of great exerciſe and trouble to God's people: as for inſtance, 1. There follows uſually on it, a great darkneſs upon the ſpirit; as when the ſun goes down, darkneſs covers the face of the earth; ſo when God withdraws, thick clouds do vail the face of the underſtanding, and the whole ſoul; ſo that the poor diſconſolate ſoul is bewildered, knows not his way, nor what courſe to take, but is made to complain, as in Lam. iii. 2. *He hath brought me into darkneſs, and not into light.* Alas! ſaith he, I know not where I am, nor how it is with me; I know not God's mind nor will towards me; I ſee not any comfortable ſign, neither know I the time how long; I meet with many dark providences, dark ordinances, dark communions, all is dark to me.

2dly, Not only darkneſs, but much deadneſs and ſtupidity alſo ſeizes upon the deſerted ſoul. Why are our ſpirits ſo dead in prayer, in hearing, and ſo dead in communicating? Is it not becauſe the Lord is withdrawn? What theſe two ſiſters ſaid to Chriſt, John xi. *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died;* may be well ſaid by ſuch a poor ſoul, Lord, if thou hadſt been here preſent in ſuch a duty, in ſuch a ſermon or communion, my heart had not been ſo dead; for why, as Moſes ſaith, Deut. xxx. 20. *He is thy life;* ſo when our life withdraws, we are dead, and all things are dead to us.

3dly, There follows alſo an unſpiritedneſs and diſability for duty: the ſoul hath neither heart nor hand for prayer, for reading, hearing, communicating, meditation, ſelf-examination, or any duty. Deſerted Heman ſaith, *I am as a man that hath no ſtrength,* Pſal. lxxxviii, 4. David's complaint is much the ſame, Pſal. xl. 12. *Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, I am not able to look up.* His ſpiritual ſtrength was ſo waſted, that he was ſcarce able either to ſpeak or look to God. Now, what is the cauſe of all our weakneſs and incapacity for duty? Oh! the Lord is withdrawn. It is a true word our Saviour ſaith, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* It were happy for us, that we were moſt ſenſible of this truth, for we are moſt apt to truſt to our own ſtrength, and think ſtill we can do well enough for ourſelves: like Samſon when he had ſinned away both his God and his ſtrength, yet he went forth to ſhake himſelf as at other times, *but wiſt not that the Lord had departed from him.* So many are inſenſible of the Lord's departure, they go to communions, and think to ſhake themſelves as at other times, but, oh! there is a benumbedneſs and weakneſs that has ſeized on their ſpirits, they cannot now lift up their ſouls at his table.

4thly, There uſually follows, on God's withdrawing, great witheredneſs and barenneſs on the ſouls of his people, their leaf fades, their fruit drops, and they quickly turn like the mountains of Gilboa, on which there is neither dew nor rain, John xv. 6. *If a man a-*

bide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered. It is his gracious preſence only that can make us *fat and flouriſhing in the courts of our God.*

5thly, We become expoſed and liable to manifold dangers and enemies; for when God withdraws, our defence withdraws too. Hence Moſes comforts Iſrael againſt their enemies, Num xiv. 9. *Ye need not fear them,* (ſaith he) *for their defence is departed from them, the Lord is with us.* The Lord's preſence is his people's defence againſt all the aſſaults of their enemies, whether from within on from without, againſt the power of their luſts, the policy of the devil, and cruelty of the wicked: but if their fence be removed, they are expoſed to them all.

6thly, Another effect, which is matter of ſad exerciſe, is, great trouble and anxiety of mind for former unkindneſs and ingratitude to God. Hence the Pſalmiſt ſaith, Pſal. lxxvii. 3. *I remembered God, and was troubled.* Formerly he had remembered God, and was comforted; his meditation of him was ſweet, but now it was far otherwiſe: Oh! ſays he, I now remember my unkindneſs to him that was ſo good to me; my conſcience upbraids me for my unſuitable carriage: *Is this thy kindneſs to thy friend?* Where are all thy former purpoſes and reſolutions? Thy promiſes and vows made at ſacraments? Are they all come to this? Oh! thou haſt ſinned thy God and friend away from thee! It was the thoughts hereof that brake Peter's heart, and made him weep ſo bitterly.

7thly, There follows on it very melancholy and unwelcome thoughts of death and judgment. When God is preſent with the believer, he can ſay as in Pſal. xxiii. 4. *Tho' I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.* But O! it is melancholy to think of going through that valley without him, and of appearing before him while he frowns, and behaves as a ſtranger or enemy to us.

8thly, Sometimes there follows a revived ſenſe of wrath, old wounds begin to open and bleed afreſh; the deſerted ſoul is driven back to the foot of mount Sinai, and begins to hear its thunders and curſes renewed, tho' he once thought they had been all ſilenced by the blood of Chriſt. Thus it was with Heman, Pſal. lxxxviii. 7. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me,* &c.

Laſtly, The fears of utter rejection is another conſequent that oft proves matter of ſad exerciſe to the deſerted ſoul. Alas! I fear my cauſe ſhall never be better, that my ſky ſhall never break, nor my clouds diſſipate; that I ſhall never recover God's preſence again, but be baniſhed eternally from it; ſo with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxvii. 9, 10. *Has God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?* And Pſal. cxix. 8. *O forſake me not utterly.*

APPLICATION.

Uſe I. Of Information. 1. Hence we may be informed, that there are but few true ſeekers of God among us, ſeeing there are few to whom God's withdrawing is matter of much exerciſe or trouble; few mourning on this account, like the prophet, and crying, *Why art thou ſuch a ſtranger to my ſoul?* Many are troubled for other trifling loſſes, but few that can ſay with David, Pſal. xxx. 7. *Thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

2dly, We may ſee the miſery of thoſe who are far from God now, and are like to be deprived of his preſence for ever, Pſal. lxxiii. 27. Unrenewed perſons deſire not God's preſence here, but ſay to him, *Depart from us,* John xxi. 14. and alas! their choice is their judgment, and ſhall be ſo for ever; for the Judge's ſentence againſt them will be, *Depart from me,* &c. If the Epheſians ſorrowed moſt of all for that parting word of Paul to them, *Ye ſhall ſee my face no more,* Acts xx. 38. how much more will ſuch a word from Chriſt's mouth at the laſt day be piercing and heart-breaking to the ungodly for ever?

3dly, How ſad muſt the caſe of thoſe be, from whom God withdraws, not to return again? The Spirit of God comes, and ſtrives for a time with many; but, when reſiſted and grieved, he goes away; and when once he goes away from an unconverted ſoul, he ſeldom returns to ſtrive any more. When the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, he came not again, but an evil ſpirit in his place, 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

4thly, Believers ſhould not conclude that God has caſt them off becauſe he is a ſtranger to them for a time; for this hath been the lot of the deareſt of God's children, yea even of his own beloved Son himſelf, when in this world.

Uſe II. Of reproof. 1. To thoſe who are ſo great ſtrangers to religion, and the ſtate of their own ſouls, that they know not what God's preſence or abſence is; and ſo indifferent are many about this matter, they never enquired to this day, whether God be a ſtranger or a friend to their ſouls.

2dly, To believers, towards whom God may be behaving as a ſtranger, and yet they are inſenſible of it. They are become ſo unwatchful, and ſo much charmed with the delights of ſenſe, and their ſpiritual ſenſes ſo dull, that they are fallen into Samſon's condition, Judges xvi. 20. *He wiſt not that the Lord had departed from him,*

3dly, To theſe who, tho' they be ſenſible of the Lord's withdrawings, yet are not duly affected therewith: It is no matter of ſerious ſoul-exerciſe to them, as it was to Jeremiah in the text, and to Job, Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9. and to the Iſraelites, 1 Sam. vii. 2. *Who lamented after the Lord.*

4thly, To theſe who are ſo far from being ſuitably exerciſed and affected with the Lord's withdrawings from them, that they are ſtill ſinning him farther away; by their formality in duty, untenderneſs of walk, ſlighting of the Spirit's motions, and venturing on ſins againſt light. O believer! *is this thy kindneſs to thy friend? Doſt thou thus requite the Lord?* We do not marvel to ſee perſecutors, and haters of God, driving him away, or to ſee Chriſt receiving wounds from his enemies: but O! it is ſad that precious Chriſt ſhould get ſuch wounds in the houſe of his friends.

Uſe III. Of *exhortation* to two ſorts of perſons. *1ſt,* To theſe who are ſtrangers to God, and know nothing of his preſence. *2dly,* To theſe who have known it, but he is become a ſtranger to them.

As to the *firſt ſort,* I exhort you *in the name of the Lord,* to bethink yourſelves, and conſider your miſery in this ſtate; for *lo, they that are far from God ſhall periſh.* It is the character of thoſe who are in a loſt ſtate, to be *without God in the world.* Now, your miſery, while ſuch, is inexpreſſible. *1ſt,* You are utterly unfit to come to the Lord's table; for *what communion can there be betwixt light and darkneſs?* Or, betwixt thoſe that have hitherto been ſtrangers and enemies to one another. Remember, it is only a feaſt for friends: ſtrangers to God are debarred. *2dly*, Your ſtate is moſt uncomfortable; the ſun hath never riſen upon you; God's face hath never ſhined; it is ſtill dark night with you, and you ſit *in the region and ſhadow of death*. *3dly*, You are under the dominion of ſatan, the prince and ruler of darkneſs. *4thly*, You are under the heavy clouds of God's wrath and indignation. *5thly*, You ſit conſtantly on the very border of hell. *6thly*, O ſinner! conſider what a day of darkneſs and gloomineſs, a day of clouds and thick darkneſs, a dying hour will prove to thee. When thy ſoul is ſtepping forth into another world, how ready will it be to ſhrink back, and ſay, How ſhall I appear before that God, who has always been a ſtranger to me, and with whom I never had the leaſt acquaintance! Can I look for any thing but a frowning Judge, and a fearful ſentence? O ſtrangers, come and *acquaint yourſelves with God now*, accept of his offers of mercy, and *be at peace* with him through Chriſt; and *thereby ſhall good come unto you*.

Exhort. II. To thoſe who have had acquaintance with God, but he is become a ſtranger to them. O poor ſoul, be ſuitably weighted and affected with this diſpenſation; let it be matter of exerciſe to thee upon a faſt-day before the communion: it will be a heartleſs and fruitleſs communion, if God continue as a ſtranger to thee; therefore be not eaſy under his withdrawings.

Conſid. *1ſt*, Your ſouls grievances can never be removed while God keeps at a diſtance from you; but they will ſtill be growing greater: as for inſtance, While he is a ſtranger, you cannot have light for your darkneſs, but darkneſs will be increaſing; you cannot have life for your deadneſs, but you will ſtill be growing deader in ſpiritual things: you cannot have appetite for your food, but you will always be turning the more indifferent about it: you cannot have protection from your enemies, but you will ſtill be brought the more under their power. Things will ſtill be growing worſe, the longer God is a ſtranger to thy ſoul.

2dly, Ordinances can neither be pleaſant nor profitable to thee, while God is a ſtranger to thy ſoul; you cannot ſee any beauty in them, while God is abſent; for without the Lord's preſence, ordinances are dead, and a dead thing can have no beauty. It is his preſence, that puts a luſtre on ordinances, and makes them ſhine, ſo as to confirm the friends of the goſpel, and make enemies aſhamed of their oppoſition. It is his preſence that puts life in communions, and life in communicants, and cauſes them to prefer a day in *God's courts, to a thouſand elſewhere*. It is his preſence that makes ordinances fruitful, and his people's ſouls to thrive under them. O! why have you ſuch lean ſouls and barren hearts under ordinances! It is, becauſe the Lord is a ſtranger to them. Would you have your food bleſt, goſpel-ſeaſons fruitful, and your ſouls under the influence thereof, like watered gardens? Then ſeek the Lord's preſence, 1 Cor. iii. 17. *It is not he that planteth, nor he that wateneth, but God that gives the increaſe*.

Queſt. Seeing God is ſetting a ſolemn tryſt with us at this occaſion, and it highly concerneth us to make ready to meet with him; How ſhall we be exerciſed on this faſt-day, ſo as to get diſtance removed, and breaches made up, that God may not be a ſtranger to us on the feaſt-day?

Anſw. I ſhall give you ſome advices, and draw to a cloſe.

1ſt, Make no harſh conſtructions of God's dealings with your ſouls, whatever they be, but juſtify him; leave your complaints upon yourſelves, and blame your ſins, that ſeparate betwixt you and your God, Iſa. lix. 2. We have a challenge from God that may ſoon ſilence all our murmurings, Jer. ii. 17. "Haſt thou not procured this to thyſelf, in that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God?"

2dly, Be ſtill reſtleſs, diſſatisfied and uneaſy in your minds, till the diſtance and eſtrangement be removed; and be expreſſing your uneaſineſs by frequent ſighs, complaints and lamentations after God; ſit as a widow in his abſence, and let none have your love but him alone; refuſe all other comforters, till he himſelf return; imitate the church's practice, Lam. i. 16. *For theſe things I weep, mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, becauſe the Comforter that ſhould relieve my ſoul, is far from me*.

3dly, Search diligently for the cauſe of the Lord's eſtrangement from you, as the Pſalmiſt did, Pſal. lxxvii. 6. *I communed with mine own heart, my ſpirit made diligent ſearch*. O! where is the idol? What is the ſin that hath been the Achan in the camp, and provoked God to turn his back? And aſſoon as you find it out, ſee that you caſt out the accurſed thing. Let not thine eye pity, neither do thou ſpare it; for it has taken thy Lord away from thee. If thou canſt not find it, then go humbly to God, and cry with Job, *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me*, Job. x. 2. 'Lord, what is the evil, the ſin or luſt which thou rebukeſt, and for which thou pleadeſt the controverſy? Have I quenched thy Spirit? Have I neglected duty? Was I formal in communicating, or unthankful for former intimations of thy love?' *Lord, what I ſee not teach thou me; make me to know my tranſgreſſions, and my ſin*.

4thly, Seek to be deeply humbled for every evil and ſin that you are convinced of; and particularly, for the heinous aggravations of them, ſay, 'Oh Lord! I am guilty in thy ſight; I have ſinned againſt more light, more mercies, more vows, and more proofs of thy loving kindneſs, than others: I have gratified ſatan, hardened the wicked, reproached religion, and diſhonoured God more by my ſins, than others do; ſo that thou mayſt juſtly frown on me, and make the ſolemn day, which will be a day of feaſting, rejoicing and gladneſs to thy children, a day of darkneſs, gloomineſs, and diſtreſs to me.'

5thly, Plead by faith the Redeemer's blood, for removing the eſtrangement, and bringing thy ſoul nigh to God; for nothing elſe can do it, according to Eph. ii. 13. ſay, 'Lord, tho' I deſerve not to taſte of thy ſupper, but to meet with a frown, inſtead of a ſmile, a breach, inſtead of a bleſſing, a cup of wrath, inſtead of the cup of the New Teſtament; yet behold the blood of my Surety, and be merciful to me. Lord! I have broke all thy commands; but has not my Surety fulfilled them all? I have indeed affronted thy juſtice; but has not my Surety ſatisfied it? I have deſerved thy wrath; but he has endured it. Remem-

'ber not what I have done againſt thee, but what he hath done and ſuffered for me, and let me be accepted in him who is thy beloved Son.'

6thly, While God carries as a ſtranger to thee, be not thou a ſtranger to the throne of grace, but continue inſtant in prayer for the return of his gracious preſence; plead the great need you have of it, and the helpleſs caſe you are in without it. Beg, however he deal with you now, that he may not be a ſtranger to you on the feaſt-day. Say, 'Lord, if thy preſence go not with me, carry me not hence. What will a communion feaſt avail me, without communion with thyſelf in it? I go not there for bread and wine, but I go to ſee Jeſus: and what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Chriſtleſs? O let Chriſt appear and be made known to me in the breaking of bread. Let me enjoy thy lightſome and reviving company in this ſtate of pilgrimage and trouble. Deſcend into my heart by the influences of thy grace, and quickenings of thy Spirit, and let me aſcend unto thee, by the breathings of faith, love and deſire. Lord, grant the requeſt of an importunate petitioner, and come over the mountains of my guilt. Lord, ſtand not at a diſtance behind the wall, but ſhew thyſelf thro' the lettice of thy ordinance, and let me ſee the goings of my God and my King in the ſanctuary. Oh! let me not go away empty from an inexhauſtible treaſure, cold from the ſun, dry from the fountain, hungry, ſad and comfortleſs from a feaſt of love. But O! let me meet with my Saviour there, ſee his face, and hear his voice; and let me come from his table with my pardon ſealed, my corruptions ſubdued, my graces quickened, my heart enlarged, and my ſoul refreſhed and encouraged to run the ways of thy commandments, and ſo inſeparably united to thee, that no temptation may be ever able to diſſolve the union.'

Object. O! ſaith ſome poor ſoul, I fear all my endeavours will be in vain; for I have communicated unworthily before: I have ſhed the blood of Chriſt, and ſinned againſt light; ſo that I doubt and fear that my day of grace is paſt, and I am caſt out of God's ſight.

Anſ. However dark your caſe be, yet ſurely it is no darker than Jonah's was in the whale's belly; who, tho' he never read or heard of any in ſuch diſtreſs: yet when he is concluding, *I am caſt out of thy ſight*, he aims at a believing look to God in Chriſt, *Yet will I look again toward thy holy temple*, Jon. ii. 4. Mind alſo Abraham's caſe, tho' he was an hundred years old, and his body as good as dead, yet he believed in God that raiſed the dead; yea, he believed, and hoped againſt hope. Lord help us to imitate him. *Amen.*

SERMON XIV.

A Preparation Sermon before the Lord's Supper.

The happineſs of being in Covenant with God.

Pſalm cxliv. 15.—*Happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord.*

THere is nothing in the world that is ſo much talked of, and leſs underſtood, than the buſineſs of a happy life. All the world is in queſt of happineſs, ſome expecting to find it in this, and ſome in the other thing. The worldling looks for it in riches, the philoſopher in knowledge, the ambitious man in honours, and the voluptuous man in pleaſures. But how miſerably are they miſtaken! they ſeek happineſs from the wrong airth; from things that can never ſuit the wants, nor ſatisfy the vaſt deſires of the immortal ſoul. True Chriſtians are the only wiſe men in the world, for they ſeek happineſs where indeed it is to be found, *viz.* in the enjoyment of God who is the centre of bliſs. And they who attain to this, muſt ſurely be the happy men, for the Spirit of God declares them ſo in my text: *Happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord.*

In this pſalm, the royal Pſalmiſt doth bleſs and magnify the Lord for the ſignal favours and mercies he had received from him; and from his former gracious experiences, he is encouraged to addreſs God for future mercies, both to himſelf and his kingdom: particularly, he prays for deliverance from public enemies, and the manifold calamities of war; for the eſtabliſhing of peace and tranquillity, and for the proſperity of the nation; for the flouriſhing of their families and children, and for the increaſe of their flocks and cattle: and, in a word, that his people might abound in peace and plenty. Then he pauſes, and makes a reflection upon the nation's proſperous circumſtances, which he had prayed for; *Happy is the people, that is in ſuch a caſe;* happy they, who have ſuch temporal proſperity and abundance, who have no want in their families, nor complaining in their ſtreets. This is the judgment of the fleſh, and the opinion of moſt men. But the Pſalmiſt preſently corrects himſelf, and retracts his former judgment, and prefers the judgment of faith, to that of ſenſe: yea, rather, *Happy is the people, whoſe God is the Lord.* As if he had ſaid, "The former eſtate is indeed very deſirable for a nation or people; but Iſrael or the people of God, their true happineſs doth not conſiſt in theſe things that are common to others with them: but only in this peculiar privilege, that the great JEHOVAH, who is the Lord of heaven and earth, is their God by covenant and ſpecial relation. That this God is their God, and they have a ſpecial intereſt in his love and favour, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. Whatever portion ſuch have in the world's good things, ſurely they are happy; and let others have what they will, if they want this covenant-relation, they are certainly unhappy and miſerable; which they can never be that have it, want what they will; ſeeing the having an intereſt in God as ours, makes up the want of all other things; for all bleſſedneſs and happineſs is included here. *Bleſſed and happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord.*"

DOCT. *That it is the greateſt happineſs we can poſſibly attain unto, to be in covenant with God, and to have God for our God.*

David was ſtill of this opinion through the whole courſe of his life, Pſal. xvi. 5, 6 Pſal. xxiii. 1, 2. And he ſees no cauſe to alter it at his death; for among his laſt words, he declares, that this ſweet covenant-relation was *all his ſalvation*, and *all his deſire*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

The method I propoſe for handling this ſubject, ſhall be, *1ſt*, To enquire when it may be ſaid, that a perſon or people are in covenant with God, and have a ſpecial intereſt in him as theirs.

2dly, What is imported in this great privilege, to have God for our God.

3dly, How this privilege appears to be the top of our happineſs.

4thly, Make improvement of the whole.

I begin with the *firſt*, When it may be ſaid, that a perſon or people are in covenant with God, *&c.*

And for clearing this point the more, I ſhall, *firſt*, Conſider it negatively, and ſhew what it is not; and, *ſecondly*, poſitively, wherein it doth really conſiſt.

I. Negatively, To ſtand in a covenant-relation to God, is not to be underſtood here,

1ſt, Of our being under the bond and engagement of the covenant of works. Though it is moſt certain, that all Adam's poſterity, by virtue hereof, are engaged to God, to perform perfect obedience, and fulfil the whole law; yea, and by breaking it, are obliged to pay the penalty thereof, bear God's curſe, underly death, and ſatisfy God's infinite juſtice; and ſo all of us are naturally in covenant with God in this reſpect. But oh! we have no happineſs, no comfort by being ſo; ſeeing we have broke the covenant of works, and incurred the penalty thereof; for though we ſtill ſtand under engagements to God, by it; yet he is looſed from all obligation to us, to make us happy: yea, by our breaking it, he is under engagement to deſtroy us. Oh! we cannot, by this covenant, plead any intereſt in God as our God, or Father: no, we can only look on him as our Law-giver, our Judge, our Puniſher and Enemy. That is all the relation that God ſtands in now to us, by virtue of the covenant of works.

2dly, There is more requiſite to make up this covenant relation to God, than that bleſſed covenant of redemption, which God entered into from eternity with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, as our head and repreſentative, for ſaving the elect. That glorious tranſaction is indeed the foundation and riſe of our covenant relation to God; but doth not formally conſtitute and make it up. For an elect perſon cannot be ſaid to be in covenant with God from eternity, unleſs by God's appointment and deſignation: he is never formally in it, till he believe, and thereby ratify and approve what Chriſt did from eternity, engage for him, and perſonally conſent to take God for his God in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator. So that you ſee the covenant of redemption will not ſave you, nor inſtate you in covenant with God, if ye can ſay no more; there muſt be ſomething done in and by you, to intitle you to that covenant of redemption, and to infeſt and poſſeſs you of the privileges and bleſſings therein promiſed to Chriſt our Head; and this is only done by the ſubſequent ratification of that covenant and treaty, made with the elect in time by the preaching of the goſpel, which is called the covenant of grace.

3dly, There is more in this covenant-relation to God, which makes us happy; than our being viſibly and externally in covenant with God by an outward profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and ſubjection to goſpel ordinances: for thus, every church that hath the word and ſacraments, is in covenant with God. Hence the Lord ſays to the church of the Jews, Ezek. xvi. 8. *I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine.* They were viſibly and externally in covenant with God, by their ſubjection to his ordinances and inſtitutions. They all did partake of the ſeal of his covenant, *viz.* circumciſion: and hence, when a viſible church makes defection from God, he threatens to come and *avenge the quarrel of his covenant*, Lev. xxvi. 25. All the members of a viſible church are federally in covenant with God by their profeſſion of Chriſt, and being baptized in his name, but ſuch an external covenant-relation to God, will not make us happy: therefore, let us beware of reſting on it; and let us ſeek earneſtly to be really and internally in covenant with God.

4thly, There is more in it than being nationally in covenant with God, by virtue of a ſolemn tranſaction entered into, and ſubſcribed by the rulers, nobles, miniſters, and repreſentatives of a land; whereby they, with conſent of the whole nation, bind and engage themſelves and their poſterity to the Lord. This did the nation of the Jews, and ſo they were God's covenanted people above all other nations of the world; but yet this national covenant did not entitle them to ſaving bleſſings, or give them an intereſt in God as their God in a ſaving way: for many were in that national covenant that never came to be in a gracious ſtate, tho' yet they received many ſpecial favours and deliverances upon the account of it. Some in this land have the honour of being nationally in covenant with God, which indeed is our glory, and perhaps the ground of many national mercies and deliverances; though it is not the ſpring of ſaving mercies, nor that which entitles us to God as our God in a ſaving way. Many may profeſs to own this national covenant, that never took hold of the covenant of grace, and gave themſelves to God according to the tenor thereof.

5thly, There is more in this, than the drawing up the form of a perſonal covenant with God, profeſſing to conſent thereto, and ſubſcribing it with the hand. For all this may be done in ſuch a manner, as will not entitle us to God as our God in a ſaving way. This work, tho' good in itſelf, and profitable to many; yet it may be performed by ſome in ſuch an hypocritical, formal or legal manner, as doth make it an abomination to an holy God, that looks for truth in the inward parts.

But II. Poſitively, we come to be in covenant with God in a ſaving way, when we are taken within the bond of the covenant of grace, and do conſent ſincerely to the gracious terms of it; for it is only by virtue of our coming into this covenant, that we have ground to claim this happineſs of *having God for our God.* Now for us to come into the bond of this covenant of grace, is by faith to 'take hold of God's covenant,' as it is called, Iſa. lvi. 4. And this we do, when we are throughly convinced of our ſin, miſery, and undone ſtate under a covenant of works, and do hence betake ourſelves to the new covenant, or gracious method of ſalvation propoſed to us in the goſpel, thro' Jeſus Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and do cordially acquieſce in, and approve of this noble contrivance, and accept of Jeſus Chriſt as our only Mediator, Surety and Peace-maker with God: and in him do ſincerly make choice of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to be our God and portion; and alſo give ourſelves ſoul and body to be the Lord's, engaging in the ſtrength of our great Surety, to abandon ſin, live for God, and walk with him in newneſs of life, as becomes his covenanted people. Now, when our ſouls are helped and determined by the Spirit of grace, to do all this heartily and ſincerely, then do we enter among that *happy people whoſe God is the Lord.*

II. The ſecond thing in the method, is to enquire into the import of this great privilege, to have God for our God. *I will be your God,* is the greateſt promiſe and ſubſtance of the covenant of grace, being the great thing ſtipulated on God's part therein, Jer. xxxi. 33. and indeed it is the ſum and compend of all his other promiſes. And imports theſe things,

1ſt, Reconciliation and friendſhip with God, *I will be your God,* i. e. I will be no longer an angry judge, but a gracious reconciled God to you; my juſtice is appeaſed, wrath pacified, fury is not in me, I have found a ranſom in Chriſt; he is the propitiation for your ſins.

2dly, A near relation betwixt God and us, yea, nearer than any relation among creatures. 'I will be 'your God,' implies, I will ſtand you inſtead of all relations. 1. I will be a Father in Chriſt to you, adopt you for my children, take you into my family, I will pity and provide for you, I will bequeath to you a rich inheritance, you are heirs of God, and coheirs with my eternal Son.—2. I will be a huſband to you, *your Maker is your huſband,* Iſa. liv. 5. I will marry you to myſelf, I will love you, cloath you, enrich you, and provide a noble dowry for you.——3. I will be your king, I will take you for my ſubjects, I will govern you, protect and defend you from all your enemies. Yea, I will be your phyſician, your ſhepherd, your guide, and inſtead of all relations to you.

3dly, I will be your God, imports a right and title to God, and all that is in him; intimate communion with him, and a communication of all good things from him. Nay, there is ſtill more in this expreſſion than can be unfolded by words; there is more in it, than, I will be father, friend, huſband, benefactor, *&c.* to you: More in it, than I will give you heaven and everlaſting life, or all the bleſſings of heaven and earth, time and eternity: no, I will give you more, I will give you myſelf, a JEHOVAH, a whole Deity, *i. e.* all that is in me, all I am, all I have, all I can do is thine. O the magnificent bounty of God! for when he had no greater, no better thing to beſtow on his people, he beſtows himſelf on them.

You may ſay, how can this be? An infinite God, ſo great, ſo glorious, we are not capable of receiving, comprehending, or enjoying him. *Anſ.* So far as you are capable to receive and enjoy him, he is yours; all that is in him, is given to you for your benefit.

1ſt, All he is perſonally, *i. e.* the three Perſons of the glorious Trinity are yours, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. 1. God the Father is yours to love you, to elect you, and contrive redemption for you, John xvi. 27. *The Father himſelf loveth you.* 2. God the Son is yours, to be a ranſom for you, to ſatisfy juſtice for you; yours to be born for you, to live, to die for you, to riſe again for you, to aſcend into heaven for you, to ſit at God's right hand for you, *&c.* All this is plain from Iſa. ix. 6. *Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is gven.* And Cant. ii. 16. *My beloved is mine.* 3. The Holy Ghoſt is yours, to apply this redemption to you, to change your hearts, to teach you, ſanctify you, work in you, dwell in you, to conduct and guide you to glory, 1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.* So you ſee, O believer, whatever God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt is, and can do for your ſalvation and happineſs, they are yours, and made over to you in the covenant of grace.

2dly, All he is eſſentially, his infinite eſſence is yours, *i. e.* all his glorious attributes and perfections. 1. My mercy is yours, O believer, to pardon your ſins and deliver you from guilt, to ſympathize with, and comfort you in all your trials and afflictions. 2. My wiſdom is yours to provide for you, to counſel and direct you, and to turn all things about for your good. 3. My omnipotence is yours, to guard and protect you from all your enemies, to ſupport and preſerve you to ſalvation. 4. My goodneſs is yours to enrich you, beſtow grace and glory, and all good things on you. 5. My omniſcience is your overſeer, to watch over and warn you againſt approaching dangers. 6. My holineſs is your fountain of grace, to ſanctify and make you holy. 7. My omnipreſence is your companion, to attend and ſolace you in all places and conditions. 8. My juſtice is your rewarder, to beſtow heaven on you; and alſo your avenger to puniſh theſe that wrong you. 9. My all-ſufficiency is your inheritance, for giving you complete and perfect happineſs. My unchangeableneſs is the rock of your ſecurity. My faithfulneſs your pledge and ſurety, for the accompliſhment of all my promiſes to you: and my eternity is the date of your happineſs. So, that O believer, you ſee, all God's eſſential perfections are made over to thee in the covenant of grace, and therein thou haſt an unſearchable treaſure. In God's attributes there is a ſuitable remedy for all theſe maladies and miſeries which ſin has brought on you: his wiſdom cures your ignorance, his grace your guilt, his power your weakneſs, his mercy your miſery, his goodneſs your evil, his faithfulneſs your inconſtancy, his holineſs your impurity, his riches your poverty, and his fulneſs your wants.

Laſtly, I will be your God, imports, that all that God hath ſhall be made over to you, 1 Cor. iii. 21. *All things are yours.* All mine are thine. As for inſtance,

1ſt, All my promiſes are yours: the promiſes both of this life, and that which is to come; my promiſes of pardon, my promiſes of healing, my promiſes of ſanctification, my promiſes of quickening and ſtrength, my promiſes of through-bearing and comfort in trouble, my promiſes of grace and glory; they are your inheritance.

2dly, My gifts and graces are yours, faith, love, hope, fear, humility, patience, and all the fulneſs that is in Chriſt is yours; all theſe graces are yours as armour to defend you, jewels to enrich you, and cordials to refreſh you, while you ſojourn in the wilderneſs.

3dly, My *creatures* are yours. My creatures on earth are yours to ſerve and ſuſtain you, my angels in heaven are yours to guard and encamp about you. The earth is your walking and ſojourning place, the heavens your country and inheritance. In a word, O believer! my ordinances and ſacraments are yours, to ſtrengthen and feed you; my providence is yours, to make all things work for your good; my rod is yours; my people is yours; my kingdom is yours; nay, my eternal Son

Chriſt is yours; all he has done and ſuffered, even his whole purchaſe is yours: both things preſent and to come, life and death, this world and heaven, *all are yours*, 1 Cor. iii. 22. Behold as when there was a covenant made between Jehoſhaphat and the king of Iſrael, Jehoſhaphat promiſed Ahab whatever he had or could do, 1 Kings xxii. 4. *I am*, ſays he, *as thou art, my people as thy people, my horſes as thy horſes;* ſo in the covenant of grace, whatever God hath or can do, is made over to you. But what do I ſpeak? For no created mind can conceive, nor the tongues of men and angels, ſhew forth the full import of this word, 'I will be your God.'

III. The third thing propoſed was, to ſhew, how this privilege of having God for our God, in covenant, appears to be the top of our happineſs. And this doth evidently appear from theſe things.

I. From the vaſtneſs of the portion, which believers have in a covenanted God, as above deſcribed. There is more comprehended here, *than eye hath ſeen, ear hath heard, or the heart of man can conceive*. In this covenant of grace you have all that is good, all that is great, and all that can make you happy. You have covenant preſence, covenant proviſion, covenant conduct, covenant protection, covenant ſupport, and covenant ſtrength for all duties, trials and performances in this world: And you have eternal glory covenanted to you for the world to come. Now, can any thing be ſo ſatisfying to the renewed mind, as, to review this vaſt portion! It is pleaſant for a man to view his temporal intereſts, to walk about his buildings, plantings, gardens, flocks, fields, *&c.* But what are theſe to this portion of the believer? It was a raviſhing proſpect that Moſes got of Canaan from mount Nebo: How pleaſant was it to view the lovely hills, the fruitful vallies, the winding rivers, the beautiful gardens, and flouriſhing trees, in that incomparable land! But all that was nothing to the believer's covenanted inheritance. View the covenant, and ſee who can number the promiſes and bleſſings contained in it; time would fail to mention them: Read the ſcriptures from the beginning to the end, and behold a dazling and glorious ſight! As the heavens are beſpangled with ſtars in a winter night, ſo is God's word and covenant with ſhining promiſes. We may allude to that paſſage in God's covenanting with Abraham, Gen. xv. 5. God brought him forth abroad, and ſaid, *Look now toward heaven, and tell the ſtars, if thou be able to number them; ſo ſhall thy ſeed be*. Look, O believer, to the firmament of the covenant, and tell the ſtars of the promiſes, if thou be able to number or weigh them; ſo ſhall alſo the bleſſings and benefits be, which thou haſt to inherit.

II. To be in covenant with God, muſt be the top of our happineſs, if we conſider the ſuitableneſs of the promiſes, and bleſſings of his covenant to all our wants and exigencies. All that we ſtand in need of, and all we can deſire is fully provided for here. O believers, what want ye? What fear ye? What are ye troubled with? Here it may be ſuitably anſwered and remedied. Is ſin and guilt your trouble? In this covenant there is pardon and redemption. Are your ſins great? Here's the Redeemer's *blood that cleanſeth from all ſin*. Are ye condemned by the law's ſentence? Here's a ſufficient righteouſneſs for your juſtification and acquittance. Are you poor? Here's fine gold. Are you blind? Here's eye-ſalve. Are you naked? Here's white raiment. Are you ſtarving? Here's the manna and the fatted calf. Are you diſeaſed? Here's the balm of Gilead. Are you chained priſoners? Here's deliverance for the captives. Are you drown'd in debt? Here's an all-ſufficient Surety. Are you dead? Here's the reſurrection and the life. Is pollution and filthineſs your trouble? Here's a deep and open fountain that runs continually. Art thou weak and unable for duty? Here is covenanted grace and ſtrength, which ſhall be ſufficient for thee. This covenant contains all neceſſary and ſuitable ſupplies for thy wants; ſo that if God be your God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, your needs ſhall be richly ſupplied, according to that promiſe, Phil. iv. 19. *My God ſhall ſupply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Chriſt Jeſus*.

III. This covenant-relation to God is our greateſt happineſs, in regard it doth take the terror out of every thing that is terrible to the believer.

1ſt, This covenant-relation removes all terror from our thoughts of God's holineſs and juſtice. The wicked cannot think of a juſt and holy God without horror, and therefore, they baniſh the thoughts of God out of their minds; hence it is ſaid, Pſal. x. 4. *God is not in all their thoughts:* For as many thoughts as are in their hearts, God is in none of them. But believers may have pleaſant and delightful thoughts of God, as their reconciled Father in Chriſt: his holineſs is a fountain of grace to them, and his juſtice the ſecurity of their happineſs. The covenant relation takes all terror out of juſtice, though the moſt terrible attribute of God unto a ſinner, and makes it, that before was an enemy, become a friend, and enter into a ſtrict alliance with the believer. Before it ſtood as a flaming ſword at the door of paradiſe to keep them out: But now it ſtands as an advocate pleading for their entrance. 1 John i. 9. *He is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins*. O believer, thy happineſs is certain; for juſtice is come over to thy ſide, and pleads for thy pardon, becauſe the debt is paid, and for the crown of glory, ſeeing the price is laid down.

2dly, This covenant-relation takes all terror out of afflictions: Why? It alters the very nature of them to believers, and makes them become good and medicinal to them, Pſal. cxix. 71. Iſa. xxvii. 9. Yea, they are changed into covenanted mercies, Pſal. lxxxix. 32. Pſal. cxix. 75. Chriſt hath ſhed his blood to purchaſe ſanctified croſſes to his people. So believers, whatever trials you meet with, though they be ſharp and ſmarting, you may make ſuch a reflection as this, The Lord ſees I want this, otherwiſe I ſhould not be exerciſed with it: My covenanted God knows that this, and no leſs than this is needful for me.

3dly, It takes the terror out of the alarming judgments of God, that come on the wicked and ungodly. When God riſes to take vengeance on his enemies, and puniſh ſinful nations with his deſolating plagues, you may ſay, Theſe are the mighty acts of my God and king: Theſe things diſplay my Father's power and glory: but in midſt of all, his children are ſafe.

4thly, It will take the terror out of death: for tho' death ſtrip you of other comforts, it cannot diſſolve your covenant-relation to God. You may ſing that ſwan-ſong, Pſal. xlviii. 14. *For this God is our God for* *ever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death.* It is this that gives a believer peace in his latter end: it made David to triumph in the view of approaching death. 2 Sam. xxii. 5. Death muſt ſurely be the king of terrors to an unbeliever; why? It is terrible to think, "I am going to appear before that God I do not know, I have no intereſt in, nor acquaintance with: How can I expect help from him now, whom I never loved, nor ſought unto before?" But a covenanted ſoul may ſay, "I will not fear, for I know whither I am going, the place I know, and the way I know, and the God of that land I know. Why ſhould I be unwilling to go to my covenanted God and friend, with whom I have had ſweet converſe, whoſe preſence I earneſtly have longed for? Is not death my Father's ſervant, ſent to bring me home to my Father's houſe, where I will be put in full poſſeſſion of all the bleſſings of the covenant? Surely then the day of my death will be better to me than the day of my birth."

5thly, This covenant-relation takes the terror out of the great judgment day. Why? O believer, it is the day of your covenanted Redeemer's coming to take you home to dwell eternally with him. Doth not a chaſte wife long for the return of her huſband? And will not a believing ſoul, betrothed to Chriſt, long for the glorious bridegroom's return to conſummate the happy marriage? Let others tremble at his coming, and cry to the 'rocks to hide them from the face of the Lamb;' but ſurely you have cauſe to 'lift up your head with joy, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh.'

IV. This covenant-relation to God is our greateſt happineſs; for it doth exceedingly ſweeten every thing that is comfortable.

1ſt, It ſweetens the thoughts of Chriſt to a believer. When the word brings the news of his glory to your ears, or the ſacrament ſets him forth as crucified before your eyes, your hearts may preſently warm to him, and cry with Thomas, *My Lord and my God!* and with Paul, "It is the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me:" and with the ſpouſe, *My beloved is mine, and I am his,* "All he did and ſuffered was for me; his bloody ſweat, his painful wounds. his dying groans were for me. He thought on me, when he was on the croſs: my name is this day on his breaſtplate: he ſtill thinks on me, and pleads for me, as his covenanted ſpouſe. *I know my Redeemer liveth; and becauſe he lives, I ſhall live alſo.*" Good ground have ye to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. civ. 34 "My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet; I will be glad in the Lord."

2dly, It will make goſpel ordinances very ſweet: As for inſtance, (1.) Prayer may be ſweet to a covenanted ſoul: Is it not ſweet to come into God's preſence, and call him our Father, and ſpeak to him as ſuch? "Father, grant me this and the other good thing which I want." An uncovenanted ſoul comes before God as his judge: But, O! it is comfortable to draw nigh to him as our reconciled God and Father in Chriſt, and with a holy confidence ſpread our wants before him. (2.) It will make the word ſweet; a covenanted ſoul may read, and hear it as a love-letter come from his friend and huſband, and may ſweetly apply the promiſe of it to himſelf, and ſay. This is mine; this was God's gracious unchangeable purpoſe to me in Chriſt; And O but that would make the word as a lovely ſong in our ears! (3.) It will make the Lord's ſupper ſweet. O covenanted ſouls, you can come to this holy table, as to a precious feaſt provided for you; you can come as God's friends and invited gueſts, and expect a kindly welcome from him: It is to you he ſaith, *Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved,* Cant. v. 1. This is your Father's table covered for you; many preſume thither who have no right; but you have no ground to queſtion your right, nor doubt your welcome: A communion-day may be a pleaſant day to you, and you may rejoice at the intimation and approach of it, and look on it as a foretaſte of heaven, and a pledge of your eternal communion with God.

3dly, This covenant-relation will ſweeten your thoughts of God's works, both of creation and providence. When you walk thro' the fields, you may ſay, I walk on my Father's footſtool, which he hath given me to ſojourn upon while I am here below. When you view the ſtructure of the heavens, you may ſay, Behold my Father's palace, where he dwells, and where I will dwell with him ere long: If the floor and pavement of it be ſo glorious, what muſt its roof, walls, gates and furniture be? Yet it is my home and dwelling place, prepared by Chriſt my forerunner. When you conſider the diſpenſations of providence and God's various dealings towards you, you may ſay, How great pains is he at with me to promote my welfare, and prepare me for heaven? Tho' diſpenſations be ſometimes myſterious now, yet how wiſe and beautiful will the whole ſcheme of providence concerning me appear in the iſſue?

4thly, It will ſweeten all your outward mercies: Why? you may receive them as love tokens from heaven, and pledges of God's fatherly good will to you in Chriſt. Art thou raiſed from a ſick-bed, or delivered from any trouble? you may ſay of it as Hezekiah did, Iſa. xxxviii. 17. *Thou haſt in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of corruption.* Again, every meal of meat, or morſel of bread thou eateſt, may be doubly ſweet to you; for it is the fruit of Chriſt's purchaſe; it is dipt in his blood, and comes thro' the covenant-channel to thy hand: Thou mayſt ſpy covenant-love in every common mercy; thou enjoyeſt it not as a creature, but as an heir: Thy Father ſends it from his own table to thee, as an earneſt of greater and better things laid up for thee hereafter. That word belongs to thee, which we have in Eccl. ix. 7. *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.*

Laſtly, This covenant relation to God is our greateſt happineſs in regard of the ſure and indiſſoluble nature of it, Iſa. liv. 10 Mutable creatures alter their purpoſes, and break their leagues and covenants which they made; but God will never break his covenant of grace with his people. A covenant with a nation may be diſſolved, as with the people of the Jews, becauſe it is not built on the eternal purpoſe of God, to put his fear in their hearts; but it hath a reſpect to their obedience. But his covenant with the elect is indiſſoluble, ſeeing it depends on God's eternal purpoſe, to make them perſevere in his ways. The covenant of grace doth not run thus, *I will be their God, if they will be my people:* but *I will be their God and they ſhall be my people.* He puts a condition indeed in this covenant of grace; but he has reſolved and decreed from eternity, to work that condition in their hearts, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.* There we ſee, that God is on both ſides in this covenant, he engages not only for his own part, but for ours, that we ſhall fear him, and ſhall not depart from him. How happy then are believers who are in covenant with God! They are a happy people; and nothing can deprive them of their happineſs. Adultery may diſſolve the marriage covenant among men, but not ſo here; for God ſaith to his covenanted people, "Thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me: Turn ye backſliding children, ſaith the Lord; for I am married unto you," Jer. iii. 1.—14. Again, death cannot diſſolve this covenant-relation, as it doth among men; but brings us the nearer to our covenanted God; ſo that a covenanted ſoul, when he finds death begin to aſſault his clay-tabernacle, he may even rejoice, and ſing with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 26. *My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* What tho' my eye and heart-ſtrings be ready to break, and the lamp of my life be like a candle burnt to the ſocket, and near the going out; yet ſtill God is my God, and portion for ever. Thus Olevian, a dying ſaint, comforted himſelf, "My hearing is gone, my ſmelling is gone, and my ſight is going: my ſpeech and feeling are almoſt gone; but the loving kindneſs of God is ſtill the ſame, and will never depart from me."

APPLICATION.

Uſe I. Of Information. We may hence ſee, *1ſt*, How far miſtaken the world is about a believer's lot; they many times reckon them poor and deſpicable, and the off-ſcouring of all things; but certainly they are, of all perſons in the world, the wiſeſt; for they make the wiſeſt choice, and the beſt bargain: Nay, they are the richeſt too, for all things are theirs; tho' they oft ſeem to the world to have nothing, 2 Cor. vi. 10.

2dly, We may hence infer, that believers have no ground to envy the worldling of his portion, but rather to pity him; for he hath no more than what is ſeen by all, and that but for a ſhort time, Pſal. xvii. 14. Luke vi. 24. A carnal man may ſay, This houſe, this eſtate, this money is mine; but a Chriſtian can ſay, *This God is mine.* And a covenanted God is more than ten thouſand kingdoms.

Uſe II. Of Terror, to thoſe that are out of the bond of this covenant: For if the people be ſo happy, *whoſe God is the Lord*, how unhappy and miſerable muſt they be, whoſe God is not the Lord: Nay, your caſe is unſpeakably ſad and diſmal; and O! that God would ſend a wakening word to all ſuch, and ſound an alarm in your ears this day."

1ſt, You have neither art nor part in the God of Iſrael, Eph. ii. 12. He ſtands in no relation to you, but that of Creator, and ſo ſtands he to the devils: But what comfort can they draw from that? for "he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will ſhew them no favour.

2dly, You are under a covenant of works, and under its fearful curſe and ſentence for the breach thereof. It is terrible to be under ſentence of death by an earthly judge, and to be looking every hour to be taken forth to the ſcaffold: But your caſe is far worſe; you are doomed to eternal death, and you may be looking every moment to be led forth to execution. When you awake in the morning, you may ſay, Shall this be the day of my execution? ſhall I be taken to the ſcaffold of divine vengeance before night? Every head-ach or ſick-heart, every pain or ſtich in back or breaſt, may put you to ſay, Is this the meſſenger that the Judge is to ſend to bring me forth? Sad is your caſe, O uncovenanted ſoul, you may ſleep and wake in continual fear; for you are ſtill tottering on the brink of hell, and ridge of deſtruction. O! tremble then to ly down another night in this condition. *In the name of God*, I obteſt you to awake from ſleep and find no reſt for *the ſole of your foot*, till, like Noah's dove, ye come into the ark of the covenant.

Uſe III. Of Examination. O communicants, try if ye be within this covanant; remember, if you be not, you have no right to the ſeals of it; no right to ſit down at the Lord's table. *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat:* And examine yourſelves by theſe marks.

1ſt, Know you any thing of a change of your ſtate? Can you ſay? 'Once I was a bond ſlave to ſatan, and ' an enemy of God: once I loved ſin, and hated holi' neſs: but now God has opened my eyes, and hum' bled my heart for ſin, and made me caſt down the ' weapons of my rebellion at his feet: once I was at ' peace without Chriſt the Mediator; but now I ſee ' nothing but fire and wrath out of him: once I thought ' little of ſin; but now I ſee it to be the moſt black ' and bloody thing in the world:' Then this is a good ſign.

2dly, If you be in covenant with God you will certainly love God with your hearts, and love the Mediator who brought you into the covenant. Can you ſay then with Peter, *Lord thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee?* Lord, tho' I cannot hear, pray, praiſe, or communicate as I ought, yet thou knoweſt I love thee; yea, I love thee above all things. And tho' all the riches, honours, and pleaſures of the world were in my offer or poſſeſſion, and Chriſt would ſay, You muſt either part with theſe, or part with me; my heart would anſwer, Lord abide thou with me, and let them all be gone.

3dly, Theſe that are in covenant with God, have certainly made choice of God, as their God, and portion. Can you ſay you have done this, O doubting communicant? Tho' you cannot ſay, that God hath choſen you, yet doth your heart truly chuſe him? And are you reſolved never to be ſatisfied without him? And whatever offers be made to you, yet you will be put off with nothing beſides God. Then this may give you comfort.

4thly, Can you ſay you have made a reſignation of yourſelves, and of all you have to God, and you reſolve to renew it again this night in ſecret, and to-morrow before men and angels? Then it is a token for good. It may be doubting ſoul, thou art fear'd to ſay, Lord, thou art my God; but canſt thou venture to ſay, 'Lord, I am thine, I reſolve to be thine, and ' thine only; I will not be mine own, I will not be the 'devil's, I will not be the world's, I will not be my 'luſt's; Lord, I am reſolved to be none's but thine.' Well, let this comfort you when other marks cannot. For if once you come the length to ſay, *Lord, I am thine*, you may ſay in the next place, *Lord, thou art mine*; for the relation is always reciprocal: And this is the reaſoning of the ſpouſe, Cant. vi. 3. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*

5thly, Are you mightily pleaſed with the contrivement and deſign of this covenant, which is to debaſe ſelf, and exalt free grace? And would you deſire heaven, tho' it were for no more, but to ſtand eternal monuments of free grace, and join your note with the redeemed, eternally to cry, 'Not unto us, not unto 'us, but to thee be the glory?'

And, *Laſtly*, Are you inclined to perform covenant-duties conſcientiouſly, and that in a covenant way, relying on covenant-ſtrength, and from a principle of love and gratitude to your covenanted God, and with an eye to glorify his name: Then fear not to come forward to take the ſeal of the covenant, for you belong to it.

Uſe IV. Of *Exhortation*. And this I ſhall direct to all that hear the goſpel, eſpecially communicants. O come take hold of God's covenant, and enter yourſelves within the bond of it; and then come and take God's ſeal to the bargain. I here, in my great Lord and Maſter's name, make offer of God's covenant to all of you, be what you will, goſpel-ſlighters, rebels againſt God, graceleſs and profane ſinners, carnal and earthly minded ſouls, hypocrites, formaliſts, backſliders, weary and heavy laden ſinners, doubting and diſcouraged ſouls; I exhort and beſeech you all to come and take hold of God's covenant, make choice of God for your God and portion, and Jeſus Chriſt for your Mediator and Peace-maker with God, and reſign yourſelves freely to God in Chriſt. O ſinners, the covenant is free, the call is preſſing, the offer is great, the bargain excellent.

This is the moſt honourable and advantageous bargain that ever you made; the deſign of my whole ſermon has been to recommend it, and perſuade you to cloſe with it: God knows how your hearts ſtand inclined. But I would have you all to remember that our time is ſhort, and the hour is coming, when we that are miniſters muſt leave this work of beſeeching, preſſing and arguing with you, and go to him that ſent us, with a faithful account of the iſſue of our meſſage. And O how ſad and unpleaſant will the account be that we muſt give of theſe of you whom we leave unperſuaded to take hold of God's covenant. It will be a melancholy thing, and matter of grief, to accuſe any of you to the Father; but we muſt do it, if you will not prevent it by your hearkening and obeying. If you do it not in time, as God is in heaven, you will eternally repent it; I do here warn you of your danger, and call heaven and earth to record againſt you that I am free of your blood. O young people! what ſay ye to it? Will ye take hold of the covenant? Your baptiſm will not profit you, unleſs now when ye are of age ye ratify your parents deed, renew your baptiſmal engagements, and perſonally join yourſelves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant. If ye approach to the Lord's table without doing it, you will be unworthy communicants, you will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, you will but mock God and deceive your own ſouls. I have not time to anſwer objections againſt covenanting with God; I ſhall only ſpeak to one queſtion, and then conclude.

Queſt. But you may ſay, what would you have us doing, in order to our being brought into God's covenant? We would gladly be among the number of that happy people, whoſe God is the Lord, and who are in covenant with him; but we know not how to get into it.

Anſ. Surely the ſoul is not wholly paſſive in this tranſaction, but muſt be active in it. Something is to be done on our part, when we enter into covenant with God; and therefore we are called to *join ourſelves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant*, Jer. l. 5. I do not mean, that we can do any thing to enter ourſelves into covenant with God in our own ſtrength; no, it is God by his Spirit *that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*. The duty is ours, but the work is the Spirit's. It is the Spirit that courts the heart, and prevails with the ſoul to give its conſent to this bleſſed bargain. But, in the mean time, let us be minting at our duty as we can, looking for the Spirit's concurrence. And there are four things to be done by us, in order to our being in covenant with God, and God help every communicant to aim ſincerely at them this night. 1. Renunciation. 2. Acceptation. 3. Dedication. 4. Solemn engagement.

1ſt, You muſt heartily renounce and break league with all the Lord's enemies and rivals, Hoſ. xiv. 8. and particularly renounce, (1.) Satan's government; tho' formerly you was led captive by him at his will, yet now ſolemnly renounce all ſubjection to him, and hearken no more to his ſuggeſtions and temptations, let God alone have the throne. (2.) Renounce the world, be no more a ſlave to it as you have been; ſet your heart no longer on its profits and pleaſures, as your portion and inheritance; but make God your treaſure. (3.) Renounce the fleſh; however its luſts have been beloved by you, let them reign no more in you; but condemn them to be crucified as the murderers of Chriſt. (4.) Renounce your own righteouſneſs in point of juſtification and acceptance with God, and ſolemnly diſclaim all truſt and confidence in your own duties and performances.

2dly, Acceptation. Heartily aim at to make choice, and accept of God in Chriſt, as your ſoul's portion and inheritance, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. But obſerve, how God is to be choſen, only in and through Chriſt the Mediator; for 'out of Chriſt he is a conſuming fire;' therefore accept of precious Chriſt as your guide and way to the Father, and of his ſatisfaction and merits, as the ranſom for delivering you from wrath. Accept of the Holy Ghoſt as your ſanctifier, quickener and comforter; and heartily acquieſce in the covenant of grace, and goſpel method of ſalvation thro' Chriſt, as *well ordered in all things*.

3dly, Dedication. As God gives himſelf wholly to you, ſo do you dedicate and give up yourſelves, and all that you have, wholly and unreſervedly to God, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Give up your ſouls with all their powers and faculties; your bodies with all their ſenſes and members; and all your enjoyments temporal and ſpiritual, to be employed for God and his honour, and to be entirely diſpoſed of for his ſervice and glory.

4thly, Solemn engagement. You muſt reſolve and engage, in the *ſtrength of Chriſt our Surety*, to live wholly to your covenanted God, and walk with him in newneſs of life, perform every duty he commands, ſuffer patiently what he inflicts, watch againſt every ſin he forbids, and manfully fight againſt his enemies. Thus be aiming at your duty, and lay yourſelves in the Spirit's way, and who knows but God will pity and help you, honeſtly to take hold of his covenant, and alſo himſelf ſay *Amen* to the bargain. The Lord bleſs his word. *Amen*.

SERMON XV.

A Preparation Sermon before the communion.

The right Improvement of the day of grace.

Heb. iii. 7, 8. *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation*, &c.

IN this chapter, the apoſtle doth diſplay ſomething of the Mediator's glory and excellency; he ſhews, that he is far preferable to Moſes, as much as the builder of the houſe is greater than the houſe; and that he alone is the eternal Son of God, the great prophet and teacher of his church. And having laid down ſeveral propoſitions to this purpoſe, he comes to draw an inference from them in the words of my text, *Wherefore*, &c. As if he had ſaid, ſeeing Chriſt, is the chief apoſtle and prophet of his church, a teacher ſent from God to intruct the world; it is therefore our indiſpenſible duty to hear his voice, comply with his counſels, and that without delay; and this exhortation the apoſtle ſtrengthens with that of David, Pſal. xcv. 7.

In the words we have, *1ſt*, The illative particle, *Wherefore*, which denotes the deduction of the enſuing exhortation from the preceding diſcourſe. *2dly*, We have the authority which the apoſtle cites for his exhortation, even that of the Holy Ghoſt, who of old ſpake by David, Pſal. xcv. and now ſpeaketh by him in the text. *3dly*, In the exhortation, we have a duty required of us, *viz.* hearing of Chriſt's voice, *Hear his voice*; not the voice of a meer man, not the voice of an apoſtle or angel, but of the eternal Son of God, that glorious ambaſſador of heaven, who was ſent to the world for advancing a treaty of peace; his voice we are to hear, his inſtructions and calls we are to comply with. *4thly*, We have the circumſtance of time, and ſpecial ſeaſon when this duty is to be done, and that is preſently, *today*, or in this ſolemn day of grace. *5thly*, We have, in the following verſe, a cautionary direction to all that ſit under the goſpel, to beware of hardening their hearts, or ſtoping their ears againſt Chriſt's calls, as the obſtinate and hard hearted Jews did in the wilderneſs.

DOCT. I. *That the conſideration of the authority of the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking in the ſcripture, ſhould mightily enforce upon us the duties their exhorted.* We ſhould conſider whoſe authority we deſpiſe, when we ſlight the offers, calls, and duties preſſed in the goſpel, even that of the Holy Ghoſt; and it is a fearful thing to ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

DOCT. II *That the voice which we are called to hear in and by the goſpel, is Chriſt's voice; it is not the voice of a man like ourſelves, but the voice of the Son of God, and therefore ſhould be awfully regarded.* But the doctrine which I intend to handle at this time, ſhall be drawn chiefly from the ſeaſon of preſſing this duty.

DOCT. III. *That all who ſit under the goſpel, ſhould be careful to improve the ſeaſons of grace, and opportunities of hearing Chriſt's voice, which God allows them.*

In handling this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. What is implied in hearing of Chriſt's voice in the goſpel.

II. That there are ſome ſpecial ſeaſons for hearing of Chriſt's voice, and what theſe are.

III. How we ought to improve theſe ſeaſons.

IV. Reaſons why we ſhould carefully improve them.

V. I ſhall apply the whole.

I. As to the *Firſt*, What is imported in hearing of Chriſt's voice in the goſpel. I ſhall not inſiſt on what is preſuppoſed in it, *viz.* That our ears are naturally ſtopped againſt Chriſt; and it is only a work of his power on the ſoul that can open them; but ſhew what it directly implies.

1ſt, This *hearing* doth import, our believing the word to be Chriſt's voice, and not the voice of man. As long as we regard what we hear, only as the voice of a miniſter, or man like ourſelves, it will never humble us, nor prevail with our ſtubborn hearts; but when we begin to take it up as the voice of God, or Chriſt ſpeaking to us from heaven, then the ſoul doth hearken, conſider, and obey. Till Samuel knew that it was the Lord's voice ſpeaking to him, 1 Sam. i. he ſtill took the wrong courſe: he went to Eli, when he ſhould have hearkned to God.

2dly, A cloſe and ſerious attention of the mind to what we hear. The ſoul that hears Chriſt's voice ſtops his career in pruſuing ſin and the world which always makes a buzzing noiſe about his ears; and applies his ear to hear what Chriſt ſaith; turns attentive to, and ſerious about the things of eternity.

3dly, The application of what Chriſt ſaith unto us in particular: As if Chriſt ſpoke to us by name and firname, and ſaid to us, as Nathan did to David, "Thou art the man." We commonly neglect what Chriſt ſaith by his word, by putting it by ourſelves to others; but we hear him aright, when we bring what he ſaith cloſe home to our own hearts and conſciences, and ſay, "It "is to me this word is directed; it is me that Chriſt in"tends, it is I that the law condemns, and that juſtice "threatens. I am the guilty ſinner that have ſhut out "Chriſt, and preferred my luſts to him, and yet he "now pities me, and calls me to open to him."

4thly, A thorough conviction of the neceſſity and advantage of yielding to Chriſt's calls; O! ſaith the ſoul, long hath my Saviour knocked, ſaying, "Open to me, riſe and come away," and yet I have ſit ſtill, and given him a deaf ear; but now I ſee I am loſt, undone and condemned in my preſent caſe; if death knock before I open to Chriſt, I can look for nothing but the bottomleſs pit to open and ſwallow me up for ever. But if I open to Chriſt, I am happy, and out of the reach of wrath for ever.

5thly, It imports, the ſoul's cordial complying with Chriſt's calls, and conſenting to receive and embrace him as he is offered in the goſpel; that is to ſay, as a *prophet* to teach us, a *prieſt* to atone for us, and a *king* to rule us. The man that hears Chriſt's voice, goes in heartily with the goſpel-method of ſalvation, acquieſces in that noble contrivance of grace, is well content to be juſtified by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, to be taught at Chriſt's ſchool and governed by his laws.

II. The ſecond thing to be diſcourſed is, That there are ſome ſpecial ſeaſons for hearing Chriſt's voice, that ſhould be carefully improven; and what theſe are. There are ſome advantageous opportune ſeaſons of grace, wherein God is ready to receive and entertain us, which are called in ſcripture *an accepted time, and day of ſalvation*, 2 Cor. vi. 2. an *accepted time*, i. e. a time well pleaſing to God. *A day of ſalvation*, i. e. a day wherein the improvers of it may get ſalvation begun in pardoning and ſanctifying grace; and eternal ſalvation completed in heaven, made ſure to them. Now ſuch times and ſeaſons ſhould be carefully managed, that they be not loſt, as alas they are to many. I ſhall mention ſome of theſe ſeaſons.

I. The *preſent time*, when you have the goſpel ordinances, and health and ſtrength to attend them: That is a ſeaſon carefully to be improven; and hence the Spirit of God ſaith ſo frequently, yea, no leſs than three times in this 3d chapter of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, *To-day, to-day, to day*, God cries to you, *To-day hear my voice;* but ſatan ſays to you, *To morrow* is time enough. But ſurely, God's ſeaſon is the beſt. O ſinner! to-day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in ſickneſs: To day thou art living, to-morrow thou mayeſt be dying: To-day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in hell: To-day Chriſt is ſmiling and inviting you to come unto him, but to morrow he may be frowning, and ſentencing you to depart from him, never to return again. And ſhould not the preſent time, then, when you enjoy ordinances, and health to attend them, be duly improven?

II. The *time of youth* is a ſpecial ſeaſon of grace, Eccl. xii. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth;* O young folk, this is an accepted time, and a day of ſalvation: It is a moſt advantageous opportunity for hearkening to Chriſt's voice; for, *1ſt*, Now the heart is ſooner affected and melted for ſin, than afterwards; for old age turns ſtiff and inflexible. The branches of a young tree will bow, and train up any way, but when old they will not ply. *2dly*, Now you have not ſuch ſins to burden the conſcience, harden the heart, and hinder you from coming to Chriſt, as you will have afterwards. *3dly*, Now your minds and thoughts are more free of cares and anxieties about the world, than they will be afterwards: and ſo more fit for cloſing and tranſacting with Chriſt in the goſpel. *4thly*, It is a ſeaſon that God eſpecially regards. Under the law, he required the firſt fruits as his portion, and would have all the ſacrifices that were offered to him, to be young, and in their ſtrength, Exod. xxiii. 19. Lev. ii. 14. And ſtill he loves the ſeaſon of youth, and remembers the kindneſs of youth long afterwards, Eccl. xii. 1. Jer. ii. 2, 3. The mourning, praying and praiſing of young folk, is the moſt melodious muſic in God's ears: Wherefore, let the precious ſeaſon of youth be diligently improven. Are there not ſome young communicants here? O! improve this day of ſalvation, a time of youth is the moſt uſual ſeaſon of converſion, and acquaintance with Chriſt. If you look through the land, among the people of God, you will perhaps find ſcarce one of a hundred, but will date his coverſion, and firſt cloſing with Chriſt from the time of youth. If a tree do not bud or bloſſom, when young, it is a ſign that it is barren, and will not bear at all afterwards. O then! now in the days of youth lay a ſure foundation ſtone; take heed to your firſt communicating; ſtrive for heart-ſincerity in hearing Chriſt's voice, cloſing with the goſpel-offer, and covenanting with God.

III. A ſeaſon when people enjoy plenty and purity of goſpel ordinances with peace and ſafety, ought carefully to be improven. And now you have ſuch a ſeaſon, you have plenty of miniſters, plenty of ſermons, ſacraments, ſolemn calls, free offers, faithful warnings, earneſt intreaties, and powerful perſuaſions, and none to make you afraid. It is propheſied of the goſpel times, Pſal. lxviii. 11. That *the Lord ſhall give the word, and great ſhall be the company of them that publiſh it.* Now you have many faithful labourers; in every pariſh you have ſuch as publiſh the word, and preach the glad tidings of reconciliation: Many a time have you Chriſt crucified ſet forth before your eyes in the Lord's ſupper; and again, the Lord is to give you in this place a new occaſion for it. Theſe are precious ſeaſons, which our fathers ſometimes would have prized at a high rate; when they were put to ſeek their ſpiritual bread with the peril of their lives, *becauſe of the ſword in the wilderneſs*. The Lord hath made his arm bare in behalf of the goſpel: He hath diſabled its enemies, ſettled the ark in its place, and ſtill continues plenty of pure ordinances, maugre all the contrivances and attempts of enemies for their oppreſſion. O! for hearts to value and improve ſuch precious opportunities.

IV. A time when God gives a people providential warnings, to awaken and excite them to attend his word and ordinances, is a ſeaſon to be improven. God hath oft threatened us with a bloody ſword; and now he is threatening us with the approaching of the peſtilence; that waſting ſtroke that lays heaps upon heaps, makes death to ride in triumph thro' the ſtreets. Many warnings of approaching judgments have we formerly miſimproven; and therefore, God may come upon us unawares, and ſurprize us with his judgments without warning. Well, while God is taking pains on us, and giving us warning at a diſtance, let us improve the ſeaſon by hearkening to Chriſt's voice in the goſpel. *Let us be moved with fear*, (like Noah) *and provide an ark for the ſaving of our ſouls*, before the flood of wrath approach. Nay, bleſſed be God, the ark is prepared to our hand, and there is a window opened in the ſide thereof for our enterance: let us take the wings of faith, and fly thither without delay.

V. A time when the *inward workings of the Spirit* on the conſcience, concur with the external diſpenſation of the word and ſacraments, is a ſpecial ſeaſon to be improven. It is then, that a great and effectual door is opened both to miniſters and people. Paul had this door opened to him at Epheſus, amongſt many adverſaries, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. Oh if it were ſo with us, we needed not fear all that adverſaries can do againſt the goſpel. But we have it to regret, that tho' God hath outwardly reſtrained adverſaries, yet a *great and effectual door* is not opened to us: Still the door is ſtrait both for miniſters and people: God's Spirit is greatly reſtrained in our day. If it be aſked, When is it that a wide or effectual door is opened? *Anſ.* It is only when the Spirit of God is poured out in a plentiful way, both on miniſters and people. When God's Spirit was thus poured out after Chriſt's aſcenſion, then both the graces and the gifts of the Spirit were communicated in a plentiful meaſure. Then miniſters had great light of knowledge and underſtanding, as well as the heat of zeal and love. It was eaſy for them to ſtudy and preach, they had clear uptakings of the matters of God, and a great readineſs and liberty of expreſſion. Their hearts were enlarged, their minds enlightened, their memories were ſtrengthened, and they had a door of utterance opened, *i. e.* a great facility in declaring of their minds; they were no way ſtraitened for proper matter or fit words; their hearts indited godly things, and their tongues were as the pen a of ready writer. Thus it is ſtill, when the Spirit of God is remarkably poured out: then the preaching of the goſpel is both pleaſant and powerful; miniſters are warmed, and peoples hearts are melted; miniſters mouths are opened, and peoples appetites enlarged. There is ſuch a thing as the Spirit of God his ſtriving with the hearts and conſciences of hearers, in and by the word, Gen. vi. 3. And when he thus ſtrives, it makes an effectual door, and a ſpecial ſeaſon of ſalvation. When the Spirit moves the waters of the ſanctuary, people ſhould not neglect then to ſtep in, and be healed. Take heed you do not ſlight the ſtrivings of God's Spirit with you in any meaſure, leſt you provoke God to paſs ſuch a dreadful ſentence againſt you, as that Gen. vi. 3. "My ſpirit ſhall no longer ſtrive with you." And if you loſe the precious ſeaſon of the Spirit's ſtriving, you perhaps will never recover it again.

Queſt. When is it that the Spirit of God ſtrives with ſinners, in and by the goſpel?

Anſ. 1*ſt*, When he opens the eyes, and gives the man a diſcovery of his ſinful and miſerable ſtate by nature, and of the evil, hainouſneſs and danger of his ſins; and ſo rivets and faſtens conviction on the heart and conſcience, that the arrows of the threatenings do ſtick, and the man is brought to thoughtfulneſs and anxiety about his future ſtate; and hence is made to cry, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* O! that is a ſeaſon which ought to be carefully improven.

2*dly*, The Spirit ſtrives, by making a man wholly diſſatisfied with his preſent ſtate, and all his earthly enjoyments, as long as he is in the dark about his ſoul's ſalvation. Tho' he may be in outward proſperity, he ſays, *All theſe things avail me nothing*, while I am ready to be ſwallowed up by the wrath of God for ſin; ſurely there is no living, no abiding in this ſtate I am in. I am ſhut up in the priſon of unbelief, and the houſe is all on fire about my ears, I muſt break priſon, and make my eſcape, otherwiſe I am undone for ever.

3*dly*, By making the man deſpair of help and deliverance by any thing in himſelf. Oh, ſaith he, I am a poor, miſerable, helpleſs creature! Neither my doing, nor ſuffering, can free me from wrath. I know no courſe, no contrivance of my own that can relieve me. My relief muſt certainly come from another airth; for I can never work it for myſelf.

4*thly*, By humbling the man to the duſt for ſin, particularly for miſpending time, neglecting prayer, miſimproving ſermons, profaning ſabbaths and ſacraments, *&c.* O! ſays he, is there any creature more vile than I? Surely there is no toad more loathſome, no carrion more offenſive, no puddle more unclean than my ſoul before God. Can ever the arms of mercy open to embrace ſuch a monſter of ſin as I have been? This is a choice ſeaſon, which ſhould be well improven.

5*thly*, By giving ſome light into the underſtanding, concerning the remedy provided for loſt ſinners. The ſoul begins, by the word, to diſcover ſomething of the fulneſs and ability of Chriſt, as a Saviour, ſo that it is made to think there is hope in Iſrael concerning this matter: My caſe, ſays the ſinner, is not ſo bad as the devils, for whom no remedy was ever provided.

6*thly*, By working ſome purpoſes and inclinations in the will toward the offered remedy; ſo that the ſoul makes its aims at Chriſt: Yea, is content to take any courſe for an intereſt in him. And therefore ſays oft with Paul, Acts ix. 6. *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* What method ſhall I take to *be found in Chriſt, not having my own righteouſneſs?*

7*thly*, By determining the ſoul to a conſcientious and diligent uſe of the means, for getting Chriſt, and ſalvation through him.

8*thly*, By making a ſtir and commotion among the affections, and exciting earneſt and paſſionate deſires after Chriſt and ſalvation thro' him: So that the ſoul is made to ſay, *O that I knew where I might find him! O! when wilt thou come unto me?* I will ſpare no pains to get a meeting with him, I will ſeek him thro' the ſtreets and broad ways, and all the lanes of the city, crying, *Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?*

Now when the Spirit ſtrives with any of you, in any meaſure, it is a precious ſeaſon of grace, that ſhould be carefully obſerved and improven.

III. The third thing in my general method is to ſhew, how theſe ſeaſons of grace ought to be improven by us.

1*ſt*, By highily valuing and admiring the diſtinguiſhing goodneſs of God, in affording us ſuch days of grace and ſalvation. He deals not ſo with other nations, Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, and Papiſts, have not the goſpel light, and offers of grace which you have. Be thankful to God, eſpecially you that have more ſpecial and remarkable ſeaſons beyond others: You that have health and ſtrength, and youth on your ſide; you that have the Spirit of God ſtriving with you in the ordinances, your eyes opened, hearts melted, conſciences awakened, affections moved; O bleſs God for his diſtinguiſhing mercies.

2*dly*, By believing firmly what Chriſt ſaith to you by the word, and attending carefully to it. Why? It is the word of the living God, more true, certain, and immovable than the foundations of the earth: Nay, heaven and earth both will ſooner paſs away, than one jot or one title of his word fall to the ground. Let your ears then be ſtopped againſt all the calls and ſolicitations of ſin, ſatan, and the world; and open only to precious Chriſt, ſaying with the Pſalmiſt, *I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak.*

3*dly*, By applying cloſely to yourſelves what Chriſt ſaith, and meditating on it afterwards. When you hear any ſin threatened you are guilty of, or any duty preſſed that you neglect; bring that word cloſe home to your hearts, and ſay, This word is to me, let me not forget it. O let it abide with me when I go home, when I eat and drink, when I ly down and riſe up, when I go out and come in. Still think, you hear Chriſt's word ſounding in your ears, and that you hear him crying, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.* Open the door of thy heart, and let me in. *Riſe up, my love, my fair one, and come away.* Why do you weary my patience, and let me ſtand ſo long neglected, *till my head is wet with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night?*

4thly, By labouring to give kindly entertainment to the word, and the motions of Chriſt's Spirit on thy ſoul, preſently ſtriking in with conviction, ſubmitting to reproofs, and harkening to his counſels, ſaying with Samuel, *Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.* Say not to the Spirit's motions and ſtrivings with thee, as Felix did to Paul, *Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.* No, no, but forthwith give ear, yield and comply with the Spirit's ſtrivings, and Chriſt's voice: Be content immediately to have thy ſores launced, and thy wounds ſearched to the bottom; and when conviction and ſoul trouble for ſin is begun, go not to ſtifle or quench it, or ſeek haſtily to pluck God's arrows out of thy conſcience; but cheriſh and entertain the work of God's Spirit, by meditating on thy ſin, conſidering thy loſt eſtate by nature, thy inſufficiency to help thyſelf, together with the excellency and ſuitableneſs of the remedy which God has provided.

5thly, By frequent and fervent application to the throne of grace, begging for Chriſt's ſake, that God may both begin and finiſh his work in the ſoul. Acknowledge that you are able of yourſelves to do nothing, and that it is by his grace only you can be ſaved; and when he begins by conviction be thankful to him, and intreat, that theſe ſparks kindled by the breath of God, may not be ſmothered, but blown up into a flame: And ſtill remember that the work is God's, though it be your duty to be caſting on fuel by prayer and meditation; yet the ſparks that kindle the fire come from God's altar; the breath that blows it comes from heaven. Pray therefore, that the fire may come down, even a live-coal from the altar, and that heaven's wind may blow on thy ſoul. Cry with the ſpouſe, *Awake, O north-wind, and come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out.* Let the north-winds of the law come, and convince, and awaken; and the ſouth winds of the goſpel come, and refreſh, and comfort. Be earneſt, O convinced ſinner, in deprecating God's taking away his Spirit from you; make it a part of your daily prayer, to cry with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. li. 11. *Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from me.* Lord forbid the new creature be ſtifled in the womb. O do thou quicken and preſerve it. Let theſe convictions terminate in my converſion here, and ſalvation hereafter. Lord! thou art a rock, thy work is perfect; haſt thou begun, and wilt thou not alſo make an end? O! ſuffer not theſe tender fruits to be nipped in the bud, or blaſted in the bloſſom, either by ſatan's froſt-winds, or the world's chilling blaſts: But, O! preſerve them to maturity, to the praiſe and glory of thy grace.

IV. The next thing is, the reaſons of the doctrine; why we ſhould ſo carefully improve our ſeaſons of grace.

1ſt, Becauſe God looks for it, and expects it at our hand. When God plants trees in his vineyard, waters and takes pains on them, he looks for fruit from them, Luke xiii. We ſee what the Lord ſays of Judah, Iſa. v. 1, 2. *My well beloved* (*i. e.* Chriſt) *hath a vineyard* (*i. e.* the church of the Jews) *in a very fruitful hill*: (*i. e.* a good ſoil, furniſhed with all poſſible means to make it fruitful:) *And he fenced it*, (*i. e.* protected it by his providence, from the incurſion of enemies) *he gathered out the ſtones thereof*, (*i. e.* removed out of it whatever was noxious or hurtful, perhaps the idol gods, put theſe out of the land) *he planted it with the choiceſt vine*: (*i. e.* with pure ordinances, and inſtitutions of worſhip, good government and diſcipline:) *He built a tower in the midſt of it*, (*i. e.* for its defence, *viz.* the ſtrong city of Jeruſalem in midſt of the land which was built as a city compact together, whither the tribes went up for worſhip) *Alſo he made a wine-preſs therein*; (*i. e.* the temple and altar continually running with the blood of the ſacrifices.) Now after all it is ſaid, *He looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes*, which doth not import that God was uncertain of the event; but denotes what is juſt and equal, and what in ſuch caſes ought to be. Surely a vineyard, ſo attended and furniſhed, ought to bring forth fruit, anſwerable to all the acts of God's care and grace towards it.

And to bring the matter home to our caſe, God hath been at ſpecial care to plant a vineyard in this land: We have a good ſoil, well fenced, the ſtones gathered out, idolatry and ſuperſtition removed, a choice vine planted, pure ordinances ſet up, enemies diſabled that laid it waſte. God has built towers, and made wine-preſſes to us, *viz.* the ſacraments, and eſpecially the Lord's ſupper, where the blood of Chriſt, our great ſacrifice, doth run plentifully to us, for pardon, healing, and waſhing. Now, doth not God look for grapes? Is it not juſt that we ſhould bring forth fruit, anſwerable to all theſe privileges? Alas! for the moſt part, there is nothing but wild grapes with us; little ſuitable fruit of our ſolemn communion-days. You may ſee, what is the reſult of fruſtrating the divine expectations, Iſa. v. 5, 6. Nothing but blaſting, withering, ruin and deſolation.

2dly, Becauſe of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of the ſeaſon of grace: None can tell how long it will laſt. You cannot promiſe it will continue as long as your lives, (tho' even theſe be moſt uncertain.) No; your ſpecial ſeaſon and day of grace may end this very day, or at this communion-occaſion, tho' you ſhould happen to live many years after this. It is likely, God is ſaying to ſome hearing me, *To day hearken to my voice, repent, and cloſe with Chriſt my Son, or be henceforth hardened and undone for ever.* O ſinner, this night thy day of grace may ceaſe; God may this day cauſe ſome of your hearts to warm by the word, others to tremble, others to mourn, others to purpoſe and reſolve. Well, if you do not lay hold on, and improve this ſeaſon, and hearken to Chriſt's voice, you may never get the like occaſion again; nay, even tho' you ſhould wiſh for it, Chriſt ſaith, Luke xvii. 22. *The time ſhall come, when you ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and ſhall not ſee it.* This may be *one of the days of the Son of man* to you; for now Chriſt is offering himſelf, and preſſing ſalvation on you, and ſtriving by his Spirit (I hope) with ſome of you. Well, if you neglect to open your hearts to Chriſt this day, God may ſet a ſeal on them to-morrow, that they ſhall never be opened. You may afterwards deſire another of ſuch days as this; you may wiſh for one of the offers of that Saviour, for one drop of that blood you ſlighted, for one knock of his Spirit at the door of your heart, which formerly you neglected; for one of his motions or ſtrivings with you; and yet it never be granted. With ſome the day of grace is longer, with others ſhorter; with ſome it ends in childhood, with others it ends in youth; and with ſome few it laſts to old age: But, O ſinner! thou haſt no reaſon to expect the continuance of it a moment after this day.

3dly, Becauſe if you do not improve your day of grace, you loſe your ſouls. You may compare the text with verſe 11. of the chapter; *becauſe they hardened their hearts*, and would *not hear his voice*, in their day of grace, it is ſubjoined, *I ſware in my wrath, they ſhall not enter into my reſt.* We ſee the ſad caſe Jeruſalem was in when they loſt their day of grace, Luke xix. 41, 42. *When he was near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou at leaſt in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes.* Here it is ſaid, *Chriſt wept*, (orig. *Ecclauſe*) it denotes a weeping with lamentation. *He wept bitterly*, to let you all know what a ſad and deplorable thing it is, for a people, city or perſon to loſe their day of grace. The words he ſpeaks are uttered in a weeping ſtrain. Abrupt expreſſions come now and then from his mouth; he drops now a word, and then a tear; he would ſpeak, but his weeping ſtops his voice, *If thou hadſt known, even thou. Thou* is reduplicate, or twice expreſt, *Thou even thou.* As if he had ſaid, Thou ancient city, the city of David, thou ſeat of the temple, and of the ſacrifices: "O if thou hadſt known." Then he adds, "at leaſt in this thy day." They had enjoyed many leſſer days of grace, when they had faithful prophets dealing with them; theſe they perſecuted and deſpiſed, and ſo loſt theſe days: But theſe were but leſſer days, which did not finally determine the ſtate of that city; for they were to have another day, which is here called, *this their day*, i. e. the day wherein the Son of God was to come among them, and preach the goſpel to them, "three years and an half:" That was a ſpecial day of grace, and the day that determined their ſtate; for ſince they did not improve it, *the things of their peace were hid from their eyes.* God would deal no more with them, but left them to deſtruction. O ſinner! O communicants! ſo will it fare with you, if you let your day of grace go over: Night will come on, wherein none can work, you will ſtumble in the dark, and fall headlong into the pit for ever.

4thly, Becauſe God keeps a ſtrict account of every hour and minute of your day of grace, that you trifle away; for he reckons it very precious, whatever you think of it. When God lights the candle of the goſpel, he expects you ſhould work by it; and he will not ſuffer this precious candle to burn without obſervation; nay, he counts every hour and minute it burns, and every hour and minute his Spirit ſtrives, and will make you reckon for them at laſt. God takes not ſuch ſtrict notice of times of darkneſs and ignorance; for it is ſaid, he winks at ſinners living under them, Acts xvii. 30. *i. e.* He doth not ſo narrowly mark their diligence; but when he ſends times of light, and of his Spirit's ſtriving with ſinners, he will not wink at one hour or minute, but exactly ſet down every ſermon you hear, every communion you ſee, every call, every intreaty, every threatning, every reproof, every conviction and warning you get, whether by ordinances or providences, whether by conſcience or by his Spirit. And, O! what a dreadful libel will theſe make up againſt you at the great day, if you neglect your day of grace.

V. The APPLICATION.

Uſe I. For *information*. We may hence ſee, that it is not the bare enjoyment of the goſpel, and communion ſeaſons that will make us happy, but the right improvement of the day of grace, which we enjoy therein.

Uſe II. For *lamentation*. We may hence take occaſion to bewail the ſad caſe of many that neglect and loſe the day of their merciful viſitation. It is ſaid, Jer. viii. 7. "The ſtork knoweth her appointed times, the turtle, the crane and the ſwallow obſerve the time of their coming," &c. And we are bid go learn of the ant, Prov. vi. 6. "that provides her meat in ſummer, and gathers her food in harveſt," while the weather is good and dry, and food may be had. So that we ſee the brutes and ſilly inſects obſerve their ſeaſons. But, alas! many men neglect and forget theirs; they let their ſummer and harveſt-days paſs, without making any proviſion for eternity. Oh! how many among us may take up that ſad lamentation, Jer. viii. 20. "Our harveſt is paſt, our ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved!" O that we could weep over many, as Chriſt did over Jeruſalem, for loſing their day of grace!

Queſt. Who are theſe that thus loſe their day of grace?

Anſ. It is hard to be very particular on this head; I ſhall only give ſome general characters of ſuch perſons.

1ſt, Theſe who have ſat many years under pure and powerful ordinances, and were never affected thereby; but ſtill remain dead and hardened under the moſt awakening calls and plaineſt reproofs. Theſe ſeem to be given over to ruin, Prov. xxix. 1. "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall be ſuddenly deſtroyed, and that without remedy."

2dly, Theſe who have had many ſecret motions and operations of the Spirit on their ſouls, to no effect; many purpoſes and reſolutions to good, and all evaniſhed; many of the Spirit's ſtrivings, and all reſiſted: Theſe are likely to be given over, Ezek. xxiv. 13. "Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee." When God's Spirit offered to cleanſe that people from their ſin, they, like Lot's wife, ſtill hankered after it, and would not part therewith.

3dly, Theſe who have greatly grieved the Spirit of God, by venturing on ſin againſt the light of their conſciences, and the Spirit's motions, and ſo are turned wilful and reſolute in ſinning; ſuch have the ſymptoms of rejection, Hoſ. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone."

4thly, Theſe who are ſo forward and bent upon a ſinful courſe, that they can endure no reproof or controul therein, but hate them in their hearts, who ſeek to reclaim them: Theſe have the ſymptoms of ruin upon them, Prov. xv. 10. Amos v. 10.

5thly, When perſons are ſo far hardned in ſin, that God ceaſeth to be a reprover to them, and ſtrikes their conſciences ſo dumb and ſenſeleſs, that they do not accuſe nor challenge them: It it a ſad ſign of up giving, Ezek. iii. 26. Hoſ. iv. 17.

6thly, When repentance is hid from people's eyes, ſo that they are not affected with the view of their ſins, when they are laid before them; no diſpenſation of providence, no token of God's anger, neither judgments nor mercies, rods nor threatenings; nay the flames of hell flaſhed in the ſinner's face, do not breed any remorſe in their conſciences nor relenting in their hearts for ſin: When people arrive at this height, it is a ſad ſign that they are given up to wrath, Iſa. xlii. 25. Jer. v. 3.

III. Next uſe ſhall be of *examination*. O try, if ye have improven your day of grace, ſo as to hearken to Chriſt's voice, and comply with his gracious offers, O communicants, it is highly your intereſt to know this, that you may come with chearfulneſs, and feaſt with your Redeemer at his table. Now try it by theſe marks.

1ſt, Had you never the experience of Chriſt's Spirit's work in opening your ear, and inclining your heart to cloſe with his offers in the goſpel? Do you experimentally know the heinouſneſs and multitude of your ſins? Do you know ſomething of the terribleneſs of God's wrath due to you for theſe ſins? Have you ſeen your ſoul's need of Chriſt, as a man purſued for his life ſeeth his need of a city of refuge? Have you ſeen yourſelves loſt and dead men, if you get not into Chriſt? Have you felt ardent deſires after Chriſt, and been made to ſay, *Give us Chriſt, or elſe we die?* Have you been content to take this lovely Saviour on any terms, to part with all for this *pearl of price*, and to count all but *loſs and dung*, to be found in him.

2dly, Can you ſay, that Chriſt's word and ordinances where you firſt heard his voice ſpeaking to you, are ſtill precious and lovely to you for his ſake? And hence you are made ſometimes to cry out with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hoſts! My heart and fleſh crieth out for the living God.* Sweet ſermons, ſweet communion-days, lovely occaſions, when the bridegroom's voice is to be heard.

3dly, Are you fill'd with low thoughts of yourſelves, and all your own doings and performances, and with high thoughts of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs! And do you turn out all Chriſt's rivals out of your hearts, and undervalue the world and all things in it beſides him, who is *the chiefeſt among ten thouſands, and fairer than the ſons of men.*

4thly, Do you find a great alteration, and gracious change on your ſouls, ſince the time you heard his voice? Doth Chriſt ſit as a refiner with you, changing both heart and life to the better? Are *old things paſt away*, old luſts, old thoughts, old deſires, old cuſtoms, old ways? And are all things with you become new? You that formerly ſet light by Chriſt and his voice, and admired the world and its flattering-pleaſures, and ſaid of Chriſt, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* Do you now value him, ſeek nearneſs to him in duties, enquire for him in ordinances, yea, meditate on him in the night watches, and when ye awake do you find your hearts with him? And is ſin that diſpleaſeth him your greateſt terror? Then ſurely you are among that bleſt company that have heard your Redeemer's voice in your day of grace, and you may come with joy to his table.

IV. Uſe of *exhortation*. And here I exhort you all, in the name of Chriſt, to improve your ſeaſon of grace. *To-day, while it is called to-day O hear his voice;* and to-morrow when he invites, O come unto his table. Hearers of the goſpel, *This is now the accepted time, this is the day of ſalvation.* What do you reſolve to do? Chriſt is now come to cry and lift up his voice to this whole congregation, to try you once more if you will hear his voice, before your day of grace end. Well, his voice is to you all, I know none of you excluded, if you do not exclude yourſelves.

1ſt, O carnal earthly minded ſoul, that has been a drudge to the world, and a ſtranger to Chriſt all thy days, his voice is to you this day: O come hear his voice, and cloſe a bargain with him, it will be the beſt bargain ever you made.

2dly, O profane ſinner, drunkard, ſwearer, liar, ſabbath-breaker, whoremonger, ſinner as black as hell, hearken to Chriſt's voice this day, and come and be ſaved from thy ſins: Why will you ſtop your ears, and chuſe to die in your ſins?

3dly, O hard hearted ſinner, that never waſt affected all thy life for the ſinfulneſs and miſery of thy natural eſtate, that never had a ſore heart for offending God, that never mourned for one ſin, Chriſt's voice is this day to thee, Iſa. xlvi. 12. *Hearken unto me, ye ſtout hearted, that are far from righteouſneſs.*

4thly, O prayerleſs ſinner, that never bowed a knee in ſecret, to cry for pardon of ſin, and an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, to ſave thee from the wrath to come, lend your ear this day, and hearken to Chriſt's ſweet voice, while he calls, *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near*, Iſa. lv. 6.

5thly, Condemned rebels in the hands of juſtice, ſentenced to die, and ready to be taken out to execution: O hear Chriſt's voice this day, and your ſouls ſhall live.

6thly, Slaves to ſin and ſatan, who have many times heard the devil's voice, anſwered his calls, and complied readily with his temptations; will you hear the Redeemer's voice for once, and comply with his counſels before it be too late? Why will ye ſhut your ear againſt the lovely Saviour, and obey the voice of your ſoul-deſtroyer?

7thly, Obſtinate ſinner, that could never hitherto, either by the word or the rod, by miniſters or providences, be prevailed upon to leave one of all thy ſins, O be perſuaded to hear Chriſt's voice this day, and no longer harden thy heart.

8thly, O goſpel ſlighter, that has many a day refuſed Chriſt's offers, ſpurned againſt his bowels, trampled on his blood, crucified him at the communion table: O come, hearken this day to his voice, and he will let you ſee, that though your caſe be ſad, yet it is not deſperate; for *he hath found a ranſom.*

9thly, Hypocrites and formaliſts, that have had a maſk of religion, but have all your days been diſſembling and dealing deceitfully with God; come deal ingenuouſly and ſincerely with him for once, and hearken to his voice, give him your hearts, as well as your outward man.

10thly, Backſliders and covenant breakers, who have broke many a vow, ſlighted many an engagement, and ſinned againſt many a reſolution; O hear Chriſt's voice this day, when he calls to you, *Turn ye backſliding children*, come to me, and *I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely*.

11thly, Poor plagued diſeaſed ſouls, who are groaning under many heart-plagues, and ſoul diſtreſſes, ſuch as atheiſm, pride, hardneſs, formality, *&c.* come hearken to Chriſt's voice, and he will be your Phyſician.

12thly, Weary and heavy laden ſinners, who are like to ſink with the burden of your guilt, come hearken to Chriſt's voice this day, and he *will give reſt to your ſouls*.

13thly, Purſued ſhelterleſs ſinners, who are afraid of the avenger of blood, hearken to Chriſt's voice, and fly to the city of refuge. Many motives and arguments might I uſe with you, to hear the voice of lovely Jeſus, while he calls to day.

I. Conſider how earneſt Chriſt is to perſuade you to hear his voice; he ſtands at your doors, and knocks both by his word and Spirit; yea he waits and knocks after many repulſes and afronts, and promiſes that all former ſlights and refuſals ſhall be forgiven, if ye will yet hearken and cloſe with him. How oft doth he repeat his intreaties, Luke xiii. 34. *How oft would I have gathered you!* Yea, he weeps for ſinners obſtinacy, Luke xix. 41. Strange! Doth he gain any thing by your hearkening to his voice? What means this earneſtneſs? It is all, O ſinners, on your account. For (1.) He knows better than any the worth of your ſouls, and that a world cannot redeem them when loſt. (2.) He knows well the miſerable ſtate of your ſouls without him; it is moſt ſad and deplorable at preſent, and will be much more ſo thro' endleſs eternity: For if you hear not Chriſt's voice, you will die in your ſins and be tormented in them for ever. (3.) Chriſt is ſo earneſt, becauſe he knows the difficulty of winning ſouls. He knows ſatan has great power and intereſt with ſouls, to blind, harden, and delude them, and that it is not eaſy to undeceive them, and pull them out of his grips; and therefore he deals and ſtrives ſo earneſtly with ſouls to gain them.

II. Take a ſerious view of the ſtate of your ſouls: While you ſtop your ears againſt Chriſt's charming voice; it is inexpreſſibly miſerable. For, *1ſt*, Your ſouls are deſtitute of all that is good, Eph. ii. 12. You are as poor and wretched creatures as ever God made; you are without life, without grace, without peace, without pardon, without comfort, without righteouſneſs, without ranſom, without the favour of God, without the image of God, without the Spirit of God, and without all happineſs. *2dly*, Your ſouls are in the poſſeſſion of Satan, where Chriſt is ſhut out, the devil is let in; and where he dwells there he hath an abſolute dominion: he uſes all the faculties of the ſoul as his tools and inſtruments, Eph. ii. 2. Oh! would not any man reckon it an unſpeakable miſery, to be in a houſe ſhut up with the devil? *3dly*, Where Chriſt is ſhut out, the plague of ſin doth rage, and its peſtilential marks do daily appear; what madneſs is it then to refuſe to hearken to the voice of this bleſſed cleanſer? *4thly*, The fire of God's wrath is kindled there, where Chriſt is refuſed; and what diſtraction is it to ſhut out Chriſt, whoſe blood only can quench this fire? *5thly*, If you do not hearken to Chriſt, you have no way to prevent eternal deſtruction; for there is no advocate, no ſurety to interpoſe for you, if he be refuſed. Surely, the thoughts of appearing before an angry God after death muſt be terrible to a Chriſtleſs ſoul; *For who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can abide with everlaſting burnings?* I have read of a certain king of Hungary who was a Chriſtian; and being on a time marvellous ſad and heavy, his brother, who was a briſk and gallant man, would needs know what ailed him. 'Oh brother, (ſaith he) I have been a great ſinner againſt God, and I know not how I ſhall appear before him, when he comes to judgment.' His brother anſwered, *Theſe are but melancholy thoughts*, and ſo made light of them, as courtiers uſe to do. The king replied nothing at that time; but the cuſtom of that country was, (the government thereof being abſolute) that if the executioner ſounded a trumpet before any man's door, the man was preſently to be led to execution. The king in the dead time of the night, ſent his executioner, and cauſed him ſound his trumpet before his brother's door, who hearing and ſeeing the meſſenger of death, ran quickly and ſprang in trembling into his brother's preſence, falls down on his knees, and beſeeches the king to let him know wherein he had offended him. 'O brother (anſwered the king) you never offended me, but loved me: And (ſaid he) is the ſight of an earthly executioner ſo terrible to thee; and ſhall not I, who am ſo great a ſinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-ſeat of an angry God?' What ſoul can think on this without terror, that hath not hearkened to Chriſt's voice in the goſpel?

III. If you do not hearken to Chriſt's voice in the goſpel, it had been better for you never to have heard the goſpel at all; for your guilt is dreadfully aggravated hereby, and your miſery will be the greater, both here and hereafter. We may gather this from Rev. vi. where after the *white horſe*, (*i. e.* Chriſt with the goſpel neglected) comes the *red horſe* of war, the *black horſe* of famine, and the *pale horſe* of peſtilence. Neglecting to hear Chriſt in the goſpel uſhers in all outward miſeries like a flood, Jer. vi. 8. *Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee, leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited.* Then again, how ſad will your caſe be at a tribunal, and through all eternity? The devils, the Turks, the Heathens, and your own conſciences, will bitterly upbraid you in hell, for refuſing to hear Chriſt's voice in the goſpel.

IV. Chriſt will not hear your cries in the time of miſery, if you neglect his voice in the time of mercy, Prov. i. 24. 25. 26. Now Chriſt's voice is ſweet, and full of mercy, but remember, O goſpel ſlighters, the time is at hand, when you will hear Chriſt ſpeaking in another tone; no more *open to me, and hearken to my voice*, poor ſoul: but *depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire*, &c.

V. This may be the laſt ſeaſon you will hear Chriſt's voice ſpeaking to you; this may be the laſt communion, and the laſt call that Chriſt intends to give you. This may be the laſt day of grace, and the laſt time that his Spirit will ſtrive with you. If you ſtop your ear, or harden your heart this day, there may follow an eternal dead ſilence, and God's Spirit never ſtrive any more with you, and ſo your day of grace is loſt, and your ſoul loſt for ever. O young folk, what ſay ye to it? A ſeaſon of youth is an accepted time, and a day of ſalvation: for the Lord's ſake do not looſe it. You have now plenty of ſermons, ſacraments, and goſpel-offers; you have Chriſt crucified ſet before your eyes to affect your hearts, and bring you to a compliance with his calls. You have alſo loud warnings this day from God's providence, and (I hope) ſome of you the inward workings of God's Spirit on your conſciences, concurring with theſe outward means. Well then, give kindly entertainment to Chriſt's voice in this ſeaſon of grace; while he yet ſtands beſeeching you, come hearken to his voice, and accept of him as your Surety; enter into covenant with him this night, and come to his table, and ſeal it to-morrow. O ſinner, turn your back on the devil, leave your ſins, and ſtop your courſe, and come and be reconciled to God thro' this peace maker, who is ſtanding waiting to be employed. Well, what anſwer ſhall I carry back to my Maſter, that ſent me to deal with you for this end? Shall I go and complain? 'Lord, they are a company of obſtinate ſinners thou ſenteſt me to; I entreated them to hearken to thy voice, and leave their ſins; but there was no concern, no fear, no ſenſe of ſin among them. Had I been to preach to beaſts, ſtocks or ſtones, they would have been as much moved as they. Alas! I have ſpent my ſtrength in vain, my voice and lungs for nought; I thought thy ſweet entreaties and charming voice would have melted their hearts, but neither comforts nor terrors had any effect.'

Or ſhall I have ground to ſay? 'Lord, I have offered ſinners a Redeemer, and entreated them to cloſe with him. Though they ſtood long out againſt thy threatenings, yet when they heard thy entreaties, their hearts began to relent, ſome began to ſigh, others to weep, others to long after Chriſt; and I hope they are gone home to make a perſonal covenant with him this night, and ſincerely deſign to return and ſeal it to-morrow.' God grant this may be the event. *Amen.*

SERMON XVI.

A Sermon after the Communion.

The Believer's Dignity in being an Heir of God.

Gal. iv. 7. *Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon: and if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt.*

IN this chapter the apoſtle doth hold forth the happy ſtate of believing Gentiles under New Teſtament times; that it is ever preferable to that of the believing Jews under the Old Teſtament. The Jewiſh church he compares to a child in minority, that is under tutors and governors, and is acquainted only with the firſt rudiments of religion; and likewiſe to the ſtate of a ſervant, that is ſtill kept under ſubjection and bondage: for that church was always in a ſervile condition, having been under the heavy yoke of a great many ceremonial rites and obſervances. But our bleſſed Lord Jeſus, by his coming into the world, hath broke off that yoke from his people's necks, and hath brought them under a more ſpiritual and agreeable diſpenſation; yea, he hath ſent forth his Spirit into their hearts. Upon which account the apoſtle concludes them to be happy, yea, even children of God, *Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant,* &c.

In the text we have the happy ſtate of the believing Galatians briefly repreſented. 1*ſt*, *Negatively*, *Thou art no more a ſervant;* i. e. no more in a ſtate of ſervile ſubjection to the law, and to the Moſaic rites and obſervations. 2*dly*, *Poſitively*, *Thou art a ſon!* i. e. thou haſt attained to a more excellent ſtate of liberty, like to that of ſons who have come to ripe age. He means not that believers under the Old Teſtament had not that privilege of being children of God; no, believers then were really ſons, but kept in ſuch a ſtate, and trained up under ſuch harſh diſcipline, that they ſeemed more like ſervants than ſons. But (ſaith he) to you believers under the New Teſtament the diſcipline is changed, and you have attained to more honourable ſon-like treatment. 3*dly*, We have an inference from this privilege of ſon-ſhip, *And if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt.* Among men only the eldeſt ſon is heir, but all God's children are heirs.

In which we have two things, 1*ſt*, The high dignity and preferment of God's children; they are heirs of God, *i. e.* they have a free right and title to eternal life, and all the gifts and bleſſings of God; yea, to the infinite God himſelf, who is the believer's chief good and portion. 2*dly*, The way of obtaining this dignity and happineſs, through Chriſt, and the merit of his blood: He is God's eternal Son, and heir of all things, and being our Surety, he, by his obedience and ſufferings, hath purchaſed a title to believers, to be God's ſons by adoption, and joint heirs with him of the heavenly inheritance; *He is our elder brother, and is not aſhamed to call us brethren.* The inheritance is his by nature, but ours by grace.

From the words thus explained, obſerve,

I. That the privileges of believers under the New Teſtament, do exceed theſe who lived under the Old. The legal ſtate was more ſervile, but the goſpel ſtate is more filial.

II. That tho' God hath one Son only by eternal generation, *viz.* our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; yet he hath many ſons by grace and adoption, *viz.* believers.

III. That theſe who have the Spirit of God dwelling in their hearts, and exciting them to prayer, have a good evidence of their ſon-ſhip, and filial relation to God. This is clear, from the connection of this verſe with the preceding.

IV. The doctrine that I am to inſiſt on at this time, is, *That it is the great honour and privilege of all true believers, to be the children and heirs of God through Jeſus Chriſt.*

This is confirmed from that parallel text, Rom. viii. 16, 17.

The method for handling this ſubject, ſhall be, (1.) To enquire in what ſenſe believers are the children of God. (2.) In what reſpect they are called heirs. (3.) What is the heritage they are intitled to. (4.) How it is they attain to this privilege. (5.) To ſhew the wonderful free grace of God, in granting ſuch a glorious privilege to believers, as to be his children and heirs. (6.) Make improvement of the whole.

I. As to the firſt, In what ſenſe believers are the children of God.

1*ſt*, *Negatively*, It is not to be meant here, that they are his children only, (1.) In reſpect of *creation*, for ſo all men are God's children, Mal. ii. 10. *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?* Had believers no further intereſt in God than this, they ſhould have but little comfort; for in this ſenſe God is alſo Father to the devils and wicked men, for *he made them;* but *he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour.* Nor (2.) Is it to be meant, that they are his children only by providence; for ſo he is to all, Deut. xxxii. 6. *Is he not thy Father that bought thee? i e.* hath redeemed thee from ſlavery, and conferred great bleſſings on thee. Nor (3.) Is it to be underſtood of their being his children by profeſſion, or external covenant-engagements; for ſo all the members of the viſible church are, Iſa. i. 2.

2*dly*, *Poſitively*, Believers are the children of God, by way of ſpecial grace, and that in theſe ſeveral reſpects, (1.) In reſpect of *election*, God has choſen and predeſtinate them from eternity to be his children and heirs, upon whom he will entail the kingdom of heaven, Eph. i. 5. Jam. ii. 5. (2.) In reſpect of *regeneration*, he dignifies them with a new birth working a gracious change upon them, infuſing in them a ſupernatural principle of holineſs, whereby they become like their heavenly Father, and ſo they are ſaid to be *begotten and born of God*, Jam. i. 18. 1 John iii. 9. (3.) They are his children by adoption; which is an act of God's free grace, whereby he aſſumes thoſe into the number of his children, who were not ſo naturally, but were ſtrangers and aliens; Yea, he takes theſe who were enemies, and of the family of hell, into the family of heaven; and graciouſly entitles them to all the advantages, dignities and privileges of children. As for inſtance, He educates, brings them up, and makes proviſion for them, as for ſons, Iſa. xlvi. 3. Matth. vi. 32. Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. 2*dly*, He allows them a ſhare in his fatherly love and compaſſion, together with the protection and attendance of ſons, Jer. xxxi. 20. Heb. i. 14. 3*dly*, He frees them from a ſervile ſtate, or any baſe and drudgery work, and endues them with a free ſpirit, Rom. viii. 15. 4*thly*, They have the chaſtiſement of ſons, which is moſt needful, Deut. viii. 5. Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8. 5*thly*, He allows them free acceſs to, and a filial confidence with him in prayer; hence in the verſe preceding my text, the apoſtle ſaith, *Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father.* And *laſtly*, He entitles them to the inheritance of ſons, as in the text, *If ſons then heirs of God.* And this leads to,

II. The ſecond head, *viz. In what reſpect believers are called heirs.* And for the better illuſtration hereof, I ſhall ſhew wherein temporal and ſpiritual heirs do agree, and wherein they differ.

I. They agree, and reſemble one another in theſe things:

1*ſt*, He that is an heir of an eſtate, hath his title freely conveyed to him: he pays not for it, becauſe he has it by birth. So believers, who are ſpiritual heirs, have the title to their inheritance freely; and as they have nothing to pay for it, ſo it is given to them *without money, and without price.* And tho' they have not a title to it by their natural birth, yet by their new birth, they become the ſons of God, and heirs of heaven.

2*dly*, They who are rightful heirs of an eſtate, have the ſureſt title of any other, becauſe it is built upon nature: A father may frown upon his ſon and heir for his fault, but doth not eaſily diſinherit him; nor will he turn him out of doors as he doth a ſervant for his offence. So believers who are God's adopted children and heirs, have a moſt ſure title to the heavenly inheritance. Tho' God may chaſtiſe them, yet he will not diſinherit them; Pſal. lxxxix. 32, 33, 34. *I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod;——Nevertheleſs my loving kindneſs I will not take utterly from him.—My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* Our title to the inheritance by the ſecond covenant, is far ſurer than Adam's was by the firſt: for when he offended, God treated him as a ſervant, and turned him out of doors: But the believer who is become a child and heir by Jeſus Chriſt, is better ſecured by the ſecond covenant; for he hath not only God's word, God's writ, and God's oath to confirm it, but he hath the Mediator's blood ſealing his charter, and an earneſt of the inheritance already given him, *viz.* God's Spirit put into his heart, 2 Cor. i. 22. So that his right and title is indefeaſible, and can never be altered.

3*dly*, An heir's title to an inheritance is reckoned more honourable than his, who obtains it another way. So the believer's title is moſt honourable, being made heirs of God, and co-heirs with his own Son Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. viii. 17. Chriſt alone is the natural Son, and hath the primary right to the inheritance, but believers by adoption, are aſſigned to a ſhare, and made co-heirs with him. So that Chriſt and believers do, as it were, divide heaven betwixt them; they have the ſame Father, dwell in the ſame houſe, ſit at the ſame table, reign on the ſame throne, partake of the ſame glory. O! What honour is this, which is put on worms of the earth? John xvii. 22,—24. John xx. 17. Rev. iii. 21. Chriſt indeed being our elder brother, his inheritance is double, and his power and glory is far greater than the glorified ſaints and angels, *inſomuch as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they*, Heb. i. 4. Eph. i. 22.

4*thly*, An heir, during his minority, hath not the actual poſſeſſion of his inheritance, as being incapable to manage it, and therefore hath tutors and curators appointed him; ſo a believer though an heir of heaven, hath not the poſſeſſion of the inheritance, while here. This life is the time of his *minority*, and Jeſus Chriſt and the Holy Spirit are his tutors and curators, until he arrive at ripe age, and the years of his *majority*, when he will be fully *meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light;* and then he enters upon the immediate poſſeſſion of all that is promiſed to him.

5*thly*, An heir of an eſtate, though he want the poſſeſſion for a time, yet he hath a preſent maintenance allowed him out of it, ſuitable to his ſtation and circumſtances; ſo believers, during their minority in this world, have a ſufficient maintenance granted them, out of that great inheritance promiſed to, and provided for them. As for *temporal things*, they have a competency ſecured to them while here: *Their bread ſhall be given them, and their water ſhall be ſure.* And for *ſpiritual things*, they ſhall have as much grace, ſtrength, comfort and joy, as will bear their charges, until the time appointed come, when they ſhall enter upon the full poſſeſſion of all.

6thly, An heir of a good eſtate may be ſomewhat ſtraitened in his circumſtances for a time, becauſe of burdens on the eſtate, or ſome neceſſary reſtrictions laid upon him; yet he comforts himſelf with the hopes of a plentiful eſtate at length: So the heirs of promiſe may be under many ſtraits and difficulties while here, under burdens of corruption, fears of wrath, and hidings of God's face. They oft complain of little grace, weak faith, languiſhing deſires, and of faint diſcoveries of God and Chriſt, and the inviſible things of the other world: Yet nevertheleſs they ſhould not murmur, but encourage themſelves in the faithful promiſe, and ſure right they have obtained in Chriſt; and be thankful, if as much be allowed them out of the inheritance, as will bear their charges to heaven, where they ſhall be ſupplied to the full, forget all their ſtraits, and remember their poverty no more.

7thly, An heir, whatever his preſent ſtraits and circumſtances be, is a reſpectful and honourable perſon; and they who know what he is born to, and what his expectations are, do put reſpect upon him: ſo believers, however mean and ſtraitened they be, during their minority in this world, are very honourable perſons, *the excellent ones in the earth,* and, in many reſpects, *more exeellent than their neighbours;* they are heirs of a great inheritance, and upon this account, ſhould be honoured by theſe among whom they live; for though they make no great outward appearance at preſent, yet, in a little, they ſhall be crowned with glory and honour.

II. *Temporal* and *ſpiritual* heirs do differ in theſe things:

1ſt, Temporal heirs, however rich they be, are only heirs of a corruptible ſpot of earth; but believers are heirs of an *inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for them.* And what is earth to heaven?

2dly, Many heirs, here on earth, never come to the actual poſſeſſion of their eſtates; for they may be ſquandered away, or loſt by the ill management of their parents or tutors; or they may be taken from them by oppreſſion or violence; and oftentimes death comes and ſnatches away the young heirs before they attain to ripe age; ſo that they never win to the poſſeſſion. But heaven's heirs will all certainly get poſſeſſion of their inheritance; their tutors will not loſe nor miſmanage it to them; no enemy can ſeize it by violence; nor *thief break through and ſteal.* And death will be ſo far from depriving them of the poſſeſſion of their inheritance, that it brings them to the immediate and full fruition thereof, through a glorious eternity.

3dly, A temporal heir doth not fully poſſeſs the heritage till the father dies; but the ſpiritual heir doth poſſeſs it fully in his Father's life time. Our eternal Father lives for ever; and this doth not hinder the heirs poſſeſſing: What a myſtery is here! In temporal heritages the father dies to give place to the ſon: but here the Son dies to bring the heirs of heaven to live and poſſeſs with the Father.

4thly, When a temporal heir comes to the poſſeſſion, he can enjoy the inheritance but a ſhort while; for death ſoon comes and diſpoſſes him. But the ſpiritual heir, when he gets poſſeſſion of his inheritance, becomes immortal, and is for ever out of the reach of death.

III. The *third* head in the method was, to ſhew what the heritage is, which God's children and heirs are entitled to; ſurely it is the greateſt and largeſt that ever was; *All things are yours,* 1 Cor. iii. 21. More particularly,

1ſt, The *earth,* is their inheritance, Matth. v. 5. tho' commonly they poſſeſs little of it, yet they have a covenant right to make uſe of the good creatures, and the outward ſupport and refreſhments of life. The men of this world, though they have a general providential right to ſuch things of the earth as they poſſeſs, yet they have no covenant-title thereto, as believers have: Their enjoyments come not to them from God as a loving Father, or as a God in covenant with them, to promote their ſouls good: They have not the comfortable and ſanctified enjoyment of the creature; no, this comes only to us in Chriſt, and is a part of the believer's portion. By the fall, Adam and his poſterity were diſinherited, they loſt their covenant right over the creatures, with the ſanctified uſe thereof. But in Chriſt, who is the heir of all things, the title is renewed to believers, and they become heirs of the world: and whatever part of it falls to their ſhare, they may look on it as a bleſſing of the covenant, a legacy from Chriſt, a part of his purchaſe, ſanctified for their uſe, and deſigned for their good.

2dly, Heaven is their heritage, however poor they be in this world, yet they are heirs of the kingdom which God hath promiſed to them that love him, Jam. ii. 5. The heirs of this celeſtial crown are like princes in diſguiſe, travelling in a foreign country: ſtrangers that know them not, look only to their outward appearance; and are apt to think them poor and miſerable: but their hopes and happineſs ly in things not ſeen; they are heirs of the land that is afar off. Sometimes, with Moſes, they are allowed to come to the top of Piſgah, to view this promiſed land, and this is moſt ſatisfying: At other times, with Abraham, they are admitted, as it were to walk through it and hear God ſay, *All this is thine, all is made over to thee in Chriſt*: and this fills the heirs of heaven with joy *unſpeakable, and full of glory.*

3dly, In the text they are called *heirs of God;* God himſelf is their inheritance, as this is more than to ſay, they are heirs of both heaven and earth. *I will be your God,* is the moſt comprehenſive promiſe in the whole Bible, it imports an intereſt in all the bleſſings and promiſes of the new-covenant, in all the purchaſe and fulneſs of Chriſt, in all the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, and in all the divine attributes and perfections. When the Lord ſaith to the heirs of ſalvation, *I will be your God*; how great is the inheritance he bequeaths to them! It is more than if he made over to them a thouſand heavens, or ten thouſand worlds; for, ſaith he, I give you the omnipotent Jehovah, I make over myſelf unto you, in all my eſſential perfections; my *omnipotency* ſhall be your guard, my *omniſciency* your overſeer, my *omnipreſence* your companion, my *bounty* your ſtore, my *wiſdom* your counſellor, my *juſtice* your rewarder, my *holineſs* your fountain of grace, my *unchangeableneſs* the rock of your ſecurity, my *all-ſufficiency* your inheritance, and my *eternity* the date of your happineſs. Surely, O believer, the *lines are* *fallen to you in pleaſant places*, and you have got a *goodly heritage*.

IV. The *fourth* head was, to enquire how believers attain to this high privilege, of being children and heirs of God. *1ſt*, It is not from any worth or merit in them, but from the free love and goodneſs of God, that hath predeſtinate them to the adoption of children, and choſen them heirs of the kingdom. *2dly*, It is by the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, who, as their Surety, interpoſes for them, when under ſentence of death; purchaſed the inheritance for them by his merits, and left it to them in legacy by his teſtament, which he ſealed and confirmed with his own blood. *3dly*, By the application of the Holy Ghoſt, who is the executor of Chriſt's teſtament, and who comes and infefts believers in the bequeathed inheritance, by renewing their ſouls, working faith in them and diſpoſing them to cloſe with the Redeemer; planting all gracious habits in them, and thereby giving them the earneſt and firſt fruits of the inheritance.

V. The fifth thing was, to ſhew the wonderful grace of God in granting ſuch a glorious privilege to poor believers. If we ſeriouſly conſider the grace of God in adopting us to be his children and heirs, we may well cry out with the apoſtle, 1 John iii. 1. *Behold! What manner of love is this the Father hath beſtowed on us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God?* The wonderfulneſs of this grace appears in theſe things:

1ſt, That he adopts us to be his ſons and heirs, when he needed us not. Men adopt ſons becauſe they are childleſs, and need ſome to propagate their families, keep up their name, and perpetuate their memories: But the eternal Father adopts children and heirs, tho' he hath a natural and eternal Son of his own, who is the brightneſs of his glory, and his ſoul's delight; and altho' he could have been infinitely happy without us, and needed no acceſſion to his glory. We ſtood in need of a Father, but he ſtood not in need of ſons.

2dly, That he chuſes theſe to be his ſons and heirs, who have nothing to recommend them to him, but are utterly unworthy of this dignity and privilege. Men uſually adopt theſe who are of their kindred, or who are their friends and favourites; but God ſhews this favour to rebels, enemies, traitors, ſatan's ſlaves, and hell's heirs. Men adopt theſe in whom they ſee, or at leaſt fancy ſomething of worth: Mordecai adopted Eſther becauſe ſhe was fair: But God adopts theſe who are naturally moſt vile and unworthy, yea, deſpicable as worms, lothſome as carcaſſes, deformed as monſters, black as Ethiopians, and diſeaſed as lepers. Having nothing to engage his love, but every thing to provoke his loathing of us.

3dly, That he ſhould be at ſuch charge and coſt in adopting us. Men are at no pains about it, but to draw up a writ, and ſign or ſeal it, and then all is done; but infinite wiſdom and power muſt be ſet on work to make us ſons and heirs; an eternity muſt be ſpent in contriving the method: the eternal Son of God muſt die to bring it about, and the charter of our adoption muſt be ſealed with his moſt precious blood. Never was it heard, that any man let his only ſon ſuffer and die, to adopt an enemy; but this the great God hath done, which is the wonder of the redeemed, the wonder of angels, and will be the wonder of eternity.

4thly, That he exalts theſe whom he adopts to ſuch high dignity and honour; for God to have pardoned his enemies, and delivered them from going to hell, had been much; for him to have taken his enemies, and made them his friends and favourites, had been more: But for God to take his mortal enemies into his boſom, and make them his ſons and heirs; yea beautify them with his image, value them as his jewels, entitle them to his kingdom, and make them co-heirs with his own beloved Son, is ſuch a prodigy of love, as ſurpaſſeth all finite comprehenſion. To have advanced one of the bleſſed cherubims or ſeraphims, ſo high, had been a ſtupendous act of grace: But to take a lump of polluted duſt, a curſed ſinner, a wretch as black as hell could make him, and raiſe him ſo high, yea above the brighteſt cherub in glory, is eternally an aſtoniſhing wonder of free love.

APPLICATION.

I. Uſe of information. This doctrine informs us of theſe things:

1ſt, Of the wonderful love and goodneſs of God, to poor elect ſinners in Chriſt: he takes enemies into his family, yea puts them among his children: and not only doth he confer the honour of ſon-ſhip on them, but alſo puts the nature of ſons in them; for they are ſons by regeneration, as well as by adoption; both theſe are joined together, as is clear from John i. 12, 13. *To them that believe he gave power to become the ſons of God, who were born not of the will of man, but of God.*

2dly, That believers are of more noble and illuſtrious deſcent than any others: they are ſons of the moſt high God. Some talk of their progenitors, and value themſelves on their high extract: So the Jews vaunted that they were Abraham's ſeed, John viii. 33. But ſurely it is an infinitely greater privilege to be among the ſons of God. David thought it no ſmall honour to be ſon-in-law to the king of Iſrael, 1 Sam. xviii. 18. And ſhall any among us reckon it a ſmall thing to be a ſon to the King of heaven.

3dly, That God is an infinitely rich and bountiful Father, who makes all his children heirs, and that of a great and ſplendid inheritance: Tho' his family be numerous, yet there is not one of them left unprovided; for he brings *many ſons to glory*, Heb. ii. 10.

II. Uſe of examination. Let us all try what right or claim we have to this honour and privilege, of being the ſons and heirs of God.

I. Try, O communicants, if ye have the marks and characters of God's children. *1ſt*, Have you cordially made choice of God as your Father in Chriſt, and dedicated yourſelves to him at this time, in a perpetual covenant, Jer. iii. 19. *How ſhall I put thee among the children!* &c. *Thou ſhalt call me my Father.* *2dly*, Have ye received the Mediator by a true and lively faith; for it is hereby we become children, John i. 2. *To as many as received him, he gave power to become the ſons of God.* Gal. iii. 26. *Ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.* We can be adopted only by virtue of his right, who is the elder brother, and heir of all things. *3dly*, Are you like your Father, have you his image upon you, holineſs? *4thly*, Do you ſincerely love Chriſt, your elder Brother and Redeemer? John viii. 42. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, if God were your Father,* *ye would love me.* *5thly,* Do ye love and eſteem all the children of the family, as the excellent of the earth? Pſal. xvi. 2. *6thly,* Are ye heartily concerned for the intereſt and welfare of your mother, the church? Pſal. cxxxvii. 6. *7thly,* Are ye troubled for offending your Father? 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. *8thly,* Are you deſirous of your Father's preſence and company? Pſal. xxvi. 8. *9thly,* Have ye childrens appetites for your ſpiritual food? Pſal. lxxxiv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

II. Try if you have the ſpirit and diſpoſition of heirs. *1ſt,* Is it your main care to make ſure your birthright, and title to the inheritance? Many of God's children have not the aſſurance hereof, but they all labour after it, and are reſtleſs without it, Matth. vi. 33. *2dly,* If you be heirs, you will highly value your birthright, and not be willing to part with it for a trifle: you will not (like profane Eſau, Heb. xi. 16) ſell it for ſenſual pleaſures, and gratifications of the fleſh: Nay, your hearts will riſe againſt ſatan's ſolicitations to break with your Father, and ſell your birthright, and ſay with Naboth to Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 3. *The Lord forbid it me, that I ſhould give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.* God forbid, that I ſhould part with my portion in Chriſt for worldly gain, carnal ſatisfactions, or any earthly delight whatſoever.

3dly, Your hearts and thoughts will be much ſet upon your heritage above, for it is your treaſure, and *where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo,* Mat. vi. 21. What do ye moſt think of, when ye are alone? Nebuchadnezzar, when he is alone, thinks on his large territories, Dan. iv. 29 30. *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the houſe of the kingdom?* &c. So if you be heirs of heaven, your hearts will be running much thither.

4thly, In the time of your difficulties and ſtraits, you will be drawing your comfort and encouragement from the large and goodly heritage, you are entitled to; and likewiſe you will be looking and waiting when it will fall into your hands; yea you will be ſending meſſengers and ſpies to the land of promiſe to ſurvey it, and bring you good tidings from thence, for your ſupport, while in the wilderneſs: You will be feaſting and entertaining yourſelves with the thoughts of your rich inheritance, and portion in Chriſt, and groaning within yourſelves, "When ſhall I be with my Father and elder Brother above! When ſhall my pilgrimage be finiſhed, and the time of my minority expire, that I may enter upon the poſſeſſion." Rom viii. 23. *We who have the firſt fruits of the Spirit groan within ourſelves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.*

Laſtly, All theſe who are heirs of heaven do get the ſeal and earneſt of the inheritance put in their hearts, viz. the Spirit of God, 2 Cor. i. 22 Eph. i. 13 14. *After that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion.* As an earneſt penny ſecures our right to a bargain, and is alſo a part of it; ſo the ſanctifying Spirit, or grace of God in the heart, is a pledge and earneſt of the glorious inheritance above. O communicants! have ye got this earneſt in your ſouls? Are ye beginning to reap the firſt fruits of the inheritance? Surely it will be matter of rejoicing to find it.

Queſt. How ſhall I know if I have got the Spirit in my heart, as the ſeal and firſt-fruits of the inheritance?

Anſw. By his actings and operations in your ſouls. *1ſt,* Wherever he is, he is an illuminating Spirit, that lets you ſee the evil of ſin, and the excellency of Chriſt. *2dly,* A humbling Spirit, that brings the ſoul to ly in the duſt, and abhor itſelf for its abominations. *3dly,* A Spirit of prayer, that inclines the ſoul to come to its father, for the ſupply of wants, Gal. iv 6. *4thly,* A ſin ſubduing Spirit, that helps to weaken and mortify indwelling corruption, Rom. viii. 13. *5thly,* A ſoul-ſanctifying Spirit, that infuſes, increaſes, quickens, and actuates grace in the heart, Eph. iv. 23. 24. Now, wherever theſe gracious actings and operations of the Spirit are to be found, you may conclude you have got a ſeal of your heirſhip, the earneſt and firſt-fruits of the inheritance, as a pledge of your being ſhortly put in poſſeſſion of all.

III. Uſe of exhortation, to two ſorts, *1ſt,* Theſe who are aliens and foreigners. *2dly,* Theſe who are children, and heirs of God.

I. I ſhall ſpeak to theſe who are aliens, have no intereſt in God's family, nor the childrens privileges; and yet many ſuch have been preſuming to eat of the childrens bread, to which they have no right. I intreat you to awake from your ſecurity and conſider the miſery of your ſtate. O! that God would ſound an alarm in your ears.

1ſt, If you be not God's children, you are dogs; and yet you have been preſuming to meddle with the childrens bread, which is horrid ſacrilege.

2dly, You are children of the devil, and of the family of hell; nay, you are Satan's bond ſlaves. There is no medium; either you are God's children, or the devil's ſlaves, John viii. 44. And what have Satan's ſlaves to do with God's holy things?

3dly, O alien and foreigner! thou art a child of wrath, an heir of hell; this is thy native heritage and portion; and this ſad heritage will remain ſure to thee: when thou leaveſt thy ſubſtance to others, this ſhall go alongſt with thyſelf to another world. *The wrath of God abideth on thee,* both here and eternally: O ſinner! wrath is thy conſtant covering now, and the heavens are growing blacker and blacker every day above thy head. The earth is weary of thee; the pit is opening her mouth for thee; *Hell is groaning for thee from beneath*; and the thread of life, that is keeping thee out of it, is juſt ready to break. O! waken before it be too late.

4thly, Thou art *without God in the world*; thou haſt no intereſt in God as thy friend; thou art far from God; he is thy wrathful enemy: Thy hell is begun already; for what makes hell, but excluſion from the preſence of God! 'Depart from me ye curſed.' Now you are gone from God already, with his curſe upon you, like the damned; only your caſe is not deſperate as theirs is: There is ſome hope of your returning to God again; but there is none of theirs. *O! turn then to the ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope.*

5thly, By preſuming on the Lord's table, you have drawn a new curſe on yourſelves; for ye have been mocking God, ſhedding Chriſt's blood, murdering the bleſſed Redeemer: You have been acting Judas's part, ſaying, *Hail Maſter,* and *betraying the Son of God with a kiſs.* O! Satan's ſlaves, you have been eating Chriſt's bread, but God's curſe was on the morſel you got; and ye have drawn down new ſoul-plagues on yourſelves. You'll be ten-times more Satan's ſlaves than you were before; for to all your other ſins you have added this, of *crucifying Chriſt afreſh*.

Queſt. Is there any hope for ſuch children of wrath, and heirs of hell as we are? *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?*

Anſw. 1*ſt*, I ſay to you, as Peter to Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21. 22. *Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter; thy heart is not right with God: repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God for forgiveneſs.* Repent and weep over a ſlain Chriſt, whom you pierced at his table, and cry, *Lord deliver me from blood guiltineſs.* O can you weep over a dead child, or friend? Can you weep for the loſs of world's wealth, and not weep for the loſs of your ſouls, and of your Saviour?

2*dly*, Retire into ſome ſecret place, and there meditate on your miſery, while children of Satan and heirs of wrath: Firmly believe your ſad ſtate, your ſalvation is impoſſible, while in it. There is a bill of excluſion paſt in the court of heaven, againſt all under a covenant of works, which is your caſe, Gal. iv. 30. 'The ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir:' heirs of wrath muſt not be heirs of glory: there is no ſalvation under this covenant, but on a condition impoſſible, perfect obedience to the law, and ſatisfaction to divine juſtice for the wrong already done. There is no promiſe in it of pardon, no place for repentance, no accepting the will for the deed. O poor forlorn ſoul, put the queſtion to thyſelf, how ſhall I live in this caſe? How ſhall I die in it? How ſhall I appear before a juſt God in it? Surely, a ſtate of wrath is too hot a climate for my ſoul to live in.

3*dly*, Cheriſh convictions when God ſends them, go not to run away with God's arrows of conviction ſticking in your conſciences, to your employments, to work them out; to your cups, to drink them out; to your bed, to ſleep them out; to your companions, to ſport them away: No, but run with them to the great Phyſician Chriſt, that he may take them out with his own hand, and apply Gilead's balm to the wound. Alas! many deſtroy their immortal ſouls, by crucifying their convictions.

4*thly*, Preſently embrace the ſweet goſpel offers that are made to you; now is the day when the great trumpet is blown, that out-caſt periſhing ſinners may come, and accept of the goſpel-jubilee, Iſa. xxvii. 13. Now liberty is proclaimed to the captives: Now the heirs of wrath may become heirs of glory: And what way is that! even by cloſing with Chriſt in a marriage-covenant. Come marry the heir of all things, and you ſhall be freed from bondage, and heaven ſhall be your dowry. Come flee preſently out of the dominion of the law, into the dominion of grace; and there the law's curſe ſhall not reach you. Accept of Jeſus Chriſt on the terms of grace, and you ſhall have a great heritage with him, an inheritance that ſhall laſt for ever. Worldly heritages do not laſt; all your riches and honours, profits and pleaſures muſt ſhortly be buried with you, they cannot accompany you into another world: But if you accept of Chriſt as your Saviour and Surety, then the eternal God is your God, *and portion for ever*. O heirs of wrath, what are your hearts ſaying? Are you content with this bargain? Are you willing to leave Satan's ſlavery, and become children and heirs of the great King?

5*thly*, Remember that dreadful vengeance will ſhortly ſeize upon them that refuſe ſuch a glorious heritage: conſider what is abiding you, Pſal. xi. 6 *Snares, fire, brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt ſhall be the portion of your cup.*

Exhort. II. To thoſe who are ſons and heirs of God, I ſhall ſpeak, in the firſt place, ſome things to you all in general.

1*ſt*, Has God, of his free mercy and rich grace made you his ſons and heirs, then be humble, and remember what you once were. When God found you, you were *children of wrath, even as others*. Free love hath picked you out from among the multitude of condmned malefactors, hath commanded your fetters to be taken off, put a pardon in your hands, and brought you forth to the glorious liberty of the children of God, and made you *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt*. You had nothing in you to engage him to love you, yet he loved you, when you were moſt loathſome: What matter of wonder is here: The glorious Bridegroom courted and eſpouſed you to himſelf on the day in which you might have been led forth to execution! He took off your priſon-garment, and cloathed you with robes of righteouſneſs and garments of ſalvation? He took the chains from off your arms, the rope from about your neck, and put his own comelineſs on you, that you might be fit for the king's table! Be not proud of your gifts, graces or attainments: but remember that ye were once *children of warth, even as others;* all you have is borrowed. Be humble alſo, and *remember your faults this day*: Mind, how you have forgotten your benefactor! How unkindly you have treated him that remembered you in your low eſtate! How unſuitably you have walked! *Is this your kindneſs to your friend?*

2*dly*, Pity the children of wrath, and heirs of hell, that ſtill ly in chains of darkneſs. Be not unconcerned for them, ſeeing ye were once in the ſame condition with them; ye have got aſhore, but your fellows behind you are ſtill in danger of periſhing. Put on bowels of compaſſion for them, pity them, and uſe all means for their deliverance.

3*dly*, Be content with your lot in a preſent world, and be eaſy under your preſent ſtraits and difficulties, whatever they be; for you have the proſpect of a great inheritance, from whence you may take encouragements under every trial. You may be eaſy under the world's hatred, and carry chearfully amidſt all affronts and injuries, for you may expect to be envied. Favourites of princes are commonly ſlandered and abuſed. Joſeph was hated of his brethren, becauſe his father ſhewed more than ordinary kindneſs to him. "If ye were " of the world, (*ſaith Chriſt*) the world would love " his own; But becauſe ye are not of the world, but " I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the " world hateth you," John xvi 19. But let theſe ſolace your minds, ye are heirs of God, and dearly beloved of him.

4*thly*, Live as children of God, and heirs of the kingdom; walk worthy of your dignity, and behave ſuitably to your character. You have the angels, theſe great officers of the crown, and chief miniſters of ſtate appointed to wait on you conſtantly, while here below, and you have a glorious expectation hereafter. Shew forth then the greatneſs and nobleneſs of your ſpirits, by undervaluing mean and ſordid things. Let your ſpeech and actions hers look like the country to which you are going, that it may be ſaid of you as of Gideon's children, Judges viii. 18. *Each one reſembling the children of a king*. The heirs of earthly kings have been obſerved to have had generous and noble ſpirits, and have ſcorned to intermeddle with baſe and inferior matters. It is a common ſtory of Alexander the Great, That when he was a little boy, and provoked to run a race with one of his inferiors, he firſt demurred, and then flatly refuſed the challenge, ſaying, 'It did not become the ſon of a king to ſubmit to ſo mean an undertaking, and contend with one ſo far below him' The brave ſpirit of that princely youth may ſhame theſe Chriſtians who are the adopted ſons of God, and heirs to a crown that ſhall never fade; and yet oftentimes are found groveling on the earth, like the men of this world, and buſied about things very far below them. Let the heirs of heaven maintain a holy contempt of the world, and the things thereof. Let them ſet their feet on theſe things on which worldlings ſet their hearts; and reckon themſelves riches and happier in their relation to God and the kingdom above, than any graceleſs monarch that ever wore an earthly crown. Shall earthly men make ſuch a noiſe in the world, and think none comparable to them, becauſe forſooth their heap of dung is ſome bigger than their neighbours? (for ſo Paul eſteems the world) and will the children of the king of heaven, *of whom the world is not worthy*, Heb. xi. 38. be ſo low and mean-ſpirited, as to be amuſed and dazzled with the world's vanities: who yet have God for their portion, Chriſt for their huſband, heaven for their home, and glory for their treaſure?

5thly, Let the heirs of heaven be mutually concerned in one another; let them ſympathize together, when any of them is in trouble, and alſo rejoice in one another's welfare And when the time cometh that they arrive at full age, and are taken up to the poſſeſſion of their inheritance, (though they be your near relations) do not quarrel God's providence, or mourn *as theſe that have no hope;* or carry, as if you grudged their happineſs; but chearfully ſubmit to your Father's will, and rejoice in their preferment; for the *day of their death is better than the day of their birth.*

6thly, Be earneſt in prayer, that God may raiſe up many young heirs to ſupply the room of thoſe that he is taking home. Let the heirs of God be never ſo much increaſed, God's children will not envy their number, but greatly rejoice therein; ſeeing the inheritance is vaſt and infinitely ſatisfying to both men and angels: and our heavenly Father is highly glorified in the multitude of his children. And, *laſtly*, When heirs are brought into the family, carry affectionately to them; be kind to young heirs, eſpecially, during the time of their nonage and want of experience; be for *eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame*, and great ſhall be your reward in heaven.

In the next place, I ſhall ſay ſomething more particularly to thoſe who were at their father's table yeſterday, of whom I preſume there have been, and are ſeveral ſorts.

I. There may be ſome (I hope) that have ground to ſay, That they came to their Father's table, and he ſmiled on them, and dealt bountifully with them. To ſuch I ſhall ſay theſe few things: *1ſt*, Wonder at the Lord's kindneſs, and bleſs his name with your whole ſouls, for his diſtinguiſhing favours to you, who were by nature enemies of God, and children of Satan. *2dly*, Hold faſt and improve carefully what you have got, and let not Satan rob you of it. *3dly*, Sympathize with other children of the family, that have not won your length, but perhaps are under great diſcouragements; mind their caſe, and ſpeak a good word for them now, while you are favourites of heaven

II. In the next place, I ſhall ſpeak to thoſe heirs of heaven, who, notwithſtanding of their being at the table, remain full of doubts and fears, and are very apprehenſive that God has not yet put them among the children, nor given them a right to the heir's portion. Well, what is the ground of your doubting? 1. O, ſaith one, I ſcarce feel the working of the ſanctifying Spirit of God in my ſoul, which is the common earneſt or pledge of the inheritance, that God uſeth to give to his heirs while here. *Anſwer*. Though grace be weak in you, you muſt *not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things*, or ſay you have none at all: Nay, bleſs God if thou canſt ſpy any ſpark of grace in thy heart at all, and pray that God may cheriſh it. A man that gets an earneſt of a good bargain, is not much diſcouraged whether it be a greater or ſmaller piece of money, a ſixpence, or half a crown, for he thinks the leaſt piece is a ſufficient earneſt or pledge from an honeſt man of his bargain; and he is eaſy ſeeing he knows he has to do with one that is faithful, and will not go back of his word: Indeed he might be diſcouraged, if that which he got were not an earneſt penny: But there is a great difference betwixt a piece of money that is given in gratitude, and that which is given only in earneſt, as a pledge of a far greater ſum, or of a very rich bargain. O heir of heaven, remember this, the ſmall degree of grace thou haſt, is given only as an earneſt of more grace, yea, of eternal glory itſelf.

2dly, Another may be ſaying, Ah! but I want that love to God, that a child ſhould have to his father. *Anſ. 1ſt*, It is good thou art ſenſible of it, and that thou knoweſt thy wants. *2dly*, Canſt thou ſay, it is thy greateſt grief thou haſt not more love to thy Father; yea, that thou wouldſt give a world, if thou waſt maſter of it, for more heart love to him? Then take comfort, for there is ſincerity of love to God in thy heart.

3dly, Another may ſay, I have not the ſpirit of prayer, which God uſeth to beſtow on his children; I cannot attain to theſe enlargements and fluent expreſſions that I ſee others have in prayer. *Anſ. 1ſt*, It may be they are old experienced Chriſtians thou converſeſt with, and they likewiſe have their ebbings and flowings as well as others; for the *Spirit blows when and where he liſteth*. Thou ſeeſt perhaps the one, but art unacquainted with the other. *2dly*, It is thy happineſs, thou haſt to do in prayer with one that looks not ſo much to the words of the mouth, as the affections of the heart. If thou haſt a heart centering on God, and flowing out towards him in duty, God loves that better than the moſt eloquent expreſſions.

4thly, Ah! ſaith ſome poor ſoul, I cannot attain to any tenderneſs of heart and frame in prayer. *Anſ. 1ſt*, Is it thy greateſt grief and trouble that it is ſo? Then it is a good ſign, thou haſt ſome tenderneſs in thy heart. *2dly*, Doſt thou look to thy elder brother Jeſus Chriſt, that he may plead for thee, and ſend his

Spirit to help thy infirmities? Our bleſſed Lord Jeſus has prayed for many that could not pray for themſelves. Cry to him for the quickening influence of his Spirit, to enable you to call on his name; for he *gives his Spirit to them that aſk him.*

5thly, It may be ſome poor drooping ſoul is ſaying, I came to my Father's table yeſterday, but inſtead of any comfortable diſcovery, all I got was a frown: my Father frowned, and ſeemed angry with me. *Anſ. 1ſt,* Thou haſt reaſon to be thankful, that he took any notice of thee at all; for ſometimes God holds communion with his people by frowns and reproofs, and thereby humbles them for ſin, and draws them nearer to himſelf. *2dly,* Perhaps God is correcting thee for ſome former ſins againſt light, which as yet thou haſt not mourned over: For theſe whom God takes into his family, and puts among his children, he will correct in his fatherly love, but *his loving kindneſs he will not take away from them.* Let all the children of God and heirs of heaven ſubmit in a humble and kindly manner, to the reproofs and corrections of their heavenly Father. And let them ſay, as Elihu to Job, under his ſharp trials, *What I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity I will do ſo no more.* “Lord train me up “during my minority, as thou pleaſeſt; make uſe of “what diſcipline towards me, thou thinkeſt beſt for “me; only (if it be thy bleſſed will) make it known “to me for my comfort, that I do really belong to “thy family, and ſhall not be ſhut out of doors for “ever. And ſo my ſoul ſhall live and praiſe thy “name.” *Amen.*

SERMON XVII.

A Sermon after the Communion.

The fainting Believer ſtrengthened for his work.

Iſaiah xl. 29. *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength.*

THE prophet having concluded the preceding chapter with a prophecy of the captivity of the Jews into Babylon, though it was many years before it came; he, in this and the ſucceeding chapter, furniſhes the church and people of God with a great many precious promiſes for their ſupport and comfort, during that long captivity; which ſurely would be of great uſe to them in that cloudy and dark day.

In the latter end of this chapter, the prophet is reproving the people of God, who are now ſuppoſed to be captives at Babylon, for their unbelief and deſpondency under their affliction, in ſaying or thinking God had either caſt them off, or could not help them, verſe 27. For remedying whereof, he puts them in mind of God's power and all-ſufficiency to help in the greateſt ſtraits, verſe 28. And in the text and following verſes, he aſſures them of God's compaſſion, and readineſs to help them under all their ſinking diſcouragements. *He giveth power to the faint,* &c.

More particularly in the text, we may notice theſe things: *1ſt,* The ſad caſe of many of God's people in captivity, *They were faint and without might,* i. e. They were under preſſures and burdens both outward and inward, that were ready to cruſh them, and make them faint away; they were called to ſeveral pieces both of ſervice and ſuffering, for which they had no ſtrength nor might of themſelves.—*2dly,* We have their mercy and privilege under this ſad caſe, *viz. power* and *ſtrength;* i. e. ſpiritual ſtrength mainly, which is graciouſly promiſed them for their encouragement, under all their faintings and trials.——*3dly,* The author of this privilege, *The everlaſting God, the Lord Jehovah, with whom is everlaſting ſtrength, who fainteth not, neither is weary.*—*4thly,* The way how this mercy is conveyed, it is in a way of free gift, without any worth or merit on our part; he giveth it, and he encreaſeth it; he giveth ſtrength where it is not, and he encreaſeth it where it is already given in any meaſure.

DOCTRINE. *That as the Lord's people while here are liable to many fainting diſcouragements, under which they cannot ſupport themſelves, ſo the Lord is pleaſed to give them ſuitable ſtrength for all their exigencies.* This is alſo confirmed from that gracious promiſe, recorded in the following chapter, Iſa. xli. 10. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs.* And the pſalmiſt confirms this truth by his own comfortable experience, Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. *In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.*

The method I chuſe for proſecuting this doctrine, ſhall be,

1. To enquire into theſe fainting diſcouragements, which believers labour under while here.
2. Why the Lord doth let them meet with ſuch trials.
3. How it is that the Lord doth ſtrengthen his weak and fainting people.
4. What are the great ends and uſes for which the Lord gives ſuch ſtrength to his people.
5. Give ſome reaſons to prove, that the Lord will certainly give them this ſtrength.
6. Make improvement.

I. As to the firſt, *viz.* To inſtance ſome of theſe fainting diſcouragements that believers labour under while here, and which, in a ſpecial manner, do call for divine ſupport. And theſe are of two ſorts, *viz.* Either of a temporal or ſpiritual nature.

1ſt, Sometimes they meet with external afflicting providences, which are very diſcouraging: As, (1.) When they are tryſted with *poverty* and *want,* ſo that they know not how to ſubſiſt themſelves and their families; this is a great trial, and requires ſpiritual ſtrength from God to help them to carry right under it. (2.) When they are deſtitute of *earthly friends,* and have none to comfort or ſympathize with them in trouble; this is alſo a heavy trial that needs ſtrength from God. (3.) When they are loaded with *reproaches* and *miſrepreſentations,* and that not only from enemies, but even from friends; this hath been very ſinking to the beſt of God's people. (4.) When they are tryſted with the death and loſs of near and dear relations, pleaſant children, and helpful friends; this caſe hath been afflicting to many. (5.) When they are under bodily ſickneſs or racking pains, ſo that they *have* *no reſt in their bones, weariſome nights are appointed for them, and they are full of toſſings till the dawning of the day.* (6.) When they have a near view of meeting with death, that king of terrors, and terror of kings. (7.) When they are under the oppreſſions and perſecution of cruel enemies. Theſe are trials that the deareſt of God's children are expoſed to, and under which they would be ready to faint, if they were not ſtrengthened from above. And eſpecially theſe outward preſſures are very ſinking, and diſcouraging to them; eſpecially when they think it is their ſin that has brought them into theſe ſad circumſtances, or when their trials are of a long continuance, and it may be ſomething in them appears to be ſingular, as it was in the caſe of the Jews in Babylon. Then it is that God's people are ready to faint and ſuccumb; and ſhould look to God to ſtep in with ſuitable ſupplies of ſtrength.

2dly, Sometimes God's people are tryſted with fainting diſcouragements of a ſpiritual nature: As, (1.) When they find indwelling corruption, and heart-plagues ſtrong and prevailing, this caſe was very affecting and afflicting to David, Pſal. lxv. 3. and to Paul, Rom. vii. 24. and to the church when they cried out Iſa. lxiv. 6. *Our iniquities like the wind have taken us away*: *q. d.* The tide is ſo ſtrong we have no might to ſtem it. (2.) When the *enemy is exalted over them,* and ſatan doth harraſs them with blaſphemous injections, horrid atheiſtical thoughts, and violent temptations; he ſometimes tempts God's children to the greateſt of ſins, as he tempted Job to curſe God: How is the ſoul ready to faint at ſuch a time, if it get not ſtrength from God! and crieth out, *How long ſhall mine enemy be exalted over me? It is like a ſword in my bones, when the enemy reproacheth me, and ſaith daily to me, where is thy God? O my rock, why haſt thou forgotten me? why go I mourning becauſe of the oppreſſion of the enemy?*

3dly, When God hides his face, and they cannot get acceſs to him in any duty; ſo as they think, they are given up and left to ſtruggle with ſatan and corruption in their own ſtrength. That is a melancholy caſe to the ſoul, under which it would faint, without ſecret ſupport from God.

4thly, When they find their hearts wholly out of frame for any ſpiritual duty; by reaſon of much backwardneſs to it, wearying of it, and corruption working in them, which carries them away from God in time of duty: Such as atheiſm, unbelief, worldly-mindedneſs, heart-hardneſs, *&c.* Now the ſoul would faint, and wholly backſlide from God, if he did not ſecretly uphold it.

5thly, When the ſoul is brought back again, as it were, to the foot of mount Sinai, and made to hear the thunderings thereof, and the curſes of a broken law renewed: The law gets a new commiſſion to take the man into cuſtody, and put his feet into the ſtocks: So that old wounds are opened, and former guilt is revived, and God ſeems to behave to him like a ſtranger or an enemy. Thus he did to Heman, Pſal. lxxxviii. Now at ſuch a time the ſoul is ready to faint, and ſay, *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Hath he forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?* But eſpecially if ſickneſs, or the meſſengers of death come and knock at the man's door, while in ſuch a caſe, O! how is he diſtreſſed with the melancholy apprehenſions of death and judgment? "Death (thinks he,) is near, and I "am moſt unready for it; judgment is approaching, "my accompts are unclear, and the Judge's face all "covered with frowns." Now the ſoul indeed would faint if God in Chriſt did not ſupport it.

6thly, As believers have many fainting diſcouragements, upon the account of their own caſe, ſo alſo upon a public account, in reſpect of the church and land wherein they live: as, *1ſt,* When they ſee a ſpirit of ſlumber and deep ſleep fallen upon profeſſors, ſo that they are not moved with the judgments of God, when denounced both by his word and providence; yea, though *the fire be kindled, and burning round about them, yet they lay it not to heart.* *2dly* When they ſee religion under a great and viſible decay among all ranks, many turning daily more careleſs and indifferent about duty, more ſlack about family worſhip and ſecret prayer, and daily more carnal and worldly in their converſation. When they ſee chriſtian-love decay, diviſions and animoſities increaſe, malice, envy, and hatred of one another prevail, and people growing more ſelfiſh, minding their own things, and careleſs about the things of Jeſus Chriſt. *3dly,* When they ſee God's Spirit in a ſad meaſure withdrawn from the aſſemblies of his people; ordinances become as a ſealed book, dry breaſts, and a miſcarrying womb, ſo that Ichabod may be written on them, or *God is departed;* when they ſee communions lifeleſs, and not what they wont to be. Chriſt is abſent, and yet few ſenſible of the judgment, or laying it to heart, ſo as to lament after the Lord. They ſee many buſy to ſin him away, but few endeavouring to pray him back again. The ſincere ſeekers of God are often like to faint under this diſcouragement. *4thly,* When they ſee many profeſſors making foul ſlips, yea, falling into ſcandalous ſins to the reproach of religon, and hardening of the wicked; and but few like to be found ſincere in their profeſſion. *5thly,* When they ſee theſe that are truly godly, tender and conſcientious in their walk, public-ſpirited and concerned for the intereſt of Chriſt, removing and going off the ſtage: This is a very melancholy and ſinking diſcouragement to the few that are left behind, under which they need ſupport from God: hence it was that the pſalmiſt cries ſo earneſtly, Pſal. xii. 1. *Help Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

II. The ſecond thing propoſed was, to enquire why the Lord lets his people be tryſted with ſuch fainting diſcouragements.

1ſt, To correct them for their former faults and miſcarriages; hence we read, Jer. iv. 18 when the Lord had threatened ſeveral ſad things againſt his people, he ſaith, *thy ways and thy doings have procured theſe things to thee.* God will have his people to ſmart for ſin; not to make any ſatisfaction for ſin, but to render ſin bitter unto them

2dly, To humble and make them low, in midſt of their great attainments and ſignal enjoyments: Believers are ſtill apt to be puffed up with theſe, if they were not kept under by humbling diſpenſations. Hence even Paul himſelf had a meſſenger of ſatan ſent to buffet him, 'leſt he ſhould be exalted above meaſure, 'through the abundance of revelations, 2 Cor. xii. 8.

3dly, To let them know the difference betwixt earth and heaven, a militant and triumphant ſtate. When things go well with us in the world, we are apt to ſay with Peter on the mount, *It is good for us to be here*. But when theſe go ill, God's people turn their tongue, and ſay with the pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 27. *It is good for me to draw nigh to God*. When we live at eaſe, we are ready to think ourſelves at home; but when trouble comes we begin to ſay, *Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt*. It is not eaſy to wean us from the comforts of this life: and therefore God many times doth rub gall and wormwood on the breaſts of this preſent world, to imbitter its comforts, and take our hearts off it.

4thly, To awaken the ſpirit of prayer, and make them more importunate in their addreſſes to the throne of grace, Pſal. cxxx. 1. Chriſt ſuffered the ſtorm to continue, till the ſhip was almoſt overwhelmed, that the diſciples might come and awaken him with their cries to help them, Matth. viii. 25.

5thly, That his people may get new proofs of his love and tender care in ſtrengthening ſuch weak reeds as they are, to endure ſuch ſtorms; and in his ſtepping in ſo ſeaſonably for their relief and ſupport, when ready to faint and ſuccumb. God's people have much to ſpeak on this account, to the praiſe of his free grace, Pſal. xciv. 18. *When I ſaid, my foot ſlippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up*.

6thly, To cauſe his people long for heaven, and mend their pace, in the way to it, Phil. i. 23. There is a great difference betwixt our paayers in health and in ſickneſs; our repentings in proſperity and adverſity, Iſa. xxvi. 16. Hoſ. v. 15. He that in proſperity prayed with a cold heart and dry eyes, can in affliction cry aloud, and mingle his prayers with tears. Though heaven was much out of ſight and out of mind before, and he had ſcarce a thought of flitting; yet now when diſtreſs comes, he begins to ſigh with David, Pſal. lv. 6. *O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I flee away, and be at reſt: I would haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt*.

III. The next thing is to enquire, how it is that the Lord doth ſtrengthen his weak and fainting people. And here I ſhall do two things: (1.) Enquire into the nature of this ſpiritual ſtrength, the Lord doth give his people. (2.) Into the way and manner how he conveys it to them.

As to the firſt, This ſpiritual ſtrength, ſuppoſeth, that the ſoul is made alive, and raiſed out of the grave of ſin and a natural ſtate, by the quickening ſpirit of God. And that the ſoul is united to Chriſt by faith, who is the fountain and channel of all grace and ſpiritual ſtrength.

But more directly, God's ſtrengthening his people imports theſe things:

1ſt, The Lord's creating and implanting the habits of grace in the ſoul, which are the ſtrength of the ſoul: and therefore called the armour of God, and our ſhield and helmet, Eph. vi.

2dly, His increaſing of grace in the ſoul; for he not only plants theſe habits, but ſtrengthens them, and gradually perfects what he has begun. Pſal. xcii. 12. 13.

3dly, His breathing on his own work of grace in the ſoul, and thereby actuating his people's graces, and drawing them forth into a lively exerciſe: For God muſt not only plant grace and increaſe it, but alſo ſet it a-work, and bring it into action, Phil. ii. 13. *It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do*

4thly, The Lord's ſtrengthening of his fainting people, imports his letting out, and conveying of freſh ſupplies of grace to his people, in the time of their need. Not only doth he plant, increaſe, and actuate grace, but likewiſe he doth come in with ſeaſonable ſupplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, anſwerable to their preſſures and exigencies. Grace of itſelf is but a creature, and ſubject to periſh, and would ſoon be deſtroyed by the frequent attacks made upon it, if it were not ſeaſonably reinforced with new ſupplies from its author. And thus the Lord, from time to time, feeds the believer's lamp with freſh oil; gives it more faith, more love, more hope, and more deſires; and thus he gives power to the faint, and ſtrengthens theſe things which remain when ready to die.

5thly, It imports the ſupplying the ſoul with experiences of the power, mercy, and faithfulneſs of God, for the nouriſhing and ſtrengthening of faith in the time of trial; and therefore we find the Lord, when he is ſtrengthening his fainting people in the text and context, he refers them to their former experience, verſe 27. 28. *Haſt thou not heard? Haſt thou not known?* How then ſayſt thou, that God hath forſaken thee? Often do we find David ſtrengthening his faith this way, Pſal. xlii. & cxvi.

6thly, It lies, in the Lord's applying to the ſoul his gracious and comfortable promiſes, and thereby animating his people with ſpiritual courage, and reſolution to grapple with all their enemies and difficulties He ſhews that God is on their ſide, that his 'grace is 'ſufficient for them,' and that he 'will never leave 'them, nor forſake them,' Iſa. xli. 10. Pſal. cxviii. 6. Heb. xiii. 5. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 9.

7thly, The Lord ſtrengthens his people, by giving them an encouraging view and proſpect of a happy outgate from all their trials and diſcouragements, and of a glorious victory over all their enemies, Job xix. 25. Rom. xvi. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 7. 8.

II. I come to the ſecond thing, *viz*. To ſhew the way and manner how this ſpiritual ſtrength is conveyed to believers. And this you may take up in theſe following propoſitions.

1ſt, God has treaſured up in Jeſus Chriſt his Son, a fulneſs of grace and ſpiritual ſtrength for his people. As our Mediator is the purchaſer of this ſtrength, ſo he is the truſtee, to whom it is given in order to be beſtowed upon believers: This is clear, (1.) From the promiſes of God for giving ſtrength, they run in this channel, Zech. x. 12 *I will ſtrengthen them in the Lord;* (*i. e*. in Chriſt) *and they ſhall walk up and down in his name, ſaith the Lord*. (2.) From the precepts of God, which are in the ſame ſtrain, Eph. vi. 10. *Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. 2 Tim. ii. 1. *My ſon be ſtrong in the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt*. (3.) From the practice of the ſaints, they al look for their ſtrength this way, Iſa. xlv. 24. *Surely ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength* And Paul ſaith, Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me*. So that Chriſt is our head of influence and ſtore-keeper. The ſtock of our grace and ſtrength, ſince Adam's fall and miſmanagement, is all put in Chriſt's hand; he is the great ſteward of heaven, the key of the ſtore-houſe is in his cuſtody, and on him we muſt daily depend for neceſſary ſupplies.

2*dly*, The way that Chriſt our head and treaſurer communicates his ſtrength, and gives out the neceſſary ſupplies thereof to his people, is by the miniſtration of the holy Spirit, and his gracious operations, and influences on their ſouls, John xv. 29 John xvi 14. 15. And for this effect, the Spirit of God dwells in believers, to excite and draw forth their graces to frequent acts and a lively exerciſe; and to give them theſe gracious aids and aſſiſtances, their exigencies do call for.

3*dly*, The way that the holy Spirit gives this ſtrength to believers is, in the uſe of appointed means, both public and private, Pſal. lxxxiv. 4, 5, 6, 7. Where we ſee, that theſe who would go from ſtrength to ſtrength, muſt dwell in God's houſe, and attend his ordinances. We expect not our daily food without labouring, tilling, ſowing and reaping; ſo neither can we look for ſpiritual ſtrength but in the uſe of the word, ſacraments and prayer.

IV. The fourth thing in the general method, is, To ſhew what are the great ends and uſes, for which the Lord gives this ſpiritual ſtrength to his people.

1*ſt*, He gives it to them for doing, or performing of duty; for without new ſupplies of ſtrength, we cannot act ſpiritually, nor perſevere in duty: Hence the ſpouſe cries out, Cant. i. 4. *Draw me, and we will run after thee.* And the pſalmiſt ſaith, Pſal. cxix. 32. *I will run the ways of thy commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart.* God's work muſt ever be done in God's ſtrength.

2*dly*, He gives it for ſuffering, and bearing of croſſes and afflictions, and we need God's ſtrength that we may do it without murmuring or fainting, Col. i. 11.

3*dly*, For fighting, we have ſtrong and dangerous enemies to conflict with, the devil, the world and indwelling ſin; and we have no ſtrength of our own to reſiſt or ſubdue them: wherefore, we muſt look to God for ſupernatural ſtrength.

V. The next thing was to give reaſons, why the Lord will certainly give ſuitable ſtrength to his people under all their exigencies.

1*ſt*, Becauſe it was purchaſed for them by their Surety Chriſt, and promiſed to them in him, Zech. x. 12.

2*dly*, Becauſe they were in the moſt ſolemn and ſerious manner recommended to the care of God by his beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt, when he was leaving the world, John xvii. 11.

3*dly*, Becauſe of their near relation to him, and his great love to them; they are the ſubjects of his kingdom, the children of his family; yea, they are as it were, the wife of his boſom; and will he not then take ſpecial care of them?

4*thly*, Becauſe they rely and depend wholly upon the Lord himſelf for this ſtrength and ſupport, Iſa. xxvi. 3. Pſal. lvii. 2.

5*thly*, Becauſe the Lord knows that his people have many ſtrong and dangerous enemies; and that they have no inherent ſtrength to hold out againſt them, having loſt that by the fall. Yea, he knows that they have a natural bentneſs to backſliding, that the ſeed of the worſt ſin is in them, and of themſelves they cannot ſtand before the leaſt ſpark of a temptation; and ſo would be infallibly undone, if he did not ſtrengthen them, Hoſ. xi. 7. Pſal. xix. 13.

APPLICATION.

Uſe I. Of *Information.* We may hence ſee.

1*ſt*, That worldly proſperity and carnal joy are no ſign of God's favour: For God's people are ſubject to many fainting diſcouragements here. Wicked men receive their good things in this life, but believers good things are to come.

2*dly*, We may hence be informed of the difference betwixt the two covenants, *of works and of grace.* Adam, by the *firſt*, was to do all by his own inherent ſtrength; but believers, under the *ſecond*, do all by borrowed ſtrength, and muſt conſtantly be beholden to God for new ſupplies. And it is well for us that it is ſo, for our ſtock is far ſurer in God's hand, than in our own. When the prodigal got his ſtock in his own hand, he preſently left his father's houſe, *went into a far country*, and ſquandered all away, and ſo would we if God ſhould truſt us with it. Beſides, by this gracious method believers are kept humble all their days, and put to keep up a conſtant correſpondence with a throne of grace, and give all the glory of their through-bearing to God's free grace. *Bleſſed be God for the well ordered covenant.*

3*dly*, We may hence ſee, how great ſecurity believers have for their through-bearing; almighty power is engaged for them; they are ſtrengthened and *kept by the power of God, through faith, unto ſalvation.* So that everlaſting ſtrength muſt fail before a believer can finally miſcarry.

Uſe II. Of *Reproof.*

1*ſt*, To thoſe who are too ſecure and confident when they attain to any ſpiritual comfort or joy, and do not remember the fainting diſcouragements God's people are ſubject to, while in this world. O communicants, have you been kindly entertained at this feaſt? Be not vain or ſecure, all things here are changeable: How ſuddenly was David's caſe altered? Pſal. xxx. One time he is mounted up in proſperity; but being too confident, he is preſently caſt down and troubled. And in Pſal. cxix. we find him at one time *rejoicing in God's teſtimonies, as much as in all riches;* and very ſoon after, his *ſoul is cleaving to the duſt, and melting for heavineſs.* Go not then to build too much on ſenſible conſolations, for theſe come and go at God's pleaſure; it is in heaven only you can have continual day without night or cloudings; but here you are to look for changes, yea, for fainting diſcouragements, therefore prepare for them by ſecuring a title to divine ſtrength.

2*dly*, To theſe believers who give too much way to fainting diſcouragements, and do not encourage themſelves in their covenanted God, and his ſtrength. I do not marvel, O communicants, though ye be caſt down, who are ſenſible of the hidings of God's face, the prevailing of heart-plagues, the buffetings of ſatan, &c. but only give not way to exceſſive diſcouragement: I call it exceſſive, when it is ready to make you give over hopes, lay aſide endeavours, indiſpoſe you for holy duties, refuſe to apply to Chriſt your all-ſufficient help, or refuſe comfort from God's promiſes of ſtrength and ſupport. Some indeed think religion lies in deſperate unbelieving thoughts, and in making of complaints; but ſurely there is no religion there, otherwiſe we muſt conclude Cain, Judas, and the damned to be godly. Religion rather lies in the actings of faith, and improving God's promiſes for ſtrengthening us in doing his will.

3*dly*, To Arminians, who maintain the doctrine of *free-will, viz.* That it is in the power of a man's free-will, to do that which is ſpiritually and ſavingly good, if he pleaſe to uſe his natural abilities. Oh! how little do theſe men know themſelves that talk ſo: for if it be not in the power of a man's will, when graciouſly changed and renewed, to do good, without ſuperadded ſupplies of grace and ſtrength from God, from time to time, as certainly it is not; far leſs can a natural and unregenerate perſon do it, that is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.

4*thly*, To theſe communicants who look not intirely to God in Chriſt for ſtrength for the work and warfare, duties and difficulties before them; but lean too much to ſomething in themſelves, or ſomething they have got at this occaſion.

1. Some truſt too much to the ſtability of their own reſolutions and engagements: They have vowed and ſworn, and they hope likewiſe to perform accordingly. But do not depend upon theſe, otherwiſe they will ſoon fail you; as they did Peter after the firſt communion. The Pſalmiſt was under many reſolutions to keep cloſe to the way of duty, yet he ſays, Pſal. lxxiii. 2. *My feet were almoſt gone, and my ſteps had well nigh ſlipt.* And he acknowledges, it was nothing but God's mercy that held him up, Pſal. xciv. 18.

2. Others truſt too much to the ſtability of their gracious habits, without looking to God for daily renewed influences of ſtrength, for actuating and recruiting their weak graces. But, what is grace, faith, love, fear of God, repentance, hope? Of themſelves they are but vaniſhing things, and if they were not ſeaſonably ſtrengthened and ſupplied from heaven, they would ſoon die, Rev. iii. 2.

5*thly*, We may here reprove theſe who make it an excuſe for the neglect of duty, *They want ſtrength.* Oh! it is, becauſe they want will. For can you ſay, That though you have no ſtrength of yourſelves; yet you deſire to caſt your impotent ſouls in God's way, and aim at duty as ye can, looking to God for ſtrength, and pleading his promiſe? Could you ſay this, it were ſomething. Were you like a man rowing up the water, and ſtill beat back by the impetuous ſtream, you might have ſome ſhadow of excuſe; but when you do not make ſincere attempts, you can have none.

Queſt. How ſhall we undertake or perform duty, when we are dead, and find the influences of grace and ſtrength withdrawn?

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Whatever be our caſe or frame for duty, yet ſtill God's command is of binding force on us, and obliges us to do it.

2*dly*, No pretence of indiſpoſition can warrant our not obeying a divine command: for our deadneſs and indiſpoſition is our ſin, and one ſin can never excuſe another, *Two blacks cannot make one white.* So that in a dead hour, you muſt eſſay to do your duty, though you can do nothing but the very outward form.

3*dly*, You muſt aim at your duty to prevent greater evils, for if you neglect it wholly, your caſe grows ſtill worſe: Your deadneſs increaſes, your hardneſs, impenitency, darkneſs, weakneſs and indiſpoſition will ſtill grow greater.

4*thly*, By aiming at duty, you put yourſelves in God's road: And when like the blind man, you ly in Chriſt's way, you ſtand fairer for a viſit or an alms from him, than theſe who ſtay at a diſtance.

5*thly*, Duties performed, when we are indiſpoſed, may be very pleaſing to God. It muſt ſurely be acceptable to our gracious Lord and maſter, to ſee one of his weak or lamed ſervants attempt to go his errands, tho' he halt and make but ſlow progreſs in his way: Nay, this will move his tender heart to pity him, and give him ſtrength. And many a time have his ſervants got ſupplies of ſtrength on a ſudden, when they have been eſſaying duty. Their ſouls, *ere they were aware, have made them like the chariots of Aminadab*, Cant. vi. 12. Therefore, *O diſcouraged communicant*, perſiſt in aiming at thy duty, whatever be thy preſent frame. Who knows, when thou art lifting at thy heavy burden, but God will graciouſly lend thee a lift and lift it for thee.

Uſe III. Of *Trial.* O communicants, examine, if you have got any ſpiritual ſtrength at this ſolemn feaſt. Many a weak believer has found it a ſtrengthening meal to their fainting ſouls. Mark, if it be ſo with you. 1*ſt*, Do ye find your graces more quick and vigorous than formerly. As for inſtance, 1. Is faith more lively? Are you better pleaſed with the contrivance of grace, and method of ſalvation, than before? And are you now enabled to abandon your own righteouſneſs, and go to your Surety Chriſt; laying the burden of your ſins upon him, and leaning wholly to him for pardon and acceptance with God: And alſo looking to him as your head of influences for heart-purity and ſanctifying grace, and ſtrength to perform duty? 2. Is your repentance and grief for ſin increaſed? Do you ſee more of ſin's deformity, and abhor it as the enemy of Chriſt? And are you more afraid of piercing your Redeemer by it, and more reſolved againſt wicked company and temptations to ſin than before? 3. Is your love and deſire toward Chriſt more quickened? Are you more reſtleſs without his preſence? Would you part with your beſt enjoyments, in a world, for a ſight of his face? Are you more deſirous of heart holineſs, that you may be capable to ſerve Chriſt, and advance the intereſt of his kingdom?

2*dly*, If this ordinance hath been a ſtrengthening meal to you, then you will find more delight in duty than before, you will be inclined and enabled to pray more fervently, to hear more attentively, to praiſe more affectionately, to receive more believingly, keep the ſabbath more exactly, watch over your heart and ways more diligently: and, in a word, to be more humble and pious towards God, more juſt and righteous towards man, and more ſober and temperate towards yourſelves; yea, you will be more afraid to ſhift or neglect any known duty than you were before.

3*dly*, You will be more animated and encouraged to *fight the good fight of faith*, to reſiſt the devil's temptations, and the world's allurements, to ſtruggle againſt your luſts, and mortify indwelling ſin. And you will be ſetting conſcience on the watch-tower, to give warning of the enemies approach; and you will not be ſlow to take the alarm.

4*thly*, If you have got more ſtrength, you will be better reconciled to the croſs than formerly; and content with patience and ſubmiſſion to underly what troubles and afflictions the Lord thinks fit to tryſt you with for your ſoul's good; yea, and kiſs the rod when it comes, ſaying, *Good is the will of the Lord concerning me.*

Uſe IV. Of *Exhortation.* Let me hence exhort you to ſeveral duties.

1ſt, Let theſe believers, who are not tryſted with ſuch fainting diſcouragements as others, bleſs God for his tenderneſs towards them, and bear their ſmaller trials the more patiently. How gentle is your exerciſe, and ſoul-trouble, in reſpect of Job's, David's, Heman's, and many others, dear and near to God, who have been ready to faint under their burdens, and preſſed above meaſure; God is gracious to you, he ſees you are weak, and will not overburden you.

2dly, Let none miſconſtruct believers exerciſes of ſpirit, nor deſpiſe them, becauſe they are frequently faint and diſcouraged: For the greateſt ſpirits in the world have been thus exerciſed. David was a man of ſingular valour, that had a heart as *the heart of a lion,* 2 Sam. xvii. 10. A man of eminent wiſdom, and therefore ſaid to be *wiſe as an angel of God,* 2 Sam. xiv. 20. A man of a chearful temper, and a great maſter of muſic, and therefore called the *ſweet ſinger of Iſrael,* 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. And yet we frequently find him ſore troubled, bowed down, cleaving to the duſt, and ſharply exerciſed under the hidings of God's face, and other ſoul diſtreſſes.

3dly, Doth God give ſuitable ſtrength to his people in all exigencies? Let none abuſe this doctrine, by giving up with the uſe of the means that God has appointed; and neglecting to uſe their own endeavours. For though believers have Chriſt to lean to all their way in their journey to heaven; yet none muſt expect to be carried thither upon his ſhoulders, without ſetting down a foot. We may warrantably look to him for ſtrength for every duty; yet it is in our uſing the means that this ſtrength is conveyed.

4thly, Beware of leaning to yourſelves, and neglecting to look for this promiſed ſtrength. (1.) Lean not to your own purpoſes; for your *goodneſs is like the morning dew.* (2.) Lean not to your gracious habits; for theſe are but creatures, and ready to die. (3.) Lean not to your duties and performances; for they are defiled and unclean. (4.) Lean not to your frames; for they are fleeting and unconſtant. And beſides, it is highly dangerous and provoking to God, for to truſt in any of theſe; remember the fearful curſe that is pronounced againſt him *that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord,* Jer. xxvii. 5 6. Whom then ſhall we truſt? Read Iſa xxvi. 4. *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.*

5thly, Let all believing communicants bleſs God for this new and excellent method of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt. The new covenant is far better than the old. Now our ſtock is not in our own hand, but in Chriſt's, and he manages it for us; which is our great happineſs. As when God brought Iſrael out of Egypt with a high hand, he did not ſet them down on the other ſide of the Red ſea, and then bid them ſhift their way to Canaan: no, he led them on their way; yea, *As a man carries his children, ſo he bare them all the way they went.* So when God, in a day of his power, brings an elect ſoul out of ſpiritual Egypt, he doth not ſet him in the way with a ſtock of ſtrength in his hand, and then leave him to march through the wilderneſs alone: no, he leads and ſupports him all the way; for he knows that the whole country riſes on him in his march, and if left to go alone without ſpecial and renewed aid, he would never get to Canaan.

Queſt. But what courſe ſhall I take to get theſe ſeaſonable ſupplies of ſtrength from God, that I may be helped ſafe through the wilderneſs without fainting and upſitting?

Anſw. Take theſe directions.

1ſt, Labour to be throughly convinced of your own impotence and inſufficiency, that you may be weak in your own ſenſe and feeling; for the way to be ſtrong, is to be weak, according to the apoſtle's experience, 2 Cor. xii. 10. *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong.* Hence alſo it is ſaid of theſe worthies, Heb. xi. 34. *Out of weakneſs they were made ſtrong,* i.e. out of weakneſs felt and apprehended.

2dly, Humbly repreſent and bemoan your impotence before God, like Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. *I heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf, I was as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke.* He felt his own impotence and averſion to what was good; and then he groans and looks up to God for power: *Turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.* And, in the next verſe, we ſee how readily the Lord ſtept in with pity and help to him. Thus alſo did Jehoſhaphat, and found help, 2 Chron. xx. 12. *We have no might againſt this great company that cometh againſt us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee; q. d.* Tho' we be weak, yet we know thou art infinitely powerful, and full of compaſſion.

3dly, Uſe well any ſmall power you have, and it will increaſe. The right arm is more ſtrong and vigorous than the lift, becauſe it is more exerciſed: So grace, the more it is exerciſed, the more it grows, Matth xiii. 12. Prov. x. 29.

4thly, Wait on the Lord in the diligent uſe of the means; for it is promiſed, Iſa. xl. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength.* And in Pſal. xxvii. 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart: wait, I ſay on the Lord.* We muſt uſe, but not truſt to the means, but to God in the due uſe of them.

5thly, Walk tenderly and guard againſt every known ſin; for ſin lets out the ſoul's ſtrength, as bleeding lets the ſpirit out of the body.

6thly, Be often looking, in a believing way, to the Mediator Chriſt, your Treaſurer and Head of influences; and derive all your ſupplies of ſtrength from and through him alone.

7thly Carefully entertain the Spirit's motions, and fall in with them. *Grieve not the ſpirit of Chriſt,* which is ſent to ſtrengthen you; otherwiſe you will caſt away your ſtrength from you.

Laſtly, Acquaint yourſelves, O communicants, with the word of God, and its gracious promiſes of ſtrength; lay them up in ſtore againſt the time of need, and plead them humbly with God: For prayer, grounded on a promiſe is likely to prevail. This was David's argument under his faintings, Pſal. cxix. 28. *Strengthen thou me according to thy word.* And he had the experience of its prevailing with God, Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. *In* *the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul.* I ſhall add no more, but conclude with the apoſtle's words, 1 Pet. v. 10. 11. *The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.

A
TREATISE
CONCERNING THE
SANCTIFICATION
OF THE
LORD's DAY.

THE PREFACE.

THAT wiſe king Solomon obſerves, Eccl. iii. 1. *To every thing there is a ſeaſon, and a time for every purpoſe under heaven.* And if there be a time and ſeaſon allowed for every thing and purpoſe, even the meaneſt things and purpoſes in the world; ſurely an infinitely wiſe God will allow a proper time and ſeaſon for the beſt things and purpoſes, and particularly for his ſolemn worſhip and ſervice, which is the moſt neceſſary and excellent purpoſe in the world. It is not enough, that we give God, from whom we have all our time, a ſhare of every day for his ſervice; no, we owe him alſo ſome whole days for his ſolemn and public worſhip: Yea, it is agreeable to the dictates of the light of nature, and of ſound reaſon, that one whole day of every week ſhould be dedicated to him for that end.

All nations through the world have had their ſeaſons and ſet times for devotion and ſacrifices. The heathens, who worſhipped dumb idols, had their feſtivals and holy-days, and particularly one day of the week, which they eſteemed more ſacred than the reſt. The Turks, who have taken up with the moſt unreaſonable deluſions and impoſtures, do ſtill retain the impreſſions of the rationality and equity of this thing, that there ſhould be a certain day of the week ſet apart for the ſolemn worſhip of God.—Indeed the light of nature, without ſome other help could not have determined men univerſally to dedicate the ſeventh day of their time to God; more than the ſixth or eighth day: But ſeeing the wiſe Creator of the world, and author of time, thought fit from the beginning, to meaſure time by days, and parcel out theſe days into ſuch remarkable periods, as weeks, or the revolution of ſeven days, to be conſtantly obſerved all the world over; it is moſt conſonant to reaſon and equity, that one day of each week ſhould be holy to the Lord.

But, beſides the light of nature, we have the light of revelation for this point; God hath expreſly appointed in his word, one day in ſeven, to be kept holy for his ſolemn worſhip; neither hath he left the particular day to mens own choice, but hath choſen it for them. And now, in the New Teſtament, he points out the firſt day of the week to be the Chriſtian Sabbath to the end of the world, as is made evident in the following treatiſe.

The Jews have their *Saturday* Sabbath, which they glory in, and call the Queen of the week: The Mahometants keep the *Friday*, as being Mahomet's birth day. The Parthians and ſome other Pagan nations obſerve Tueſday, and eſteem it above all the days of the week. But it is the diſcriminating badge of the profeſſors of Chriſtianity through all the world, to celebrate the firſt day of the week, being Chriſt's reſurrection-day, and hence called the Lord's day. Now, tho' the Jews and ſome few others plead that the ſeventh day from the creation is unalterable by virtue of the fourth command, it is ſhewed in this treatiſe, that the words of the fourth command are ſo framed, that they may be applied to any day of the week that God doth pleaſe to pitch upon for the Sabbath, whether it be the firſt or laſt of the ſeven days.—For when it is ſad, *The ſeventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;* it doth not mean the ſeventh day from the creation, but any ſeventh day after ſix days labour which God pitches on; upon which account it is not called that ſeventh day, but the ſeventh day.—Neither is the ſeventh day mentioned in the firſt words of the command, which contain the ſubſtance of it; for it is ſaid only, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, not the ſeventh day.—Nor is the ſeventh day mentioned in the laſt words of the command, which contain the formal reaſon of it; for it is ſaid only, *The Lord bleſſed the Sabbath day and hallowed it*, not the ſeventh day.

As to the firſt day of the week our Chriſtian Sabbath; the great Lord of our time hath appropriate this day to himſelf, marked it with his ſeal, and hath put his name upon it, calling it, Rev. i. 10. *Hemera Kuriake*, the Lord's day; even as he calls the holy ſupper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. *Diapnon Kuriakon*, the Lord's ſupper; becauſe the one was his inſtitution as well as the other, and ſet apart for keeping up his memory, and ſhewing forth his glory. Wherefore no true Chriſtian or lover of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will be indifferent about the keeping of this holy day: For as the holy obſerving of this day is an open and viſible owning of the Lord Jeſus (whoſe name it bears) for our Lord and Maſter; ſo the neglect of this day is a plain diſowning of him, and an open ſlighting of the benefits of his reſurrection. O that men would think on this, and conſider what they do, when they neglect or contemn the Lord's day!

Tho' the way of Sabbath-ſanctification be the good old way, appointed by God ever ſince he created man upon the earth; yet there is no way more hated, no duty more oppoſed by ſatan and wicked men: Which we need not be ſurpriſed at, ſeeing it is a ſpecial fence to all religion, and a great bulwark againſt the torrent of impiety that runs in the world.—And that true piety is ſo low in moſt places, and vice and immorality ſo generally prevail, is mainly to be imputed to the abounding neglect and contempt of the holy Sabbath: For common experience doth teſtify, that where the Lord's day is more ſtrictly obſerved, there Chriſtian knowledge, piety and morality do proſper moſt; and where the Sabbath is diſregarded, there all theſe do decay. The conſideration whereof ſhould excite all the lovers of God and holineſs, to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to ſupport the credit and maintain the dignity of the Sabbath againſt all its enemies.

This conſideration hath moved me to contribute my mite upon this excellent ſubject in the following treatiſe, which is partly controverſial, and partly practical; for confuting the enemies of the Sabbath, and for inſtructing all in the divine warrant for ſanctifying this holy day, and in the right manner of doing it.—There are two eſſential things in the Chriſtian religion, which all ſhould make conſcience of; ſincerely to believe its truths, and faithfully to practiſe its duties. The firſt of theſe hath great influence upon the ſecond; for, if the Chriſtian truths be not firmly believed, the Chriſtian duties will be ill performed: Now, the beſt means for promoting both the Chriſtian faith and Chriſtian practice is the ſanctification of the Lord's day.

Had it not been for the obſervation of the Sabbath, the truths of Chriſtianity had been quite razed out of the minds of the moſt part: For as the Lord's day, of itſelf is a bright and lively memorial of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt: ſo upon this day we conſtantly have ſounded in our ears the truths of that religion which Chriſt and his apoſtles delivered unto the world, and the excellency of them inculcate upon us.—And as the obſervation of the Sabbath is a great preſervative to the truths of Chriſtianity, ſo it is alſo to the duties thereof. God hath ſet this one duty as a hedge or fence for keeping all the reſt; for, by keeping the Sabbath conſcientiouſly, the ſoul is notably diſpoſed and put in frame for ſerving God in every religious duty. The frequent recurring of this day, and the goſpel ordinances therein diſpenſed, ſerves to continue the remembrance of Chriſt and heaven among men, keep ſin and vice under conſtant rebukes, and put atheiſm and infidelity to the bluſh. Take away the obſervation of the Lord's day, then the worſhip of God would be caſt off, and atheiſm, profaneneſs and all diſorders, like a flood, would brake in upon us.

We may look upon the duty of Sabbath-ſanctification to be of no leſs conſequence to the practice of Chriſtianity, than Luther reckoned the article of juſtification to be to the doctrine of it, when he called it *articulus ſtantis ſeu cadentis eccleſiæ*: For, if once we make a gape in this hedge of piety, ſerious godlineſs will run out at it, and a flood of impiety and looſeneſs ruſh in upon us. It was ſurely the ſenſe of this, that determined the wiſeſt of emperors, kings, parliaments, and church councils and ſynods, to frame and publiſh ſo many excellent laws and acts for the ſtrict obſervation of the Lord's day, agreeable to the divine laws thereanent. It would be happy for churches and nations, if theſe were put in execution, and all ſorts of men brought to have a due regard to them.

But notwithſtanding of all the laws divine and human for the holy obſervation of the Lord's day, there are many in the age wherein we live, who adventure to pour contempt upon this holy day. Some there are who diſpute againſt the morality of the Sabbath, and diſown the ſtanding and perpetual obligation of the fourth command.—Others, tho' they own the obligation of the command ſo far as to forbear ſervile work, and attend pubilc worſhip on the Sabbath, yet plead for carnal diverſions and recreations after public worſhip is over.—Many would incline to the Papiſts way of celebrating the Sabbath, who after maſs and evenſong (as they call it) go preſently to piping and dancing, and then to the ale-houſe; the ſame way that the Iſraelites celebrated the feaſt of the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 6. *The people ate and drank, and roſe up to play.* If this profane courſe were allowed, as of old, in times of antichriſtian darkneſs, many would then call the Sabbath a delight, and be, in ſome meaſure, reconciled to it; but, when they hear that the whole Sabbath is to be ſpent, in religious duties and exerciſes, they murmur, and ſay as theſe in Mal. i. 13. *What a wearineſs is it?*

It would be no grievance to many to ſee that old abomination of the *book of ſports* revived and authoriſed among us; I mean, that infamous declaration for liberty of ſports and recreation on the Lord's day, publiſhed by authority in the year 1633, and appointed to be read from the pulpits; the prelates conſenting to it, and perſecuting theſe miniſters who refuſed to read it. O what heinous God provoking wickedneſs was it for civil and eccleſiaſtic rulers to unite in promoting the profanation of the Sabbath by ſuch methods! As the heavy judgment of God followed them for ſuch avowed, profanation, ſo theſe in our age have reaſon to fear his judgments, who continue to be of the ſame profane diſpoſition. Oh, is it not evident that ſports and paſtimes do unfit the mind for ſpiritual ſervice, and take off mens thoughts from what is ſerious and ſolemn? Do they not put the heart out of frame for attending on God, and for holding communion with him in holy duties and ordinances? This is ſhewed more fully in the following treatiſe.

Again there are others who obſerve this day no better than the beaſts do: They only reſt from their ordinary labour, and ſpend the day in idleneſs and ſloth; which is to keep the Sabbath of an ox or aſs, not of a reaſonable creature. To ſanctify the Sabbath, it is not to keep it merely as a reſt from our common employments, or keep it as an idle day: but to keep it as a holy day, a day ſet apart for God's glory, and for promoting our ſalvation. But, alas! ſuch is the ſpiritual ſloth and idleneſs of many poor careleſs ſouls on this day, they labour as little for their ſouls on it, as they do for their bodies; they ſleep, loiter, ly at home, and ſeldom go to any worſhip at all; if they go out of doors, it is for their diverſion, to take a walk, to pay a viſit, or the like, but not to attend God's worſhip. Many, alas! will go a dozen of miles to a market for a little gain, that will not go one mile, nor a few ſteps to the church, to attend the goſpel market for enriching their ſouls. If the bell that calls them to the worſhip of God, did advertiſe them of a ſtage play, or of ſome idle paſtime, perhaps they would be found there among the firſt; but, for ſpiritual work, they have an averſion to it.

Moreover, there are many who go to church and attend ordinances this day rather to pleaſe a natural conſcience, or ſupport their reputation in the world, than to ſerve God or ſave their ſouls. Or perhaps they go becauſe it is the faſhion, or the way in which they have been brought up; but alas! leaving their hearts behind them, they preſent their bodies to God, and no more: And hence it is, that in the time of the moſt ſolemn worſhip they have their eyes either wandering after vanity, or elſe ſhut with drowſineſs, and ſleep; they find no delight in the Sabbath, taſte no ſweetneſs in ordinances, know nothing of communion with God in them: They underſtand not the pſalmiſt's language, *A day in God's courts is better than a thouſand any where elſe.* No, this day is to them the longeſt and moſt weariſome day of all the week; the religious exerciſes of it are irkſome and burdenſome to them. It may be ſaid of them as of Doeg the Edomite, 1 Sam. xxi. 7. *He was that day detained before the Lord.* They long to be releaſed from the ſervice of that day, and glad when it is over.—Alas! the minds of many are ſo ſet upon the world, that they complain in their hearts of the length of this day, as theſe Iſraelites of old, Amos viii. 5. *When will the new moon be gone that we may ſell corn; and the Sabbath, that we may ſet forth wheat?* They count all theſe days loſt days, that bring them in no worldly gain. Hence it was, that the Heathens (as Seneca tells us) counted the Jews a fooliſh people, becauſe they loſt a full ſeventh part of their lives, to wit by obſerving the Sabbath. But, ah! it is to be lamented, that not Heathens only, but alſo many profeſt Chriſtians, count the Sabbath a loſt day: O what baſe ingratitude is this to God, for the invaluable privilege and bleſſing of the Sabbath to the ſouls of men!

Laſtly, There are, beſides theſe mentioned, ſome prodigies of wickedneſs in the world, perſons who proſecute their lewd and profane courſes with more vigour on this holy day than upon any other; and ſo make this day of holy reſt the devil's working day, and conſume it wholly upon their luſts! O how daring an affront muſt this be to a great a holy God, to make that a day to ſerve the devil, a day to improve in vice and debauchery, which the Lord hath inſtituted to be a day for his own worſhip, and for our improvement in piety and devotion!

It is for remedying theſe woful abuſes of the Sabbath that I have written the enſuing treatiſe; and, to make it more generally uſeful to the poor, I have ſhortned this fourth edition of it, by leaving out the *Help for prayer* which was ſubjoined to the former, and poſſibly may be afterwards publiſhed by itſelf. I have heard of the uſefulneſs of this treatiſe to ſome who have read it: O that God would bleſs it to many more, and make it the means to preſerve and promote the love and eſteem of the Lord's day in the hearts of many!—As ſerious godlineſs never did, ſo it never will thrive nor flouriſh in the world, when or where the Lord's day is diſregarded: Long experience confirms it, that the ſin of Sabbath-breaking is a woful inlet to impiety and profaneneſs: They who once begin to make little difference betwixt the Lord's day and other days, will eaſily be brought to make little difference betwixt the Lord's names and other names, the Lord's table and other tables, the Lord's book and other books: Whereas a conſcientious regard to this holy day is a ſtrong fence to religion, being a mighty aw-band upon the ſoul againſt the commiſſion of ſin, and the neglect of duty.—The Lord's day is an unſpeakable bleſſing to a loſt world, and the ſweeteſt day that ever dawned upon it; it ought to be the delight of our ſouls, and rejoicing of our hearts. Every wiſe man, that knows the value of this day, will have a peculiar eſteem for it above all the days of the week, and will reckon every minute of it precious, and deſire that none of it be miſpent. What Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples concerning the loaves and fiſhes, he ſays to us concerning his holy day, *Gather up the fragments*, "Gather up the ſpare hours and minutes of it, count them as precious as the gold-ſmith doth the ſmall filings of his gold, let nothing of Sabbath-time be loſt, improve it wholly for God and your ſouls."

This treatiſe I recommend chiefly to families, becauſe the duty of ſanctifying the Sabbath doth nearly concern all families as ſuch: For all governors of families are charged, by the fourth command, to ſee that it be done in all their dwellings; and by the command, they are made reſponſible for *their children, ſervants*, and for all that lodge *within their gates*, that none of them be allowed to break the Sabbath. If any maſters of families be excited by this treatiſe to mind their proper duty, I have my reward; but let the glorious author of the Sabbath alone have the praiſe.

May all of us get grace to keep the Sabbath of our God, and chuſe the things that pleaſe him, and take hold of his covenant, that ſo we may be numbered among thoſe whom he will bring to his holy mountain and make joyful in his houſe of prayer! *Amen.*

GOD in his infinite goodneſs to fallen mankind, has been pleaſed to give us the Holy Bible, or canonical ſcriptures, as a perfect rule of faith and manners; containing at large the great truths, duties, and concerns of the Chriſtian religion. And theſe we have briefly compriſed in three ſuccinct compends, which are owned and received by all Chriſtians, *viz. the Apoſtles creed*, as it is commonly called, *the Lord's prayer*, and the *decalogue*; the firſt being the ſum of our *credenda*, the ſecond of our *petenda*, and the third of our *facienda*.

The Decalogue or Ten Commandments, which were ſolemnly delivered to the people of Iſrael from mount Sinai, do contain the moral law; being a fixed and perpetual rule of righteouſneſs, which God hath given to be obſerved by all mankind, in all ages and periods, to the end of the world. This is that law which the royal pſalmiſt ſo much admires and commends, and makes his chief ſubject in ſeveral pſalms, particularly xix, and cxix. which deſerves our ſpecial notice, and high eſteem in that reſpect.

The moral law, differs vaſtly in its nature from that of a poſitive law, which commands or prohibits things that before were indifferent, and only become good or evil by the virtue of the command, and otherwiſe: Such was that command to our firſt parents, concerning their eating of the tree of knowledge; ſuch were the ceremonial, and many of the judicial laws, given to the Jews: Theſe were binding only upon particular perſons, and laſted but for a time. But the moral law, contained in the Decalogue, is of univerſal and perpetual obligation to every rational creature, and can never be abrogated, nor diſpenſed with; ſeeing it is evidently founded upon, and agreeable to the dictates of the light of nature, and the principles of ſound reaſon, naturally engraven on man's heart.

This moral law God hath divided into two tables, Deut. v. 22. In the firſt table, we have the firſt four commandments, which immediately belong unto the honour of God, and inſtruct us in the duties we owe to him. In the ſecond table, we have the laſt ſix commandments, which reſpect the welfare of our neighbours, and teach us our duty towards them.

As all God's works are very beautiful in their order, ſo are the Ten Commandments, which have their place and rank aſſigned them, according to the dignity of the duties commanded, and the heinouſneſs of the ſins forbidden. As for the firſt table, the order of its commands is admirable; for the firſt command determines the right object of our worſhip, *viz.* the eternal and only true God. The ſecond directs to the means of worſhip, *viz.* that they be only theſe of God's inſtituting, and not images, or means of our deviſing. The third appoints the manner of our worſhip, that it be with awful fear and reverence; without blaſpheming or prophaning of his name. The fourth commandment ſpecifies the right time or ſeaſon to be employed in his ſolemn worſhip, *viz.* one day in ſeven, which is the ſubject of the enſuing treatiſe, the deſign whereof is to promote the religious obſervation of the Chriſtian Sabbath, as the beſt mean to revive religion when it falls under decay, and to maintain it in its life and power where it is.

Time is a jewel of ineſtimable worth, and upon the management of it depends the ſalvation of our immortal ſouls for ever; and therefore it can never be enough valued, nor too carefully improven. Time is a golden ſtream, continually running down by us out of one eternity into another; and yet its worth is ſeldom taken notice of until it is quite paſt away from us. How ſadly do we verify that word of Solomon? Eccl. ix. 12. *Man knoweth not his time.*

But of all time, Sabbath-time is the the moſt precious, and ſhould be redeemed with the greateſt care, as that upon which our ſalvation depends in a peculiar manner. It is the time in which the holy Spirit is eſpecially at work for convincing, converting and edifying the ſouls of men; it is the time ſet apart by infinite Wiſdom for the happineſs of the creature, and the glory of the Creator: And therefore it is the buſineſs of every one to enquire, how this time is to be improven aright. Now, for their encouragement and aſſiſtance in this matter, I propoſe to inſiſt chiefly upon two heads: To evince the morality of the Sabbath, and the divine appointment of the Lord's day. 2. Give directions how to ſanctify it aright.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the morality of the Sabbath, and the divine appointment of the Lord's day.

IN order to the handling of this ſubject the more clearly and methodically, I ſhall, thro' the divine aſſiſtance, propoſe and reſolve ſeveral queſtions relative to it.

Queſt. I. *What is the proper ſignification and import of the name Sabbath, ſo commonly in uſe among us?*

Anſwer. The name Sabbath is a Hebrew word, ſignifying *reſt*, the Sabbath being a day of holy reſt: And it is ſo called, becauſe God hath enjoined us to reſt this day from our earthly work and labour, that we may ſolemnly call to mind his reſting from his works, both of creation and redemption; publicly adore him therefore, ſolace our ſouls in his goodneſs, repoſe and reſt in the arms of his mercy, and meditate upon that *eternal reſt which remains for the people of God* in the other world.

This being the true import and meaning of the word Sabbath, we ſtill retain it, and commonly uſe it to ſignify the Lord's day, our Chiſtian Sabbath.

There are ſome indeed who are offended at the retaining of the name Sabbath, under the New Teſtament times, pretending that it is properly Jewiſh; tho' in the mean time, they are fond of the words prieſt and altar, which are much more ſo. But it is ſurely a miſtake to ſay, that the name Sabbath is Jewiſh, or peculiar to the Jews, and ſo not to be uſed by Chriſtians: For we ſee the Lord gives it that name in the moral law, which is of perpetual uſe, binding Chriſtians as much as Jews; *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.* So it was not the Jews, but the great God, that gave the Sabbath its name. Nay, Chriſt our Saviour doth, in the New Teſtament, call his own day by the name of Sabbath, Matth. xxiv. 20. *Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day.* Now, it is evident, that our Lord doth there mean the Chriſtian Sabbath, or his own day; for he is not only ſpeaking to Chriſtians, but concerning the flight of Chriſtians, which he knew was to fall out forty years after the Jewiſh Sabbath was aboliſhed, and the Lord's day come into its place. Surely he would not bid Chriſtians pray that their flight might not fall on the Jewiſh Sabbath, when he both foreſaw, and intended, that then they would reckon themſelves under no obligation to obſerve the Jewiſh Sabbath, nor under any reſtraint of fleeing or travelling on that day: (which even the Jews themſelves believed at that time, they might lawfully do in time of eminent hazard, as appears by the decree which they made relative thereto under the Haſmonians) and therefore he muſt mean the Chriſtian Sabbath, upon which he bids Chriſtians pray that their flight might not happen. Not that it was unlawful for them to flee or travel on that day in time of danger, but becauſe it would be a great addition to their trouble, if their flight ſhould happen at ſuch a time, as to deprive them of the opportunity of God's worſhip and ordinances.

It is of no weight, what is objected by ſome, that the Chriſtians, who lived in Judea among the Jews, could not be allowed by them to travel on their Sabbath, and therefore (ſay they) Chriſt bids them pray that their flight might not fall upon it.——For in the *firſt* place, The Jews not having the government then in their hands, they had no power of reſtraining or puniſhing of crimes. *2dly*, The time which Chriſt ſpeaks of was a time of war and confuſion, occaſioned by the Roman armies invading the land, when no notice could be taken of ſuch caſes as travelling on the Sabbath. *3dly*, The moſt ſuperſtitious were at that time put to flee and travel as well as the Chriſtians; which they then thought it lawful to do, as we told before. *4thly*, If Chriſt had ſpoke ſo concerning the Jewiſh Sabbath, it had laid ſome foundation for Chriſtians to fall into miſtakes concerning the obligation of the Jewiſh Sabbath, and other ceremonies: which, to be ſure, our Lord would not have given them. And, if there had been any ſuch occaſion given, the Judaizing Chriſtians would certainly have improven it againſt the apoſtles; which yet we do not find. *Laſtly*, The learned Owen, Durham, Brown, and other writers on this ſubject, underſtand Chriſt as ſpeaking in this place of the Chriſtian Sabbath.

But granting that the name Sabbath were indeed Jewiſh and improper, (as ſome would have it) yet I am ſure it is ſtill preferable to that of Sunday, which is truly Heatheniſh, tho' commonly uſed by them in their liturgy, to the offence of many Chriſtians: For it is well known that the Heathen idolaters called this day Sunday, becauſe of their dedicating it to the created Sun, which was the chief of their planetary gods that they ordinarly worſhipped, as may be gathered alſo from 2 Kings xxiii. 5. Ezek. viii. 16. And hence, ſome of the ancient Heathens (of whom Tertullian ſpeaks) fancied that the Sun was the God of the Chriſtians, becauſe they celebrated the firſt day of the week.

I know it is objected, that ſome of the primitive apologiſts for Chriſtianity, as Juſtin Martyr and Tertullian, in their writings, call the Lord's day Sunday. But the reaſon of their ſo doing is plain; they were writing to Heathens, to whom the doctrines of Chriſtianity and inſtitution of the Lord's day were things new and ſtrange, and who would not have known what day they meant, if they had ſpoken of the Lord's day; and therefore they call it by the name they gave it, Sunday: For when we treat with others, we muſt expreſs things by the names that are common and current among them, unleſs we intend to be Barbarians to them.

But the primitive Chriſtians did not uſe to call it Sunday among themſelves, but commonly, the Lord's day; not the Sabbath, partly to diſtinguiſh it from the Jewiſh Sabbath that was ſo lately aboliſhed, and partly to wean the Jewiſh converts the more effectually from Judaiſm. But the true reaſon why ſome in this age ſeem to be offended at the word Sabbath, as being applied to the Lord's day, is, becauſe they cannot allow of any thing that would infer an obligation upon them to keep ſuch a ſtrict holy reſt upon the Chriſtian Sabbath as the Jews did upon their Sabbath: but I will have occaſion to ſpeak of this afterwards.

I need not ſtand long here, to ſhew the different ſignifications of the word Sabbath among the Jews; only in a word, beſide the ſeventh day of each week, or weekly Sabbath, (which is the moſt ordinary acceptation of the word in ſcripture) it is put alſo ſometimes to ſignify a whole week, becauſe every week had a Sabbath included in it, Lev xxiii. 15. 'Seven Sabbaths ſhall be 'complete,' *i. e.* weeks. The Phariſee ſaith, Luke xviii. 12. *I faſt twice a week*, orig. *neſteuo dis tou Sabbatou*. Likewiſe the word Sabbath is ſometimes put to ſignify *ſeven years*, Lev. xxv. 8. *Thou ſhalt number unto thee ſeven Sabbaths of years*, i. e. (as it is there explained) ſeven times ſeven years. Seven years was called, among the Jews, *a Sabbath of years*, becauſe their land reſted from culture or huſbandry every ſeventh year, in anſwer to the church's reſting every ſeventh day. Hence it is ſaid, Lev xxv. 4. *The ſeventh year ſhall be a Sabbath of reſt unto the land.* Beſides this, they had their great ſabbatical year, or Jubilee, which was every fiftieth year: For, according to Lev. xxv. 9 they were to reckon ſeven Sabbaths of years, or ſeven times ſeven years which is forty nine, and then to obſerve their Jubilee, or ſabbatical year. *Laſtly*, The other ſacred feaſts which the Jews kept monthly or annually, are alſo called Sabbaths, in regard of their reſting from labour on theſe days, as on the weekly Sabbath. Hence, Lev. xxiii. 24. the firſt day of the ſeventh month, which was their *feaſt of trumpets* is called a Sabbath: But the weekly Sabbath is commonly called in ſcripture, by way of eminency, *the Sabbath*; to diſtinguiſh it from all other Sabbaths, and give it the preference to all the other feaſts of the Jews.

Queſt. II. *For what ends hath God appointed a weekly Sabbath?*

Anſwer. *1ſt*, God hath appointed it for manifeſting of his own glory, and particularly for diſplaying his ſovereign power and authority over all his creatures. It muſt certainly be an high acknowledgment of God's univerſal dominion and ſupremacy to have all the world, every week, in one day, lay aſide their own buſineſs, that they may jointly worſhip him in a public and ſolemn manner.

2dly, He appointed the Sabbath for the benefit of his creatures, and particularly in compaſſion to fallen man; for he ſaw man's heart would be ſo glewed to the world, ſo drencht in ſenſuality, that, were he left to himſelf, he would not allow one day in a month, nay, in a year, for divine worſhip; but would have drudged himſelf, his ſervants and beaſts, even to death, in purſuit of worldly things, without minding any thing that is better: Wherefore a merciful God hath ſtrictly commanded man to reſt one day every week from all worldly concerns, that thereby he might, in a manner, be laid under a neceſſity to mind his ſoul and the things of another world; and in the mean time, the poor toiled beaſts, as well as mens bodies, might have ſome reſt and eaſe, for their preſervation and ſupport.

But more particularly, the Sabbath is deſigned for our ſouls eternal welfare; in regard,

Firſt, The Sabbath tends highly to our inſtruction, and to the keeping up the lively impreſſions of the truths of Chriſtianity in our memories. The Sabbath recurring every week, doth ſtill of new lay before us a compendious view of theſe eſſential doctrines. *The creation of the world, man's fall, Chriſt's incarnation and ſatisfaction, his death, reſurrection and victory, for completing our redemption:* Beſides that *glorious and eternal reſt above*, provided for the people of God.

Secondly, It tends to promote holineſs, ſpirituality and heavenly mindedneſs in us; and that two ways. 1. By calling us off from temporal to ſpiritual employment. Senſual objects through the week are ready to alienate our affections from God, and wear ſpiritual things out of our minds; for recalling whereof, the Sabbath ſeaſonably returns, and preſents and entertains us with divine objects.

2. By affording us a lively emblem of heaven, and the converſation of the glorified ſaints, in celebrating that eternal Sabbath above: For, as in heaven there is no buying, ſelling, nor any worldly buſineſs, but a continual ſpeaking of God, enjoying communion with him, adoring and praiſing him for ever, without any mixture of other affairs; ſo the Lord will have an emblem or repreſentation hereof, as near as may be, given weekly to his people on earth, by the Sabbath, wherein they muſt lay aſide all worldly things, and be wholly employed in the ſervice of God, and work of heaven: And this in order both to keep them in mind of, and make them meet for, that inheritance of the ſaints in light.

Queſt. III. *What is to be underſtood by the* morality *of the* Sabbath, *or fourth commandment ſo frequently ſpoke of?*

Anſwer. When we call the Sabbath, or fourth commandment, *moral*, we mean that it is one of God's moral precepts, or a part of the *moral law*, i. e. the perpetual and unalterable rule given us by God, for regulating our life and manners: Alſo, by calling it *moral*, we diſtinguiſh it from the *ceremonial law*, which was binding for a time only, and abrogated by Chriſt's coming. The fourth commandment, enjoining the obſervation of the Sabbath, is not ceremonial, but moral; that is, it is not temporary, but of ſtanding and perpetual obligation, and which binds all men, in all ages to the end of the world.

But, that we may have a more diſtinct apprehenſion of the morality of the Sabbath, we muſt diſtinguiſh betwixt things that are *naturally moral*, and things *poſitively moral*.—*Moral natural* is, when the thing required is ſo founded upon, and authorized by, the law of nature and right reaſon, that it is fit and neceſſary to be done, though there had been no expreſs command for it; ſuch as *worſhipping God, obeying parents, abſtaining from murder*, &c. *Moral poſitive* is ſomething enjoined us, which, tho' it be agreeable to the law of nature, yet carries not ſuch a natural evidence in it, as to oblige us, without a divine revelation and expreſs command; but, being once revealed and commanded, it is perpetually binding as well as that which is *moral natural*. Now, the fourth command is commonly called *moral poſitive*, though indeed there are ſeveral things in it, which are of natural equity, and authorized by the law of nature and ſound reaſon; ſuch as,

1ſt, That there be a due part of our time ſtated and conſecrated for the ſolemn worſhip and ſervice of God, and particularly in public aſſemblies.

2dly, That this ſtated time or day ſhould be univerſal, and the ſame through all, that one man's buſineſs interfere not with another's devotions.

3dly, That this day ſhould recur in a due frequency, that it neither be ſo rare as to hinder our ſouls good, or indiſpoſe us for the duties of it; nor ſo frequent, as to deprive us of opportunity for our neceſſary ſecular employments.

4thly, That the holy duties of this day be not marred or interrupted by worldly employments or diverſions; in regard they tend naturally to draw of the mind from God and divine objects. Theſe four things, included in the fourth commandment, I reckon to be of natural equity or moral natural.

There are other things in it, which are of poſitive inſtitution, *i e.* binding only by a poſitive law, and expreſs revelation. Of theſe again there is ſomething,

1ſt, That is *poſitive moral*, *i. e.* of perpetual and unalterable obligation, *viz.* That the foreſaid ſtated time for God's ſolemn worſhip ſhould be the ſeventh part of our time or one day in ſeven. This by God's law, is become perpetually moral and unalterable: but, if God had not revealed it to us, the law or light of nature could not have determined us to it nor rendered any ſolid reaſon why the ſeventh rather than the fifth, ſixth, or eight part of our time ſhould have been ſo conſecrated to God: But the Author of nature, who beſt knows what proportion of time ſuits beſt both to mens bodies and ſpirits, and how oft it ſhould recur, ſo as to anſwer beſt the exigencies both of our preſent and future life, hath wiſely determined it to be a ſeventh part or one day in ſeven: And can any man ſay but it is a moſt rational and fair determination? Had he dealt with us ſtrictly, he might have taken the ſix days, and left us but one: But ſince he hath taken but one, and allowed us ſix, we ought to acknowledge that the Lord hath dealt graciouſly and liberally with us. Nay, had it been referred to ourſelves, could we have given leſs time than this to God, from whom we have all our time, nay, our very being, and all the good things we enjoy?

But, *2dly*, There is in the fourth commandment ſomething that is poſitive ceremonial, or mutable, *viz.* The obſervation of the laſt day of the ſeven for the Sabbath. This indeed was enjoined at firſt, tho' not directly and principally, as any wiſe eſſential to the command for the Sabbath; but only in a ſecondary way, as a circumſtance of the command, which was to be altered when God pleaſed. It belonged not to the ſubſtance of this command, or the great deſign of the law, in what end of the week, the Sabbath ſhould be, whether the firſt or laſt of the ſeven days ſhould be conſecrate for it; ſince the ſcope of the fourth command is only, to bind us to conſecrate the ſeventh part of our time, or one day in ſeven, to the Lord: This is the morality of the command, and what is of ſacred and perpetual obligation in it. For, obſerve how the command runs, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy:—Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the ſeventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.* He ſaith not, *Remember the ſeventh day* to keep it holy, but, *Remember the Sabbath day,* or *holy reſt,* whatever day it ſhall be appointed on.——Take the ſix days for your labour, and let God have a ſeventh every week for his ſolemn worſhip; this is the deſign of the law: For when it is ſaid, *The ſeventh is the Sabbath of the Lord,* it is not perciſely meant of the ſeventh in order, but the ſeventh in number; not the ſeventh day after the creation, but the day following the ſix days allowed man to labour; that day is the Lord's whatever day in the week it fall on. And tho' it be told in the end, that *God reſted the ſeventh day,* which indeed ſeems to be the ſeventh from the creation; yet it is ſaid, *He bleſſed the Sabbath day,* not the ſeventh day. So that it is plain, that, both in the beginning and end of the command, the Lord puts a remarkable difference betwixt the Sabbath or day of holy reſt, and the ſeventh day of the week, the day of his own reſt; implying that the ſcope of the command is to bind us to ſanctify one day in ſeven, whatever ſeventh the Lord pleaſes to chuſe, whether it be the firſt or laſt day of the week: and that the obſervation of the ſeventh day from the creation, is to be diſtinguiſhed from the ſtanding law of the Sabbath. For *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,* is the fourth command, and would have bound us, tho' it had ſtopt there, and ſaid no more—Tho' yet I grant, that the obſervation of the ſeventh or laſt day of the week for the Sabbath, is ſo enjoined by the fourth command, that none could have altered it from that day to another, but he that is Lord of the Sabbath.

Thus you ſee in what ſenſe the fourth command is moral, and of unalterable obligation: and how it perpetually binds all Chriſtians as well as Jews, to ſanctify one day in ſeven for a weekly Sabbath unto the Lord. And now the day being changed by divine authority, from the laſt or the firſt day of the week, (of which afterwards) the ſubſtance, ſcope, or morality of the fourth command is nowiſe infringed; and it ſtill retains its authority and obligatory force as much as ever, binding Chriſtians to ſanctify the firſt day of the week, as much as it did the Jews to ſanctify the laſt: Even as a law, commanding the keeping of an anniverſary day for the ſovereign's birth doth equally apply itſelf to the birth-day of each ſucceeding prince.

Queſt. IV. *How may the morality of the Sabbath, or the perpetual obligation of the fourth command, be demonſtrated againſt theſe who deny it?*

Anſwer. There are many reaſons which prove that the fourth command is moral, binding us by a ſacred and perpetual law, to keep holy one day in ſeven, to the end of the world; ſuch as,

I. If the law for the Sabbath was given to man, and binding upon him in a ſtate of innocency before there was any ceremony or type of Chriſt inſtituted; (for then man did not need a Redeemer, nor any rite or type relative to him) then conſequently this command was not ceremonial, nor aboliſhed by Chriſt's coming, but is of moral and perpetual obligation: But the former is true; and therefore the latter. The conſequence of the firſt propoſition is certain, for the reaſons mentioned; and alſo from this, that the Sabbath was appointed to Adam upon a moral ground, which obliges all his poſterity, *viz.* That he might have freedom and opportunity for the ſolemn worſhip of God, without any diverſion from worldly things. For Adam, in his beſt eſtate being but a finite creature, could not be intenſely taken up with ſpiritual and temporal things both at once; his ordinary employment of dreſſing the garden would in ſome meaſure have diverted his mind, that he could not wholly give himſelf to devotion, and the ſolemn worſhip of his Maker: Wherefore God ſaw it fit he ſhould have a day ſet apart, wherein he might have an uninterrupted freedom for it. Now, if Adam needed a Sabbath, for the grounds above mentioned; much more do we need one, who are not only finite creatures, but corrupt alſo; and have ſo little grace and ſtrength for ſpiritual employment, and ſo many corruptions, tentations and allurements to draw our hearts from God through the week, which he had not.

Philip Limbroch and other Anti-ſabbatarians have no way to anſwer this argument, but by denying ſuch an early inſtitution of the Sabbath, and aſſerting, that it was not appointed till Moſes his time, when the ceremonies were inſtituted. But the contrary is evident from ſeveral texts.

1ſt, From Gen. ii 3. where we are told before man's fall, or any word of it, that *God bleſſed the ſeventh day, and ſanctified it becauſe that in it he had reſted from all his work.* Now the ſcripture notion of ſanctifying any thing, is to ſeparate and ſet it apart from common to ſacred uſes and purpoſes. And ſo it is plain from this text that God from the beginning of the world, did ſanctify and ſet apart one day in ſeven to be obſerved by all mankind, as a day of ſacred reſt, a day ſolmnly conſecrated to his worſhip and ſervice: And to lay a tie on us to obſerve it, we have God's example, of *reſting* this day *from all his work,* ſet before our eyes. And ſeeing God from the beginning of the world had a church in it, who would certainly join together in performing public worſhip and ſervice to him; they behoved to have ſet times for it, and conſequently a Sabbath: And what day ſo fit for that purpoſe, as the day which God hath ſanctified for ſacred reſt? That this was the ancient practice, may be inferred from Gen. iv. 2. 5. where we read of Cain and Abel their bringing offerings to the Lord, which was an inſtance of public worſhip. And, ver. 3. it is ſaid, *In proceſs of time,* they brought offerings, &c. Now, theſe words, *In proceſs of time,* may be as well rendered from the Hebrew, *At the end of days,* and ſo it is in the margin of bibles. Now, by *the end of days* muſt be meant the period of working days, which we call a week; and ſo it was on the ſeventh day, when ſolemn worſhip was (according to divine inſtitution) to be performed, that men brought their offerings to the Lord. That God's reſt on this day was exemplary to all mankind appears from his taking ſix ſeveral days to perform his works of creation, and the diſtinct recording of each day's work, and his reſting upon the ſeventh day. Certainly it had been as eaſy for an almighty power to have made the world in one day as in ſix. He that ſaid, *Let there be light, let there be a firmament*, and it was ſo, might, if he had pleaſed, aſſoon have ſaid, *Let their be a world*, and it had been ſo. And why did he not? Surely for our inſtruction and imitation, that we in like manner ſhould ſanctify every ſeventh day of our time after ſix days labour. And this is given as the reaſon of the fourth command, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;—for in ſix days God made heaven and earth*, &c.

The *Anti-ſabbatarians* are much gravelled with the forecited text, Gen. ii. 3. And to evite the force of it, contrary to all reaſon, they would alledge that the bleſſing and ſanctifying of the ſeventh day did not commence immediately from the creation, but only in the days of Moſes, when the command was given for the Sabbath, Exod. xx. and that Moſes only relates this in Gen. ii. by way of anticipation. But this opinion, is contrary both to the text and context; for it is evident to every man that ſeriouſly reads them, that Moſes relates the ſanctification of the Sabbath, as a thing done by the Lord immediately on the back of the creation, and nowiſe as a thing done or to be done by him two thouſand years thereafter: For, aſſoon as he had ſaid, that God ended his work and reſted on the ſeventh day, he adds immediately in words of the ſame tenſe, *That God bleſſed the Sabbath day and ſanctified it*. And if we compare this place with Exod. xx. 11. *For in ſix days the Lord made heaven and earth, the ſea, and all that in them is, and reſted the ſeventh day; wherefore the Lord bleſſed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.* It is manifeſt, that there he brings in God's bleſſing and ſanctifying of the Sabbath, not as an action then firſt done, but as that which God hath done long before, upon the creation of the world.

2*dly*, That this was done from the beginning, is further confirmed from Exod. xvi. 16. 22. 23. from whence commentators juſtly obſerve, That the ſanctification of the Sabbath, was a thing notour to the Iſraelites, before it was enjoined them by Moſes; otherwiſe there would be a ſtrange abruptneſs in the introducing of that matter. For, before ever there was any mention of the Sabbath, we find, ver. 22. that the Iſraelites of their own accord, gathered two days proviſion of manna on the ſixth day of the week, reckoning that the gathering of manna was a ſervile work, not proper on the Sabbath. But the rulers taking notice of this practice as done, not only without, but in appearance contrary to the orders given them, they bring the matter to Moſes, that they might know his thoughts of it. Whence it appears that the rulers doubted if the people had done right, ſeeing Moſes had commanded that every man ſhould *gather it according to his eating, and lay up none till the next day*, ver. 16. 19. and ſo they might apprehend, that by virtue of this order they might, lawfully gather it on the Sabbath alſo. But not being able to reconcile the ſeeming claſhing of theſe two commands, of gathering manna every day, and reſting on the *ſeventh day*, they come to Moſes in a ſolemn manner, for direction in this ſtraitning caſe. Accordingly, ver. 23. Moſes gives them a reſolution, and approves what the people had done, as agreeable to God's ancient law concerning the Sabbath, Gen. ii. which now was to be renewed and confirmed. *To morrow is the reſt of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.* He ſaith not to-morrow ſhall be the reſt, but, to-morrow is the reſt; ſpeaking of it as a thing well known to them. Now, if Moſes had given them any previous direction about the keeping of the Sabbath, and gathering a double proviſion of manna, what was the need of all the rulers coming ſo ſolemnly to Moſes about this caſe? For, it is ſaid, ver. 22. *That all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moſes.* From all which it is clear, that the law for the Sabbath was extant, and the obſervation of it in uſe, before either the promulgation of the moral law at mount Sinai, or the giving of the ceremonial law, which was ſometime afterwards.

3*dly*, The firſt words of the fourth command, *Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day*, plainly inſinuate the renovation of an old command, and not the enacting of a new one. It is highly probable, that the obſervation of this ancient law had been greatly neglected for many years before, while the Iſraelites were in bondage in Egypt, and obliged to ſore labour every day by their taſk-maſters, and ſo not ſuffered to keep the Sabbath as before. Hereby no doubt the impreſſions of the duty of keeping it, might be much worn off the minds of many; tho the memory of the Sabbath was not quite loſt, as appears from the peoples gathering double manna on the ſixth day of the week without direction. But, that they might guard againſt neglecting or forgetting the law for the Sabbath in time coming, the Lord renews the command with a ſolemn *memento*, *Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day*.

4*thly*, Tho' Moſes makes not expreſs mention of the patriarchs obſerving of the Sabbath, it is no wonder; in regard he writes the hiſtory of ſome thouſands of years after the creation, in very ſmall bounds; wherein many things relating to the church in that period muſt certainly be omitted: for the account which Moſes gives of thoſe early times is only deſigned for an introduction to his hiſtory of the deliverance, erection and polity of the nation of the Jews, God's peculiar people, and the only viſible church he then had upon the earth. Nevertheleſs, we have no reaſon to call in queſtion the patriarchs obſervation of the Sabbath from the beginning of the world; but good ground to believe they did it, if we conſider the eminent piety of ſome of them, together with the long lives, by reaſon whereof it was very eaſy to hand down the inſtitution of the Sabbath, with others of God's revelations, from Adam to Abraham's days. For Adam's life reached to Methuſalem's time; Methuſalem's life reached to Shem's time; and Shem's life reached to Abraham. And, being religious men, they would not fail to teach and recommend God's ſtatutes to one another. And for Abraham the father of the faithful, we read expreſly of his commanding his children to keep theſe ſtatutes, Gen. xviii. 19. and, without doubt, he enjoin'd the keeping of the Sabbath among the reſt. And tho' it be not mentioned in ſo many words, that is no argument againſt the thing; for we read not of the church's obſerving of the Sabbath all the time of the Judges, which was near five hundred years; yet there is no ground to queſtion but they kept it all that time.

Several things might be added, which make it highly probable, that the inſtitution of the Sabbath was handed down by tradition from Adam to his poſterity, through all the world. What reaſon elſe can be given of Noah's obſerving the revolution of ſeven days while in the ark? Gen. viii. 10. 12. where we ſee him once and again waiting the fall of the waters by ſevens. He ſtill did let the ſeventh day or Sabbath be over, before he ſent out the next meſſenger: wiſely reckoning, that upon his ſuitable obſervation of the Lord's Sabbath, he might look for the more agreeable news to be brought him. What reaſon elſe can be given for the Heathens dividing of their time into weeks, and their weeks into ſeven days, and their conſtant holding the ſeptenary number as ſacred? Yea, (as Clemens Alexandrinus tells us) the ſeventh day of the week was ſtill held ſacred by the Greeks. All this certainly was conveyed to them by tradition from Adam and Noah, their forefathers; and not learned, to be ſure, from the Jews againſt whoſe cuſtoms and religion they had ſuch rooted prejudices.

II. A ſecond argument for the morality of the fourth command, may be drawn from the ſituation of it. We find this command placed in the midſt of the *Decalogue* or theſe *moral precepts* which God hath delivered to the world, as a perpetual rule of their lives. And is it any way probable, that God would place a ceremonial law, or temporary precept, in the very midſt of them? As it is certain that the moral precepts have the preference to the ceremonial in many things; ſo it is as ſure that the fourth command, or the ſacred obſervation of one day in ſeven, hath an equal ſhare with the other nine, in all the dignity and privileges of the moral law. For,

In the *1ſt* place, This fourth command, as well as the reſt, was ſpoke immediately by the voice of God, in the hearing of all the people; whereas the other laws, ceremonial or judicial, were only given unto Moſes, and by him declared unto the people.

2dly, This command, as well as the reſt of the *Decalogue*, was written by the finger of God; nay, twice written by him in tables of ſtone: Whereby the Lord intended to teach us its fixed continuance and laſting obligation; and that by his Spirit he would have this law writ in the fleſhly tables of his people's hearts, never to be obliterated. But this was not done with the ceremonial laws, which were only delivered verbally to Moſes, and written by him from God's mouth.

3dly, This command was put and reſerved with the reſt of the moral law in the ark; whereas the law of ceremonial ordinances was placed in a book without on the ſide of the ark, and which might be ſeparated from the ark. The moral precepts were laid up within the ark of the covenant, as a ſign of their excellency and perpetuity, and of their being inſeparable from Chriſt and his covenant (of whom the ark was a famous type) therefore ſaith Chriſt, Pſal. xl. 8. *Thy law is within my heart*: But the ceremonial precepts being without the ark of the covenant, was a token they were ſeparable from it, and to be aboliſhed by Jeſus Chriſt, when the appointed time ſhould come. And, if the law of the Sabbath had been of this nature, to be ſure it had been placed on the ſide of the ark, with the other ceremonial laws, and not lodged within it together with the moral precepts, which were perpetual and unalterable. Moreover, if ſituation in the Decalogue, among the moral precepts, which were laid up in the ark be a good argument for the morality of the ſecond command, againſt the Papiſts, as it is improven againſt them by proteſtant divines, there can be no reaſon, why the ſame argument ſhould not be fully as concluding for the fourth command againſt the Anti-ſabbatarians.

III. A *third* argument for the morality of the fourth command, may be this: The reaſons and grounds of this command are in their nature, moral and perpetual, and as forcible upon Chriſtians as Jews; conſequently the command itſelf muſt be moral alſo.

The reaſons included in the fourth command are various. *1ſt*, One reaſon, enforcing the ſanctification of the Sabbath is taken from the propriety of the day, 'The ſeventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;' it is the Lord's day, and the *holy of the Lord*, Iſa. lviii. 13. the day which the Lord hath reſerved for himſelf and his uſe, and therefore muſt be entirely dedicated to him; no man may incroach upon this conſecrated time, without the guilt of ſacrilege. And doth not this reaſon bind us as much as the Jews? Have we any power to alienate from God, what is his property, more than they had?

2dly, Another reaſon is taken from the equity and rationality of this precept. God is good and liberal to us, in giving us ſix days for our works: Wherefore it is highly reaſonable and juſt that we ſhould give him one day for his worſhip. It aggravated David's ſin, that he took the poor man's darling ewe lamb, when he had a whole flock of his own: As it did our firſt parents fault in pulling the fruit of one tree that God had reſerved, when he gave them all the reſt of the trees at their will; ſo it heightens our crime, if we rob God of his one day, when he gives us no leſs than ſix to ourſelves.—Moreover, it is highly reaſonable and fit, when our dying bodies have ſix days for their neceſſities and occaſions, that our immortal ſouls ſhould have one for theirs. Now, doth not the equity and juſtice of this command affect and oblige us as much as it doth the Jews?

3dly, A third reaſon is taken from the charitableneſs of this law, *viz.* That our bodies and cattle ſhould have a day allowed them for reſt; charity ſaith, that they ſhould have ſome eaſe and relaxation from ſore labour and not be wearied out with continual toil: And is not this as needful now, as it was of old among the Jews?

4thly, Another reaſon is drawn from God's example, which is a rule to us: 'For in ſix days the Lord made 'heaven and earth, the ſea, and all that in them is; 'and reſted the ſeventh day.' Here we have a twofold example, both of God's reſting and working; and they are both ſet before us for our imitation. As God employed ſix days in the works of creation; ſo we are to make uſe of ſix days in the works of our lawful calling: And as he ceaſed from his works, and reſted on the ſeventh day; ſo we are bound to imitate him in that reſpect by quitting our weekly labours, and ſanctifying of the Sabbath day. Now, can there any reaſon be given, why we are not as much bound to follow God's example, in reſting one day after ſix days labour, as the Jews were?

A fifth is taken from the bleſt advantages of it; it is a bleſt day to them that keep it. And, is not God as able and willing to bleſs the Sabbath to us now, as he was of old? And, do not we need his bleſſing as much as the Jews?

Now, if theſe arguments be moral, perpetual and obligatory to us, as much as to the Jews; the command that is enforced by them muſt be ſo likewiſe.

IV. A fourth argument may be taken from the ſpecial marks of honour and reſpect that God puts on this command. It is not only engraven in tables of ſtone by the immediate finger of God, as all the reſt; but it is privileged above them, in ſeveral reſpects.

1ſt, It is placed in the firſt table of the law, and thereby preferable to thoſe of the ſecond table.

2dly, It is ſituated in the midſt of the Decalogue, in the cloſe of the firſt table, and before the front of the ſecond table; thereby teaching us, that the obſervation of both tables much depends on the keeping of this one command. God hath placed it in the heart of the Ten Commands, becauſe the keeping of it gives life to the keeping of all the reſt. The ſanctification of the Sabbath is an epitome of all religion; it virtually includes all the commands, and ſtrongly engages men to keep them all. Hence it was, when the Iſraelites broke the fourth commandment by gathering of manna, that the Lord charges them with breaking all the commands, Exod. xvi 28 *How long refuſe ye to keep my commandments and my laws?* Why ſo? Becauſe he that makes no conſcience of keeping the Sabbath, will not much ſtick to break any of the reſt.

3dly, It hath a ſolemn *memento* prefixed to it, which the reſt have not; God uſhers it in with a *remember,* which is very emphatic, and is, as if he had ſaid, *Keep this command always in your minds: forget what you will, forget not this.* God ſpeaks, as a maſter that hath ſome ſpecial affair, among many others, to recommend to his ſervant: Among all other injunctions, he bids him particularly, *Remember* ſuch an affair; thereby ſhewing a ſpecial concern for it, more than the reſt.

4thly, It is delivered both *poſitively and negatively:* All the reſt of the commands are delivered only one of the ways, but this is both ways. It is not only ſaid poſitively, *Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;* but alſo negatively, *In it thou ſhalt do no manner of work* &c.

5thly, The Lord preſſeth obedience to this command, with more reaſons and arguments than any of the reſt, which were enumerated before. And this he doth becauſe he knew the conſcientious obſerving of this command would engage us to make conſcience of all the reſt, and becauſe he foreſaw wicked men would attack it, and reaſon againſt it more than any of the reſt. Now, is it probable that God woold ſhew ſuch a conrern for a *ceremonial law,* that he would place it in the middle of the *moral precepts,* and preſs it with more reaſons and arguments than any of them?

6thly, He makes the keeping of this command, and ſanctifying of the Sabbath, one ſpecial end of man's creation; becauſe therein God is highly glorified. The Jewiſh Talumd propounds the queſtion, *Why God made man on the evening before the Sabbath?* and gives this one reaſon, that man might forthwith enter upon the obſervation of the command to keep the Sabbath, and begin his life with the worſhip of God, which was the chief end why it was given him, as if the keeping the Sabbath were the great end of his creation. And indeed there is ſolid reaſon for this aſſertion, if we conſider, that as the end of the Sabbath-day, is to commemorate God's glorious works, and celebrate his praiſes for the ſame; ſo the chief end and deſign of man, whom God made on the ſixth day as his laſt and moſt conſummate work of all, was that he might be the tongue of the whole creation, to trumpet forth his praiſes for all the reſt of his works. And accordingly, juſt on the back of his creation, he entered upon the keeping of a Sabbath, for that very end. So it may well be ſaid, That God made man chiefly for this end, to keep the Sabbath day.

7thly, The Lord entails many ſpecial bleſſings upon the keeping of this command, and denounces many ſad threatenings againſt the breaking of it. Read the 56th chapter of Iſaiah throughout, where the Lord not only pronounceth him bleſſed that keeps the Sabbath, but promiſes to *give him a place and a name better than of ſons and daughters,* to fill his heart with *ſpiritual joy,* to give him a *ſpirit of prayer,* and to *hear his prayer:* God will both give him ability to ſerve him, and then accept and reward his ſervice when it is done. Alſo read Iſa. lviii. 14. Jer. xvii. 24. where bleſſings, both ſpiritual and temporal, *peace, wealth, plenty* and *proſperity,* are promiſed to ſuch as keep the Sabbath. On the other hand, how terrible are the plagues he threatens againſt a land or people for breaking this command. Read Jer. xvii. 27. Ezek. xx. 21, to 26.

8thly, He hath ſeverely puniſhed ſinners for the breach of this command as if it were the ſum of his whole ſervice. He cauſed a man to be put to a cruel death for *gathering ſticks on the Sabbath,* Numb. xv. The offence might be thought ſmall, but God looks on the contempt of the Sabbath, as an affront to the Creator who inſtituted it, and to whoſe honour it was dedicate, and an incurſion upon the whole law, about which God appointed the Sabbath for a hedge. It was the ſlighting of the Lord's Sabbaths that cauſed Jeruſalem to be burnt with fire, Jer. xvii. *ult.* Many inſtances of judgments againſt Sabbath-breakers might alſo be brought from human hiſtories.

V. A fifth argument may be taken from the prophecies of the Old Teſtament. We find Iſaiah that evangelical prophet, pronouncing a bleſſing on thoſe that ſhould keep the Sabbath, even in evangelical times, Iſa. lvi. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, keep ye judgment, and do juſtice; for my ſalvation is near to come, and my righteouſneſs to be revealed. Bleſſed is the man that doth this,——that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it.* That is a plain prophecy of Chriſt; yet, in his times he declares them bleſſed who ſhould keep the Sabbath: Yea, ver. 6. he puts *the keeping of the Sabbath* in a manner for the whole duties of the covenant. That this evangelical prophet is ſpeaking there of the New Teſtament times, there is no ground left to doubt; for he is ſpeaking of the time when the ſtranger and eunuch ſhould be joined to the Lord, and when there ſhould be no diſtinction of perſons, Jews or Gentiles, but both ſhould be alike welcome to God and his ordinances: And yet, in theſe times, there are many bleſſings promiſed to them that ſhould keep the Sabbath; which demonſtrates it to be a moral and perpetually binding duty.

VI. Chriſt himſelf plainly tells us, *That he came not to deſtroy* or abrogate any part of the *moral-law, but to fulfil it*, ſeverely threatening theſe who would ſeek to invalidate the obligation of the leaſt of theſe commands, Matth. v. 17, 18, 19. and, in confirmation hereof, he bids Chriſtians *pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day*, Matth. xxiv. 10. Now, the flight he there ſpeaks of, was to happen in Veſpaſian's time, about forty years after that all ceremonies were aboliſhed, together with the Jewiſh Sabbath, as I ſhewed before; and yet we ſee Chriſt plainly enough homologates the morality and perpetual obligation of the law for the Sabbath, under the New Teſtament: for he ſtill ſuppoſes that a Sabbath would be in being and in force, after all the ceremonies were aboliſhed; and therefore he warns his diſciples, and in them all Chriſtians to the end of the world, to make it a petition in their prayers upon any approaching calamity, to be delivered from the neceſſity of fleeing upon the day when the duties of the Sabbath ſhould be obſerved: Seeing it is no ſmall aggravation of our diſtreſs to be forced to flee and travel on God's holy day, when we ſhould be employed in attending the ſolemn ordinances of his worſhip, and enjoying communion with God therein.

VII. A ſeventh argument may be taken from the abſurdities that would follow upon the denying the morality of this command. For then, *1ſt*, There would be but nine commands of the moral law, which is directly contrary to ſcripture; for we are told that there are ten in it, Deut. x. 4. *And he wrote on the tables, according to the firſt writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord ſpake out of the midſt of the fire*, &c.

2dly, It would open a door for atheiſm and immorality, and tend to caſt looſe the whole moral law: For if we yield that the fourth commandment is not moral, but ceremonial; why may not ſome, in the next place, riſe up and ſay, The ſecond and fifth are not moral neither? and ſo on, concerning the reſt. But the Lord having written the whole moral law in tables of ſtone, and the fourth command in midſt thereof, doth teach us thereby, that the whole of it ſhould be indelibly written in our hearts, and that the obligation of it, and of this command among the reſt, can never be extinguiſhed.

Laſtly, The univerſal church have ſtill held the commandment of the Sabbath to be moral, and of perpetual obligation, and that the ſeventh day of our time ſhould be conſecrated unto the Lord. The conſtant practice of all true Chriſtians, ſince the apoſtles times, in obſerving a weekly Sabbath, is a great confirmation of this truth; eſpecially if we conſider, that the judgment and practice of the catholic church have been ſo uniform, conſtant and uninterrupted in this matter, that we do not find ſo much as one heretick, or perſon of any ſort in ancient times, that ever preſumed to oppoſe or contradict this doctrine.

And as the foreſaid univerſal conſent evidenceth this truth or law to be of divine inſtitution, ſo it proves it to be a dictate of the law of nature and ſound reaſon, that one day of the week ſhould be dedicate to the worſhip and ſervice of God. Yea, ſo ſtrong is the light hereof, that thoſe who have apoſtatized from the true religion, and have taken up with the vileſt of ſuperſtitions, have ſtill found it neceſſary to fix upon a certain day of the week, for the performing of ſolemn worſhip; and ſo the Mahometans have choſen Friday for this end, and the Parthians obſerved Tueſday: For it is evident to every rational man, that the religious obſervation of a weekly Sabbath is the greateſt preſervative of a ſolemn profeſſion of religion in the world. Take away from amongſt men all conſcience of obſerving a ſtated day of ſacred reſt to God, for the celebration of his worſhip in aſſemblies, and all religion will quickly decay, if not come to nothing in the world. And it is to be obſerved, that, wherever religion flouriſheth in the power of it, there we find moſt conſcience made in the obſervation of the Sabbath.

Queſt. V. *If the fourth commandment be moral, and perpetual; how then could the Sabbath be changed from the laſt to the firſt day of the week, as we ſee it done?*

Anſwer. The preciſe day of the week for the Sabbath not being of the eſſence of the fourth commandment, but only an alterable circumſtance in it, the actual alteration thereof under the New Teſtament makes no more againſt the morality of the fourth command, than the change of the outward ordinances and means of worſhip under the goſpel, makes againſt the morality of the ſecond command. That the keeping of the preciſe ſeventh day of the week is diſtinct from the ſcope and ſubſtance of the fourth command, which is only to inſtitute one day in ſeven for the Sabbath, is pretty evident from the command itſelf, both the firſt and laſt words of it. The firſt words, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, do contain the whole ſubſtance of the command: the laſt words, *Wherefore the Lord bleſſed the Sabbath day and hallowed it*, do contain the formal reaſon of the command: And in neither of theſe is the ſeventh day of the week ſpoke of; which notifies to us, that the obſervation of that preciſe day is not eſſential to the moral and ſtanding law of the Sabbath, but ſeparable from it. If it be ſaid, that the command enforceth the obſervation of this day from God's example in reſting upon it; I anſwer, that a ſeventh day's reſt after ſix days labour is all the conformity which the fourth command requires of us to the example of God, *i. e.* any ſeventh day he pleaſeth to appoint.

Moreover, our natural reaſon argueth for what is above aſſerted: For though the Jews, who lived in the land of Paleſtine, might poſſibly have obſerved the preciſe ſeventh day from the creation; yet the joint obſervation of that preciſe time was impoſſible to all others whom the fourth command doth concern, becauſe of the difference of the climate where they live, which makes it night to many of them, when it was day to the Jews. Again, the computation of our time by weeks, conſiſting of ſeven days, each of twenty four hours length, was ſo interrupted in the times of Joſhua and Hezekiah, by the prodigious lengthening out of ſome days, that I cannot ſee how the preciſe ſeventh day could poſſibly be moral, or perpetually binding. From all which I infer, that the change of the day, by inſtituting the Lord's day, or firſt day Sabbath, in the room of the ſeventh day Sabbath doth no ways repeal or infringe the morality and ſubſtance of the fourth commandment.

Several proper queſtions may be moved upon this head.

Queſt. I. *By what authority came the day for the Sab-*

bath to be changed? *Anſw.* By the ſame authority that firſt appointed the Sabbath, I mean that of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is true God, *the Lord of the Sabbath*, and ſovereign Head of his church.

There are indeed ſome differences among divines about this matter, *ſome* holding this change to have been made immediately by Chriſt himſelf; *others*, that it was made by the apoſtles: But both opinions come to one thing, and equally eſtabliſh the divine authority of the Lord's day; ſeeing the apoſtles were divinely inſpired, and infallibly guided by Chriſt's Spirit, in their eccleſiaſtical determinations, delivering nothing to be conſtantly obſerved in God's worſhip, but what they had the Lord's authority for, according to 1 Cor. xi. 23.

Athanaſius plainly affirms, that the change was made by the Lord himſelf; and indeed it is more than probable, that during Chriſt's forty days ſtay on earth after his reſurrection, wherein he continued inſtructing his diſciples of the things relating to the goſpel-church, *and giving his commandments to his apoſtles*, Acts i. 2, 3. he, among other things, appointed this change, leaving it upon his apoſtles to make promulgation of it to the world after his aſcenſion, and eſpecially at Pentecoſt, at the extraordinary effuſion of the Spirit on that day, whereby he publicly confirmed this charge.

When the ſacred penman of the book of the Acts tells us, that Chriſt continued for ſo many days ſpace after his reſurrection, to ſpeak to his apoſtles *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, i. e. the goſpel-church; he ſurely hath a ſpecial reſpect to the inſtructions he gave them concerning the ordinances and inſtitutions of the Chriſtian church: And as he inſtructed them how they ſhould change the carnal ſacrifices of beaſts into the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, the ſacrament of circumciſion into that of baptiſm, and the ſacrament of the paſſover into that of the Lord's ſupper; ſo likewiſe he inſtructed them how to change the ſeventh-day Sabbath into that of the Lord's day. All the primitive fathers are very poſitive concerning the divine authority of this change. Ignatius, who lived in the firſt century, ſaith (in his Epiſt.) concerning the Lord's day, *Omnis Chriſti amator dominicum celebrat diem, reginam et principem dierum omnium.* Auguſtine, Serm. 151. *de tempore*, ſaith, *Dominicum diem apoſtoli religioſa ſolemnitate habendum, ſanxerunt, quia, in eodem Redemptor noſter a mortuis reſurrexerit, quique ideo Dominicus appellatur.*

Queſt. 2. If it be aſked, *What was the neceſſity of this change?* I anſwer it was neceſſary,

1ſt, To manifeſt Chriſt's glory and equality with the Father; for Chriſt ſaith, *That men ſhall honour the Son, as they honour the Father*, John v. 23. Wherefore, as they honoured the Father with a Sabbath, upon account of his reſt from creation; ſo it was fit they ſhould honour the Sun with a Sabbath, upon account of his reſt from redemption, which was a far more glorious work: And therefore, in honour of the Son, the Chriſtian Sabbath is, by the Spirit of God, called the Lord's day.

2dly, The change of the day was neceſſary to manifeſt Chriſt's headſhip over his church, and that he is the ſovereign Lord over his own houſe, worſhip and ordinances; and particularly, that he is *Lord of the Sabbath*, which title he had aſſumed before in Mark ii. 28. And accordingly he would have this convincingly diſplayed to the world, by ſhewing that he is able to change the day of his ſolemn worſhip.

3dly, Since he hath thought fit to appoint a new manner of his worſhip, it was meet to appoint a new time of it alſo. The Levitical ſervice and ceremonial worſhip of the Sabbath day being changed, it was proper the day of the Sabbath ſhould be changed alſo, to ſhew the more clearly the expiration of that worſhip, and to induce the Jews the more eaſily to lay it aſide, and keep Chriſtians the more from judaizing.

4thly, There were ſome things in the obſervation of the ſeventh-day Sabbath peculiar to the Iſraelites, that belonged properly to that nation, and not to others: As, 1. God deſigned it to be a ſignal or mark for diſtinguiſhing that people from the reſt of the world; therefore he calls the keeping of this day, *a ſign betwixt him and the children of Iſrael, throughout their generations*, Exod. xxxi. 13. 17. *i. e.* a ſign they were God's covenanted people, a nation that ſtood in a peculiar relation to God, above all others in the world. But, this relation coming at length to be altered, it was fit the ſign ſhould be alſo changed. 2. When God revived the inſtitution of the Sabbath to the Jewiſh nation, he enjoined them to keep it in memory of their deliverance from Egypt, as well as the creation of the world: for it is very obſervable in Deut. v. when Moſes called the Iſraelites together in a ſolemn manner, to put them in mind of the covenant God had made with them in Horeb, he repeats the Ten Commandments to them: But, in repeating of the fourth, he leaves out the argument of keeping the Sabbath, taken from God's creating of the world in ſix days, and reſting the ſeventh; and, in the room of it, puts in their miraculous deliverance from Egypt: For, in the cloſe of the fourth command, he ſays, Deut. v. 15. *Remember that thou waſt a ſervant, in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a ſtretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.* And hence ſome think, that it was not preciſely the ſeventh day from the creation that was appointed for the Jewiſh Sabbath, but the ſeventh day from their deliverance from Egypt.—*Laſtly*, This day was alſo appointed them, for to call to mind their wonderful deliverance at the Red-ſea, which ſeveral learned writers are of opinion was wrought for them on the morning of the Jewiſh Sabbath, and ſeems very probable from Exod. xii 15, 16, 17. and hence they are enjoined to reſt, and ceaſe from their labour on this day, in rememberance of their being miraculouſly reſcued on it from Egypt, and of their reſting from the cruel bondage thereof. From all which it appears, that there was ſomething in this commandment peculiar to the Jewiſh nation, and which belonged not to others. And whence I may well infer, that if the deliverance by Moſes, from Egypt and the Red-ſea, was a good reaſon for the Sabbath of the Jews, ſurely the eternal redemption by Chriſt, from ſin and hell, is a much ſtronger and better reaſon for the Sabbath of the Chriſtians.

5thly, In the command for the ſeventh-day Sabbath, there were ſome things typical and myſtical, peculiar to the Old Teſtament times, and which were to be fulfilled in the Meſſiah and goſpel-times; and therefore to be aboliſhed. 1. The ſeventh day Sabbath repreſented Chriſt, who is the only reſt, centre, and ſatisfaction of our ſouls; therefore the apoſtle tells us, Col. ii. 17. That the Sabbath *was a ſhadow of things to come, but the body is of Chriſt*, i. e He is the ſubſtance which this ſhadow or type repreſented.

2. It ſignified the great Sabbath of the New Teſtament, or the happy times of the goſpel, wherein the faithful were to reſt from the ſervile rites and burdenſome ceremonies of the law.

3. The ſeventh-day Sabbath being a *ſhadow of things to come*, typified the believer's reſt and deliverance by Jeſus Chriſt from the bondage of ſin, and being brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

4. The Jewiſh Sabbath, with its ceremonial and typical worſhip under the law, ſhadowed forth the Chriſtian Sabbath, with its pure and ſpiritual worſhip under the goſpel, and ſo is expired.

5. The reſt of the ſeventh day Sabbath was a type and ſhadow of Chriſt's reſting upon that day in the grave, and therefore could not be continued after his reſurrection, more than any of the other types fulfilled in Chriſt. Our Saviour, by chooſing to ly buried throughout this day in the grave, did thereby bury the Jewiſh ſeventh-day Sabbath with the reſt of their types and ſhadows Hence it is that the apoſtle Paul, Col ii. 16. 17. doth expreſsly number the Sabbath among the Old Teſtament ſhadows, that ceaſed upon their being accompliſhed in Chriſt the ſubſtance and Antitype, who came in place of all the legal ſhadows. Now, it being evident from the foreſaid text, that the Jewiſh Sabbath was abrogated by Chriſt's death and reſurrection; it is neceſſary to believe that either Chriſt, by himſelf or his apoſtles, did appoint another day in lieu thereof, for the ſolemn worſhip of God; otherwiſe the ſtate of the Chriſtian church under the New Teſtament would be far worſe than that of the Jews under the Old, which is abſurd.

6 The two ages before and after Chriſt are reckoned as two diverſe worlds, Heb. ii. 5. wherefore as when the firſt world was made by creation, there was a day ſet apart in memory thereof; ſo, when the world was renewed by redemption, it was fit there ſhould be a day kept in honour and memory of that great work: For, if the perfecting the work of the firſt creation deſerved to have a day ſet apart for celebrating the power and glory of the Author, much more doth the finiſhing the new creation, or reſtoration of the world, deſerve a day to be conſecrated for the commemorating of that, in regard the glorious attributes of God do ſhine far more brightly in this, than in the other.

Queſt. 3. If it be aſked, *Why was the Sabbath changed to the firſt day of the week?*

I anſwer, For many reaſons.

1. The great reaſon given for obſerving the laſt day of the week doth plead more ſtrongly now for the obſervation of the firſt day of the week. The reaſon for obſerving the ſeventh day was becauſe the Lord reſted that day from the great work he had made, *viz.* of creation, which ought to be remembered with thankfulneſs and praiſe. Now, when God gave the ten commandments, there was no greater work in the world than the creation; and therefore it was fit that the day of God's reſt from his greateſt work ſhould be the Sabbath, or day of reſt to the world. But, ſhould God thereafter work a greater work than creating heaven and earth; then, by parity of reaſon, and even by virtue of the fourth commandment, the day of God's reſt from that, ſhould be the Sabbath of the world Now, the work of redemption, which the Lord perfected, and reſted from on the firſt day of the week is far greater than the work of creation; it doth even eclipſe and ſwallow it up, as the temple did the tabernacle: It is far more valued and eſteemed by God the Author, and ought to be far more regarded and remembered by us on many accounts.

1ſt, In regard that in the world's redemption there is a far more glorious diſplay of the divine attributes, God's power, wiſdom, juſtice, goodneſs, *&c.* than in the world's creation.

2dly, It is much more for our benefit and comfort than the work of creation: we could have had no comfort in this without the other; for the whole creation groaned under the burden of ſin, and, by reaſon thereof, all the creatures were at enmity with us, Without redemption what pleaſure can we take in our creation, ſince by it we are made capable only of everlaſting miſery and deſtruction: Alas! there are no comforts in being creatures, if we be not made new creatures; and there is no doing of that, but by this new and glorious method.

3dly, In regard the ſecond creation was a work of far greater difficulty and expence than the firſt. The firſt was finiſhed by the word of his mouth, but the ſecond could not be perfected but by the blood and death of his dear Son: The firſt was finiſhed in ſix days; but it coſt the Son of God above thirty three years painful travail and ſuffering in the world, to effectuate the ſecond. In the firſt there was no oppoſition; for, ſince the world was made out of nothing, there was nothing to make reſiſtance to the Creator: But in the ſecond creation, or redemption of the world, there was a formidable oppoſition made by juſtice, men and devils. It was wonderful for the glorions fabrick of heaven and earth to be made out of nothing; but much more for the Maker of all things to be made of a woman, Jeſus Chriſt to be born of his own creature. In the firſt creation God made us like himſelf; but here the Lord makes himſelf like us. The glorious Creator is made a creature, yea, made ſin, made a curſe, to ſave man, his ſinful creature, from the curſe. We may indeed ſay, *We are fearfully and wonderfully made*; but much more are we fearfully and wonderfully redeemed. Creation was the work of God's fingers, Pſal. viii. 3. but redemption the work of his arm, Luke i. 51. We uſe the ſtrength of the arm, to effectuate what the fingers cannot do. So that we ſee it is a far greater work and miracle to bring us back from hell, than to bring us from nothing; to make us ſaints, than to make us men and women. Well then, if God's reſting from his work of creation on the ſeventh day, determined mankind to keep this day for a Sabbath in a thankful remembrance thereof, much more ſhould God incarnate's raiſing a new world at a far greater charge, and reſting from his labour of love on the firſt day of the week, determine us to obſerve that day for a Sabbath, in an adoring remembrance of his infinite glory and goodneſs diſplayed in this ſtupendous work.

4thly, The Lord himſelf delights and rejoices much more in the new creation, than in the old, his glory being more conſpicuous by the one than by the other; and that which is eſteemed and preferred by him, ought to be ſo by us. The Lord indeed took pleaſure in the review of his works in the firſt creation, when he at firſt reſted from the ſame: But theſe being afterwards all corrupted and deformed by ſin, his complacency therein was exceedingly diminiſhed. Hence, Gen. vi. it is ſaid, 'It repented him he had made man:' Wherefore it was proper and neceſſary to transfer the Sabbath to the day of the world's new creation or reſtoration, effected and completed by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt the world's Redeemer, in which day the Lord reſted from theſe his more glorious works, delighting himſelf in the review thereof with an everlaſting complacency.

Laſtly, To confirm what is ſaid, let it be obſerved, that God ſo far preferred the work of redemption to that of creation, that he changed the beginning of the year (as Dr Lightfoot remarks on Exod. xii.) from the time of the world's creation, to the time of the paſſover, and the Iſraelites deliverance from Egypt by Moſes, as being an eminent type of our redemption from ſin and hell by Jeſus Chriſt. We have reaſon to believe, that, from the creation of the world, the year began in September, at the time of the autumnal Equinox; for we find the fruits were on the trees at the creation, Gen. i. 12. But when God inſtituted the firſt paſſover, which immediately uſhered in the Iſraelites deliverance from Egypt which was in March, at the vernal Equinox; he changed the beginning of the year, and ordered it to commence from that time, Exod xii. 2. *This month ſhall be unto you the beginning of months, it ſhall be the firſt month of the year to you.* Now, if the beginning of the year was changed upon the account of the type, a day might well be changed upon the account of the antitype. If the month of the figurative redemption was ſo remarkable, that the month of the world's creation muſt give place to it; then ſurely the ſubſtance itſelf, when it appeared, might well be the cauſe of the change of a day, and the ſeventh day of the creation give place to the firſt day of the finiſhing of our redemption.

II. Since there was a neceſſity of changing the Sabbath from the ſeventh day of the week, as is already proven; it could be into no other day ſo fitly, as the firſt day of the week, on ſeveral accounts.

1ſt, Becauſe of its anſwering the intent of the command better than another day: For if the Sabbath had been changed into the ſecond, third, fourth, or any other day of the week than the firſt, the morality of the fourth command had been infringed: For ſo God would not have had one day, and man ſix working days together of one and the ſame week; as the command requires. But now it holds in a conſtant courſe. God hath his one day, and we our ſix together in one and the ſame week; as it was from the beginning. And, by this wiſe alteration, there was never a week without a Sabbath, and never a week had two Sabbaths. For as the week ended with the Jews Sabbath, ſo the next week began with the Chriſtian Sabbath; which could not have been, if any other ſeventh day had been choſen.

2dly, Since there behoved to be a change, it was very agreeable to reaſon to begin the week with God, and that our Creator and Benefactor ſhould be firſt ſerved, and have his portion of the week aſſigned to him in the firſt place, that his worſhip might have the preference to our labour; and alſo, that our conſecrating the firſt fruits of the week to God, might in a manner ſanctify the whole, obtain his bleſſing on the week's labour, and make all our works therein the more acceptable to him.

3dly, The firſt day of the week is the fitteſt for keeping up the memory both of the firſt and ſecond creation of the world. For it being a day of reſt always ſucceeding our ſix days labour, puts us in mind of God's finiſhing the works of creation in ſix days ſpace, and reſting the ſeventh. And eſpecially, it being the firſt day of the week, ſerves to mind us of the beginning of the world, and of its firſt creation; ſeeing it was on this day that God began his glorious work, ſaying, *Let there be light.* But in a ſpecial manner, this day ſerves to perpetuate the memorial of this greater bleſſing of the world's new creation or redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; ſince on it he finiſhed this work by his reſurrection. It was on this day that not only that temporal and periſhing light did firſt ſhine at the firſt creation; ——but alſo that eternal and heavenly light brake out in a meridian ſplendor, the Sun of righteouſneſs aroſe from a dark grave, and ſhined on a dark world, and brought light, life, peace, healing, and all mercies under his wings.

4thly, It is the fitteſt day for celebrating the honour and memory of all the perſons of the glorious Trinity; For tho' Jeſus Chriſt the ſecond perſon of the Trinity, be honoured by this day in a peculiar manner, upon account of his glorious reſt this day from the work of redemption; yet the Father and Holy Ghoſt are this day remarkably honoured alſo. The Father did not only begin this day to create but he was the glorious contriver of our happineſs, and ſent his Son to carry on that bleſſed work of redemption, which was this day happily completed. Alſo the Holy Ghoſt is honoured by obſerving this day, ſince he gloriouſly deſcended at Pentecoſt on this day for fitting and furniſhing the apoſtles for the work of the goſpel: and he is the bleſſed Applier of the redemption finiſhed this day by Jeſus Chriſt, and is in a more eſpecial manner at work this day, in making ſaving application of it unto elect ſouls, by the preaching of the goſpel.

III. The Sabbath is changed to the firſt day of the week, becauſe it is the moſt honourable and glorious day to Chriſt and his church, that ever dawned upon the world: The moſt honourable day to our Redeemer, and the moſt joyful to the redeemed; and therefore ought to be kept in perpetual remembrance.

Hence, by the Spirit of God, and ever ſince Chriſt's reſurrection upon this day, it is called the Lord's day, it being the moſt glorious day ever he had. It was in an eminent manner his birth-day, for in it he was born from the dead: in it God ſolemnly owned him to be his only begotten Son; hence that word in Pſal. ii. *Thou art my Son this day I have begotten thee*, is applied to the day of his reſurrection, Acts xiii. 13. He was this day *declared to be the Son of God with power*, Rom. i. 4. For, at his riſing, he made the earth to ſhake, the graves to open, the ſtones to roll away, the dead to riſe and appear, the ſoldiers to tremble and flee, and both ſaints and angels to come and attend him. And was not this a triumphant day to him? Yea, on this day he conquered the grave, death and hell, and ſhewed himſelf to be the Captain of our ſalvation, triumphing over his and our enemies. His birth and death did ſhew him to be truly man, but his reſurrection did manifeſt him to be truly God, and the great Redeemer of the world. Hereby he gave full proof, that he had compleatly finiſhed the work of our redempton, paid the elect's debt, ſatisfied divine juſtice, cancelled our bond and obtained an ample diſcharge, ſince he, as our great Cautioner, was now let out of priſon. Was not this then a joyful day, a day to be had in everlaſting remembrance? The day our Jonas came ſafe out of the whale's belly; the day our Samſon carried away the gates of Gaza. Now it was that death loſt its ſting; now the grave and hell loſt their purchaſe; now the ſerpent's head was bruiſed; now were they all ſwallowed up in victory; now it was that our glorious Redeemer reſted from all the works of ſuffering and redemption, and rejoiced in the review thereof, with infinite complacency. And ought not we, who are ſo much concerned, chearfully to reſt this day with Chriſt, in a thankful remembrance of all he hath done?

IV. This day was propheſied of long before, Pſal. cxviii. 24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.* The current of expoſitors underſtand this day of our Chriſtian Sabbath, and of Chriſt's reſurrection thereon; for here plainly there is a prophecy of Chriſt, and of a remarkable day whereat the world ſhould wonder, and the church rejoice. *This is the day which the Lord hath made,* i. e. of which God is author. He made it, not by creation only, as he made all days; but by conſecration, deſigning and appointing it for a peculiar end, even for that ſtrange and wonderful work of Chriſt's reſurrection from the grave, when he obtained his glorious victory, and our gracious deliverance from hell and deſtruction. Again, he made it, *i. e.* (as the word from the original may be rendered) exalted it. This is the day which the Lord hath honoured and exalted above its fellows, above the ſeventh, or any other day of the week, becauſe of the incomparable work of this day. That the day propheſied of in that place is ſome remarkable day of the Meſſiah, is very clear, if we conſider the context, and the two preceding verſes of this Pſalm; by which it plainly appears, that the day there ſpoke of is the day wherein *the ſtone rejected by the builders,* (*i. e.* Chriſt, who was rejected by the elders, ſcribes and phariſees, the pretended builders) became *the head of the corner*: Now what day was this, but his *reſurrection-day?* in which God, by raiſing him from the dead, gloriouſly exalted him above all his enemies, rolled away his reproach, made him *Head of the corner,* and Head of the church, by openly declaring him, to be his *Son with power,* and that to the terror and confuſion of all his enemies, and the joy and gladneſs of all his friends. And to put it beyond doubt, that this is the meaning of the place, ſee it particularly applied by Peter, before the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, Acts iv. 11, 12. *Be it known to you, that this Jeſus Chriſt whom ye crucified, God hath raiſed from the dead:* And therefore he ſubjoins, verſe 12. *This is the Stone which was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become* the *head of the corner.* Now, this being ſuch a memorable day, the pſalmiſt's direction is, that all Chriſtians ſhould rejoice and be glad in it; which indeed is a moſt proper duty on our Chriſtian Sabbath.

Again we have another prophecy concerning this day, in Iſa. xi. 10. *And in that day there ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, which ſhall ſtand for an enſign of the people; to it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek, and his reſt ſhall be glorious.* Now, what was that ſpecial day, wherein Chriſt was raiſed and exalted for an enſign, to invite and engage the nations to flee to him as their Redeemer? Was it not his reſurrection day, on which he was declared to the world to be *the Son of God with power,* Rom. i. 4. This is the day then on which his reſt was glorious. For as God the Father's *reſt from the work of creation was glorious,* and had great glory and honour put on it, by the world's keeping a Sabbath for about four thouſand years thereupon; ſo God the Son's *reſt from the work of redemption* was to have great glory and honour put upon it, by the Chriſtian world's obſerving a weekly Sabbath on it, to the end of time.

And was it not a glorious reſt which the Son of God had on the firſt day of the week, from his great and ſtupendous work, when he had laid the foundations of the new heavens and new earth, and had given the finiſhing ſtroke to the new creation; when all *the ſtars ſang together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy?* It was on this day the Son reſted from his works, *and was refreſhed,* as it is ſaid of God, Exod. xxxi. 17. with reſpect to his reſting from the works of the firſt creation. Now, as God's reſt from his works on the ſeventh day, and his being refreſhed therein, was a ſufficient indication of the preciſe day of reſt which he would have obſerved by the world under the old diſpenſation of the covenant; ſo the reſt of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from his works on the firſt day of the week, and his being refreſhed therein, is a ſufficient indciation of the preciſe day of reſt which he would have obſerved under the diſpenſation of the new covenant. And accordingly upon this indication, we immediately find the diſciples aſſembling themſelves together upon this day of their Redeemer's reſt; and no ſooner are they met, but Chriſt comes and graciouſly meets with them, ſolemnly bleſſes them, and gives them the Holy Ghoſt, John xx. 19. from which time foreward, the firſt day of the week was never without its ſolemn aſſemblies.

Moreover, we have the apoſtle to the Hebrews expreſly confirming the foreſaid prophecies concerning Chriſt's reſt upon the firſt day of the week, by telling us, that under the goſpel, *there remained a reſt for the people of God,* Heb. iv. 9. Now if this place be duly conſidered, and rightly underſtood, it will mightily confirm the change of the Sabbath from the laſt to the firſt day of the week. For the word, which is there rendered *reſt,* in the original is *Sabbatiſmos,* and ſhould be rendered a *Sabbatiſm* or *Sabbath keeping;* and ſo the meaning is (according to Doctor Owen, and other learned commentators) *There remaineth a Sabbath-keeping for the people of God, under the New Teſtament, as well as under the old.* And this (as the apoſtle ſhews in the context) behoved neceſſarily to be a new Sabbatiſm, in regard it hath a new foundation, in correſpondence to the foundation of the old Sabbatiſm mentioned verſe 4. of that chapter. *For he ſpake in a certain place of the ſeventh day on this wiſe, And God ſaid* *reſt the ſeventh day from all his works.* Well (ſaith the apoſtle) the new Sabbatiſm hath the like foundation verſe 10. *For he* (viz. *Jeſus Chriſt*) *that is entered into his reſt, hath alſo ceaſed from his own works, as God did from his.* Now, it was on the morning of the firſt day of the week that Chriſt entered into his mediatory reſt from his works of redemption, as God on the ſeventh day entered into his reſt from the work of creation. And as God, by his reſting on the ſeventh day, did determine that day for a ſacred ſabbatical reſt under the Old Teſtament; ſo Chriſt (who is the Lord of the Sabbath) by his entering into his reſt on the firſt day, did determine that day of the week for a ſacred Sabbatiſm under the New Teſtament. The ceaſing from his works, as God did from his mentioned ver. 10. can never properly be applied (as ſome do) to the believer, but to Chriſt's ceaſing from his works of redemption; ſeeing it is abſurd to make our ceaſing from the vile works of ſin, a parallel to God's ceaſing from his glorious works of creation. And it cannot be meant of ceaſing from the works of duty and ſervice to God; for, to all eternity, believers never ceaſe from theſe, Rev. xxii. 3.

V. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath put honour upon the firſt day of the week, and authoriſed the obſervation of it by his own example and practice, which hath the force of a law to us. It was on this day he met with the two diſciples going to Emmaus, opened the ſcriptures to them, and was made known to them in the breaking of bread, Luke xxiv. 13. Likewiſe upon the ſame day he appeared to the eleven, when gathered together and others with them, ſhewed them his pierced hands and feet, comforted them, and opened their underſtandings that they might underſtand the ſcriptures, Luke xxiv. 33, 36, 40, 45. It was on this day that Chriſt came to his diſciples, (being all conveened together except Thomas) gave them his peace, and bleſſed them, and alſo gave them their commiſſion and the holy Ghoſt, John xx. 16. 20, *&c.* Again, upon that day eight days, being the next firſt day of the week, when the diſciples were aſſembled together, and Thomas with them, John xx. 26. Chriſt choſe to appear unto them, and graciouſly convinced Thomas by the diſcovery of his wounds. Tho' Chriſt, after his reſurrection, met with ſeverals of his diſciples upon other days of the week, yet on the firſt day only (which is therefore expreſly recorded) did he appear to them when aſſembled together; and therefore we ſee how he left Thomas a whole week under his unbelief and doubtings, till the next Lord's day or firſt day of the week ſhould come, that he might have occaſion graciouſly to reſolve him in the aſſembly of his diſciples, for their common edification and comfort. The firſt day of the week is the only day of the week, or month, or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Teſtament; and wherever it is ſpoke of, we hear of the religious obſervation of it, by the diſciples aſſembling together. And why are we told by the evangeliſts ſo expreſly, and ſo often, of Chriſt's making his viſits to his diſciples upon the firſt day of the week? but to ſhew us, that Chriſt put a peculiar honour and reſpect upon this day, and thereby gave us a plain intimation of his will, that it ſhould be obſerved in his church, as the Chriſtian Sabbath, or the weekly day of holy reſt and holy convocations. That one day in ſeven ſhould be religiouſly obſerved in this manner, was a law from the beginning, and that as old as the ſtate of innocence (as I ſhewed before.) But that, in the kingdom of the Meſſiah, the firſt day of the week ſhould be that ſolemn day; this was indication enough, that Chriſt on that day once and again met his diſciples in a religious aſſembly. And it is highly probable, that at his firſt meeting with them, he appointed them that day eight days to be together again, promiſing to meet them; for we find them more chapterly conveened that day than the former, John xx. 26 *And after eight days, again his diſciples were within, and Thomas with them* as it would ſeem waiting for Chriſt's coming. And many are of opinion, that he thus continued to meet with them every firſt day of the week, till his aſcenſion, *ſpeaking to them the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,* Acts i. 3.

Chriſt's meeting with them that day was not merely occaſional, but deſigned; as appears by the expreſs mentioning of the firſt day of the week ſo oft as he met them. For, when Chriſt met with his diſciples on any other day of the week, we are not told what day it was, whether the ſecond, third or fourth day of the week; but when he meets with them on the firſt day, the holy Ghoſt names and records that, thereby aſcribing ſomething peculiar to it above all the reſt.

VI. The obſervation of the firſt day of the week is alſo authoriſed by the divinely inſpired apoſtles of Chriſt and founders of the Chriſtian church, and that both by their example and direction.——We have them both directing and performing the duties of the Sabbath on this day, and alſo aſſerting Chriſt's propriety in it as his; all which is evident from ſcripture.

In the forecited ſcriptures, where we read of Chriſt's appearances to his diſciples, we alſo read of their aſſembling together on the firſt day of the week ſeveral times, which certainly was for the public worſhip of God, and in honour of this day. For, when they met on other days of the week, it is not told what theſe were; but, when they met on the firſt day of the week, the holy Ghoſt records that; which ſhews it to be a remarkable day in itſelf, and obſerved as ſuch by the diſciples of Chriſt, and that in a religious way.

But, beſides theſe, I ſhall adduce four other ſcriptures, that clearly demonſtrate what is above aſſerted.

The firſt is, Acts ii. 1, 2. where it is recorded, that *the apoſtles and other brethren were met all together on the day of pentecoſt in one place.* This meeting was for public worſhip on the firſt day of the week, according to their wonted practice. It is not in the temple with the Jews, but in a houſe in Jeruſalem by themſelves.

Queſt. How prove you that it was on the firſt day of the week? *Anſw.* Becauſe it is evident from ſcripture that the paſſover that year fell on the Jewiſh ſabbath; and Pentecoſt being ſtill the fiftieth day after the paſſover, it conſequently fell that year on the firſt day of the week, or the Lord's day. Pentecoſt is a Greek word, ſignifying the *fiftieth* called ſo becauſe of its being ſtill the fiftieth day after the paſſover, a Jewiſh feaſt, which fell ſometimes upon one day of the week, and ſometimes on another; but this year it fell on the laſt or ſeventh day of the week. Pentecoſt was another feaſt of the Jews, but kept in remembrance of God's giving the law that day on mount Sinai, being the fiftieth day after their eating the paſſover and coming out of Egypt. And conſequently, Pentecoſt falling this year upon the firſt day of the week, our Lord's reſurrection day, the apoſtles and brethren aſſembled for celebrating this day by public worſhip. Now, let us obſerve how remarkably God confirmed their keeping of the firſt day of the week, and bleſſed their meeting together upon it for worſhip: He even ſent down that extraordinary effuſion of the holy Ghoſt upon them, for fitting and furniſhing them for the extraordinary work of planting the Chriſtian church, and converting the world. This was a ſolemn approbation of the Chriſtian Sabbath, and a ſeal to its inſtitution from heaven, which did confirm all Chriſtians in the celebrating of this day for the future: And many times have they experienced the gracious effuſions of the Spirit on their public aſſemblies this day ſince that time. It is obſerved by Grotius, upon Exod. xix. 1. That it was on the firſt day of the week that the law was given in its fearful promulgation from mount Sinai. But tho' God made that in ſome reſpect a terrible day to them, yet he makes it weekly a joyful day to us, by the comfortable promulgation of the goſpel thereupon from mount Zion.

A ſecond ſcripture is, Acts xx. 7. *And upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them,* &c. Where it is plain that the firſt day of the week was then the ſtated time for Chriſtians their meeting together, for the preaching of the word, and celebrating of the Lord's ſupper; for this is recorded as their cuſtomary known practice. Paul had been at Troas ſeven days, and conſequently was there upon the Jewiſh Sabbath; but there is no word of any meeting among them on that day, or any other day of the week: But when the firſt day of the week comes, the church is ſolemnly conveened, and perform the work of the Sabbath on this day. Paul was ready to depart from that place, only he muſt ſtay till the firſt day of the week, that he might meet with the whole church, and preach to them before he leave them; and ſo, according to their cuſtom, they all aſſemble together, and he ſanctifies the Sabbath with them, by preaching and diſpenſing the ſacrament, and that even till midnight; for they did not ſoon weary, at that time, of the work and duties of the Lord's day.

A third ſcripture is, 1 Cor. xvi. 1. 2. *Now concerning the collection for the ſaints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye. Upon the firſt day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore,* &c. Whence it is plain, that the apoſtle injoins the church of Corinth, in conformity with other churches, to make their collections for the poor on the firſt day of the week. Now, why on the firſt day of the week, and not on the ſeventh, or any other? but for theſe reaſons: 1. They had their public meeting on this day, and ſo had more conveniency for gathering their charity on this day, than upon another. 2. The firſt day of the week was now come in place of the old Sabbath, on which day collections were made in the Jewiſh ſynagogues; for the giving of alms was always reckoned a proper duty for the Sabbath day: But now the apoſtle will have all the duties of the Sabbath transferred to the firſt day of the week, and particularly this duty of public charity, there being a peculiar fitneſs in this day for it, in regard we are called this day to commemorate Chriſt's infinite charity to our ſouls, and alſo to receive new bleſſings and expreſſions of bounty from him; and therefore ſhould be the more liberal to his poor ſaints. I hope, there is none that will ſay that the apoſtle had not Chriſt's warrant for what he appointed in this matter; for in this epiſtle he proteſts, that *he delivered nothing to them, but what he had received from the Lord, and had his command for;* ſee 1 Cor. xi. 23. & xiv. 43. It is as clear as light from the foreſaid teſtimony, and many others, that the primitive Chriſtians had their aſſemblies on the firſt day of the week, which they would not have had without the apoſtles direction; nor would the apoſtles have determined ſo, without knowing the mind of Chriſt.

A fourth ſcripture is, Rev. i. 10. where John ſaith of himſelf that *he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day;* which, to be ſure, is no other than the Chriſtian Sabbath, getting the denomination from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his riſing from the dead thereupon, and frequent meetings with his diſciples this day; and to this day it ſtill retains this title of the Lord's day, being a day ſpecially inſtitute for the honour of our Lord, and conſecrate for his ſervice and worſhip. The apoſtle wrote this book near the end of the firſt century, and calls this day by that name which it commonly got then, and ſpeaks of it as a day univerſally notour and remarkable for the Chriſtians obſervation of it. The apoſtle, at this time, was baniſhed into the iſle of Patmos by Domitian the emperor, where probably he wanted the opportunity of the public aſſemblies on this day; yet he is employed in ſanctifying the Lord's day in a private way; he is in the Spirit, *i. e.* in a ſpiritual frame, and taken up in ſpiritual exerciſes, meditation and prayer (which are proper duties for the Sabbath) and the Lord rewards this his conſcientious regard to this day, with the revelation of theſe great things which were afterwards to fall out to the church to the end of the world.

Moreover, it is obſervable, that the Lord puts his name on this day; for the Holy Ghoſt calls it here the Lord's day, and that for theſe reaſons; 1 Becauſe of its deriving its inſtitution from him: So the prayer, dictate by him, is called the Lord's prayer; the ſacrament of his ſupper, inſtitute by him, is called the Lord's ſupper.

2. It is called the Lord's, becauſe of his ſpecial propriety in it: He hath ſeparated and ſet apart from common uſe, and conſecrated it wholly to his uſe and ſervice: So the ſacrament is called the Lord's table, becauſe of its being conſecrated for holy uſes, and ſo ſet apart and diſtinguiſhed from all other tables.

3. Becauſe of its being dedicate to his honour and memory, being the day in which he conquered death, got a total victory, and triumphed over all his enemies.

4. It is called the Lord's day becauſe the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his perſon and mediation is the principal ſubject of this day.

VII. Another argument for the obſervation of the Chriſtian Sabbath may be drawn from the conſtant and uninterrupted practice of all Chriſt's churches through the world ſince the apoſtles days; they have all continued to obſerve the Lord's day for holy worſhip. All the ancient fathers and Chriſtians had the Lord's day in great eſteem, and made it a badge of their religion to obſerve it carefully, as appears from the writings of

Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, *&c.* Ignatius that ancient father, who lived ſo near Chriſt's times, in his epiſtles recommends the Lord's day: *Let every one that loveth Chriſt* (ſaith he) *obſerve the firſt day of the week, the Lord's day, as the queen of all days.* It is a remarkable ſaying of Auguſtine, *as the virgin Mary was bleſſed above all women, ſo is the firſt day of the week bleſſed above all days.*

VIII. The conſciences of men plead for the divine authority of the Lord's day. Surely it is God, who is the ſupreme Lord and Sovereign of mens conſciences, that directs this his deputy in men, to excite and preſs them ſo cloſly to the obſervation of this day, and alſo to challenge and ſmite them ſo ſharply for the neglect and profanation of it. And indeed there is no ſin that conſcience more commonly accuſes wicked men of, than the breach of the Lord's day: And hence it is, that many malefactors, at their laſt hour, when moſt ſerious, do moſt bitterly bewail it: acknowledging that their Sabbath breaking was their leading ſin, and the occaſion of all the reſt of their wicked courſes; having provoked God to leave them, and give them up to the luſts of their own hearts, and temptations of the devil. Clark, in his 2d vol. of Examples, tells us of one Thomas Savage (a young man who was executed at Ratcliff, October 28. 1668, for murdering his fellow ſervant) that whilſt he was in priſon, cried out to ſome that came to viſit him, after this manner; "Oh wretch that I was! I ſtudied "how I might ſpend the Lord's day in the devil's "work; at that time when I ſhould have been ſerving "God, I was buſieſt in ſerving ſatan. I was glad "when the Sabbath came, for then I had leiſure to "purſue my luſts and pleaſures. I ſometimes went in "to the church, but I never ſtaid the time of a whole "ſermon. I laughed at thoſe who ſpent the Sabbaths "in hearing and praying, and looked on them as the "verieſt fools in the world. O tell young men from "me, that Sabbath-breaking is a dangerous and coſtly "ſin," *&c.*

Turner on Providence, gives an account of one Edmund Kirk vintner, executed at Tyburn, July 11. 1648, for murdering his wife, who in his confeſſion lamented his frequent profanation of the Lord's day; "Upon which holy day, ſaith he, I committed the "heinous ſin of murdering my poor wife." Thus one ſin was puniſhed with another, Sabbath-breaking with murder, and that with the gallows. Likewiſe, he tells of another executed May 25. 1687, for theft; who in his confeſſion, ſaid, "That it was his earneſt "deſire, that all, young men eſpecially, ſhould take "care not to miſpend the Lord's day." And the author's remark is, that he doth not know that ever he obſerved any repentance in a malefactor, who did not bitterly lament his neglect of his duty to God on that day.

IX In the *laſt* place. The diſpenſations of divine providence may be brought in, as giving ſuffrage to the ſanctification of the Lord's day. God hath highly honoured this day, by doing many mighty works upon it: On this day he created the light, and began to make the world; on this day he gave the law from mount Sinai as Grotius obſerves. Nay, it is affirmed by an ancient council held at Conſtantinople, Counc. 6. Can. 8. "That Chriſt was born on the Lord's day, "and the ſtar ſhined to the wiſe men on it. Chriſt "fed the five thouſand with the five loaves and two "fiſhes on this day; that he was baptiſed, roſe from "the dead, and ſent down the holy Ghoſt on this "day." And ſome of the ancients have further affirmed, that whatſoever notable thing was done in the world, the Lord ordered it ſo, was done to the honour of this day. Thus God hath conſecrated the firſt day of the week, or Chriſtian Sabbath, by doing ſo many of his wonderful works upon it; to intimate to us, that it is his will we ſhould ſanctify this day, and obſerve it weekly, for publiſhing and proclaiming his worthy acts, and keeping up the memory of Chriſt's nativity, paſſion, reſurrection, *&c.* to the end of the world, without inſtituting days of our own for theſe ends.

Moreover there are various diſpenſations from God, both of mercy and judgment, that conclude for the obſervation of this holy day. The gracious providences, that attend the conſcientious obſervers of the Lord's day, are moſt remarkable. On theſe the Lord pours down the gracious influences of his Spirit, in his ordinances diſpenced this day; he eminently bleſſeth them with increaſe of grace, tenderneſs of conſcience, and holineſs of life; and with all his beſt bleſſings both ſpiritual and temporal. God hath now for theſe 1700 years paſt granted all his churches thro' the world many ſignal marks of his favour and preſence in obſerving the Lord's day, which they could not have expected had they been in an error in keeping it. How often hath he poured out his Spirit upon them when attending ordinances on this day, and bleſſed them with conviction, converſion, and manifeſtations of his love? Nay, the univerſal experience of Chriſtians do teſtify, that all the bleſſings and mercies, promiſed to the obſervers of the Sabbath under the Old Teſtament, are now transferred and accompliſhed to the keepers of the Chriſtian Sabbath: For, the change of the day being by divine authority, the firſt day Sabbath doth lawfully ſucceed to all the privileges, promiſes, and threatenings formerly pertaining to the ſeventh day Sabbath. We ſee what bleſſings are promiſed to the keeping of the Sabbath of old, both ſpiritual and temporal; that is a remarkable word, Jer. xvii. 24, 26. *If ye hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein, then they ſhall come from the cities of Judah, and all other places, bringing burnt offerings, and ſacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incenſe, and bringing ſacrifices of praiſe unto the houſe of the Lord;* i. e. When the Sabbath is duly obſerved then the church ſhall flouriſh, religion ſhall be promoted, and the name of God highly exalted. And do we not ſee this promiſe viſibly accompliſhed to ſuch churches and perſons as ſtrictly ſanctify the Lord's day? Among ſuch Chriſtianity doth flouriſh, knowledge is increaſed, reformation is advanced, grace is multiplied, and a conſcientious regard is had to all the other duties of religion.

Again we find temporal mercies annexed to the keeping of the Sabbath, Iſa. lviii. 13, 14. *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath,* i. e. If thou ceaſeſt from prophaning it, *I will cauſe thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father;* i. e. Thou ſhalt be bleſſed with outward proſperity, and many earthly enjoyments.

This is again confirmed in Jer. xvii. 24, 25. *If ye diligently hearken unto me, ſaith the Lord, to hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein, then ſhall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes ſitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots, and this city ſhall remain for ever;* i. e. The nation and city ſhall be bleſſed with all ſecular and civil advantages. Accordingly the people of God have found the hallowing of the Lord's day ſenſibly proſperous to them with reſpect to their ſecular affairs: When they have diſcharged the duties of this day with a good conſcience, it hath fared the better with them all the week after. In teſtimony whereof, I ſhall here narrate the experience of that excellent perſon, Sir Matthew Hale, lord chief juſtice of the king's bench in the reign of king Charles II. who was both an eminent lawyer, and a great divine. In his book called Contemplations moral and divine, he hath theſe words; "I have found (ſaith he) by a ſtrict and diligent obſervation, that a due obſerving the duty of the Lord's day, hath ever had joined to it a bleſſing upon the reſt of my time; and the week that hath been ſo begun, hath been bleſſed and proſperous to me: And on the other ſide, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the reſt of the week hath been unſucceſſful and unhappy to my ſecular employments; ſo that I could eaſily make an eſtimate of my ſucceſſes in my own ſecular employments the week following, by the manner of my paſſing this day: And this I do not write lightly or inconſiderately, but upon a long and ſound obſervation and experience." Again in another place, he ſaith, "I thank God, I ever found that, in the ſtricteſt obſervation of the times of his worſhip, I ever met with the beſt advantage to my worldly occaſions; and that, whenever my worldly occaſions encroached upon thoſe times, I ever met with diſappointment, tho' in things of the moſt probable ſucceſs: and ever let it be ſo with me. It hath been and ever ſhall be to me, a conviction beyond all argument and demonſtration whatſoever, that God expects the obſervation of his times: and that, while I find myſelf thus dealt with, God hath not given over his care of me. It would be a ſad preſage unto me, of the ſevere anger of my Maker, if my inadvertance ſhould caſt me upon a temporal undertaking upon this day, and that it ſhould proſper." Thus the learned and pious judge Hale, who ſpake from his own experience, after long and critical obſervation of divine providence.

Again, the judgments which often follow upon the violation of this day, do give teſtimony to its divine authority. How ſad are the ſpiritual ſtrokes, though little noticed, which God inflicts upon the ſlighters of his holy day, by giving them up to hardneſs of heart, ſearedneſs of conſcience, and vile affections; ſo that commonly they fall into ſcandalous out-breakings, and notorious crimes, proceeding from evil to worſe, till they at length run themſelves into ſome fatal miſchief! And, when men neglect to puniſh the profanation of this day, the Lord uſually takes the ſword into his own hand, and, by viſible temporal judgments, plagues the profaners of it. If the violation of the Jewiſh Sabbath was by a divine order, puniſhed with death, under the law, Exod. xxxi. 15. ſurely the breach of the Chriſtian Sabbath ſhall not eſcape without ſome ſignal marks of the divine vengeance, according to the ſcripture threatenings, which are levelled againſt the one as well as the other, as I ſhewed before. Let us not forget that terrible denunciation of judgment, which we have in Jer. xvii. 27. *But if you will not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jeruſalem,* on the *Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it ſhall devour the palaces of Jeruſalem,* and it *ſhall not be quenched.* The Jews (as Auguſtine obſerves) fell generally into this grievous ſin of profaning the Sabbath: For though they pretended to hallow it, by forbearing ſervile labour upon it; yet upon that day above all days, they uſed to pamper the fleſh with carnal delights, and run into the exceſſes of gluttony and drunkenneſs. Againſt theſe ſins did our Saviour warn them; but, they perſiſting, the foreſaid direful threatening was at length exactly fulfilled: For upon that very day, ſo abuſed by them, their regal city Jeruſalem, the glory and maſter-piece of the whole earth, was burnt down to the ground by the Romans. And this Hegiſippus and Dio obſerve to have been done on the Sabbath-day, in September, about forty years after Chriſt's death.

And doth not that prophetical commination concern us, as well as the Jews? And have we not cauſe to fear the accompliſhment of it for the breach of the Chriſtian Sabbath? Yes, we have found it to be true. Some impartial obſervers of God's judgments in the world have remarked, that this ſin, *viz.* the breach of the fourth command, by the profane neglect of God's worſhip upon the Lord's day, and the ſpending of this time in open works of impiety, hath been frequently viſited upon cities and private perſons, by conſuming fires that have happened upon this day: Of which many inſtances might be given in this ſame iſland, as well as other parts of the world. That fiery prediction againſt Jeruſalem hath been oftener than once fulfilled and executed upon the two capital cities thereof, many of whoſe inhabitants have been as guilty of profaning the day ſet apart for God's ſervice as ever the Jews were. In London this vice reigned, and there it was dreadfully puniſhed with a furious and aſtoniſhing fire in the year 1666, which laid the moſt part of that great city, with its faireſt churches and buildings, in rubbiſh, in three days ſpace: And it is remarkable, that, that dreadful fire broke forth on the Lord's day, very early in the morning, being the ſecond day of September.

Likewiſe in Edinburgh, where Sabbath breaking very much abounded, (as appears by the acts of aſſembly made againſt that ſin) the faireſt and ſtatelieſt of its buildings, in the Parliament cloſs, and about it, (to which ſcarce any in Britain were comparable) were on the fourth of February 1700 (being the Lord's day) burnt down and laid in aſhes and ruins, in the ſpace of a few hours, to the aſtoniſhment and terror of the ſorrowful inhabitants; whereof I myſelf was an eye-witneſs: And the effects of that fire are viſible to this day. Yea, ſo great was the terror and confuſion of that Lord's day, that the people of the city were in no caſe to attend any ſermon or public worſhip upon it, though there was a great number of worthy miniſters, conveened in the place, (beſide the reverend miniſters of the city) ready to have prayed with or preached to the people on that ſad occaſion; for the general aſſembly was ſitting there at the time: But the diſmal caſe of the city made this impracticable. However the Lord himſelf, by that ſilent Sabbath, did loudly preach to all the inhabitants of the city, ſetting forth to them, in a moſt awakening manner, the great ſin and danger of irreligious neglecting of God's worſhip upon the Lord's day, and profaning it, *by doing their own works, and finding their own pleaſures*.

I have read of the town of Stratford upon Avon, that it was twice, upon the Lord's days, almoſt conſumed with fire, chiefly for profaning the Lord's day, and contemning his word in the mouth of his faithful miniſter. The like alſo might be told of ſeveral towns in Scotland.

Dr. Beard, in his theatre of God's judgments, tells us of the town of Feverton in Devonſhire, that was often admoniſhed by her godly paſtor, that God would bring ſome heavy judgment upon the inhabitants of that place, for their profanation of the Lord's day, occaſioned chiefly by preparing of their weekly market, which they then held on the Monday. Accordingly, very ſoon after the ſaid miniſter's death, on the 3d of April, 1598. God ſent a terrible fire, which in leſs than half an hour, conſumed the whole town, except the church, the court houſe, alms-houſes, and a few poor people's dwellings; where a man might have ſeen four hundred dwelling-houſes all at once on fire, and above fifty perſons conſumed in the flames. But the remaining inhabitants not taking warning by the former judgment, but continuing in the ſame ſin, the town was again fired on the 5th of Auguſt 1612. (fourteen years after the former fire) and all conſumed, except a few poor houſes. The hiſtorian adds, that they are blind who ſee not in this the finger of God; and he prays for grace to the people of that city, when it is next built, to change their market day, and to remove all occaſions of profaning the Lord's day.

Dr. Twiſs on the Sabbath, relates a paſſage that happened in Bedford ſhire, not long before his writing that book. A match at foot ball being appointed on the Sabbath afternoon, whilſt two of the moſt forward were in the belfrey, tolling of a bell, to call the company together, there was ſuddenly heard a clap of thunder, and a flaſh of lightning was ſeen by ſome that ſat in the church porch, coming through a dark lane, which flaſhed in their faces, and much terrified them: And, paſſing through the porch into the belfrey, it tripped up his heels that was tolling the bell, and ſtruck him ſtark dead; and the other that was with him was ſo ſorely blaſted therewith, that ſhortly after he died alſo.

Mr. Clark, in his father's life, p. 128, hath a very ſtrange paſſage, to this purpoſe. Mr. Hugh Clark preaching at Oundle in Northampton ſhire, where the people were generally very ignorant, and much addicted to the profanation of the Lord's day, by Whitſon ales, Morice-dances, and ſuch paſtimes, which he much ſet himſelf againſt, endeavouring to convince them of the evil, and denouncing God's judgments againſt them in caſe of perſeverance: But they being trained up in thoſe courſes, and hardened by cuſtom, perſiſted ſtill in their wickedneſs. At laſt, on a Lord's day, the leader of the dance being a luſty young man, in the midſt of their profane paſtimes, fell down ſuddenly, and died; but they, ſoon ſhaking of their fear, returned to their vomit again. The Lord's day following, Mr. Clark took occaſion, from this ſad diſpenſation, to quote the forecited text, Jer. xvii. 27. *If thou wilt not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire*, &c. But the people kicked againſt theſe admonitions, and that ſame evening went to their ſports again; among whom was a ſmith that was a chief ring leader: But it pleaſed God, the very next day, two huſband men coming to his ſhop to ſharpen their plough ſhares, a ſpark from the red hot iron, as he was beating it upon the anvil, flew into the thatch, which both the ſmith and his neighbours ſaw, but had no power to move towards it; which preſently burnt down the ſmith's ſhop, houſe, and all his goods. This Mr. Clark preſſed upon their conſciences: but nothing would prevail till at laſt, upon a Sabbath day at night, when they were retired to their ſeveral homes, there was heard a great noiſe, and rattling of chains up and down the town, which was accompanied with ſuch a ſmell and ſtink of fire and brimſtone, that many of their guilty conſciences ſuggeſted to them, that the devil was come to fetch them away: And now, and not till now, they began to think in good earneſt of a reformation.

Mr. Clark, in his examples, tells of on Mr. Abberly a godly miniſter in Burton upon Trent, who took occaſion often to reprove and threaten Sabbath breakers, eſpecially ſuch as ſold and bought meat upon Sabbath day mornings, a practice too common in that place. Neverthleſs, there was a taylor, that dwelt in the upper end of the town, who would go through the long ſtreet (as it were in a bravado) to the other end of the town, and fetch home meat on the Lord's day morning; but as he returned with both his hands full in the midſt of the ſtreet he fell down ſtark dead. I was (ſaith Dr. Teate) an eye-witneſs, both of his fall and burial: And it pleaſed God thereby to work ſome reformation, both among the butchers and others.

Alſo he relates, from one Mr. Falconer, miniſter of Burford near Saliſbury, a fearful example of God's juſtice, about the year 1635. A profane company of young men, on the Lord's day early in the morning, went to Claringdon park, to cut down a May-pole; and having loaden the cart with it, at Milner's Bars, entering into the city of Saliſbury, one of the cart-wheels fell into a rut, which made the young tree in the cart (which they had ſtole for a May pole) to give a great ſurge on one ſide, ſo that it ſtruck one of the company ſuch a blow on the head, that beat out his brains, and he inſtantly died on the place, and lay there a fearful ſpectacle of God's wrath, both againſt that heatheniſh ſport, and wilful profaning of the Sabbath; whilſt he maketh the very thing they had choſen for their ſport and paſtime, to be the inſtrument of executing his fury. The author ſaith, that he diligently enquired after the truth of this matter, at his firſt going to Sarum; and many godly and credible perſons, who had ſeen that ſad ſpectacle in his hearing atteſted it to be ſo as above narrated.

Alſo, in the county of Devon, one Edward Ameridith, a gentleman, having been pained in his feet, and being ſomewhat recovered, one ſaid unto him, He was glad to ſee him ſo nimble, Ameridith replied, That he doubted not but to dance about the May-pole next Lord's day; but, before he moved out of that place, he was ſmitten with ſuch feebleneſs of heart, and dizzineſs in his head, that, deſiring help to carry him to an houſe, he died before the Lord's day came.

Dr. Twiſs on the Sabbath, tells, That at a place called Tidworth, on the Sabbath day, many being met together to play at foot ball in the church yard, one had his leg broke, which preſently gangrening, he forthwith died thereof. Likewiſe at Alceſter in Warwick ſhire, a luſty young woman (upon the coming forth of the declaration for ſports) went on the Sabbath-day to a green not very far off, where ſhe ſaid, ſhe would dance as long as ſhe could ſtand: But, while ſhe was dancing, God ſtruck her with ſuch a violent diſeaſe, whereof, within two or three days after, ſhe died.

Beard in his theatre, writes of a certain nobleman, that uſed to go a hunting on the Lord's day in time of ſermon, who had a child by his wife with a head like a dog, and it howl'd like a hound.

I ſhall conclude with one example more from Mr. Clark. He gives account of a godly miniſter, that one day was preaching, and earneſtly preſſing the ſanctification of the Sabbath; and, in his ſermon, he had occaſion to make mention of that man, that, by the ſpecial commandment of God, was ſtoned to death for gathering ſticks on the Sabbath day. Whereupon one in the congregation was ſo wicked as to riſe up and laugh; yea, made all the haſte he could out of the church, and went to gathering of ſticks, tho' he had no need of them: But, when the people came out from the Sermon, they found him in their way, lying ſtark dead, with the bundle of ſticks in his arms. Theſe inſtances of divine vengeance, inflicted upon the profaners of the Lord's day, may contribute very much to confirm us in the belief of the divine inſtitution of this holy day; and likewiſe may ſerve to warn all ranks and degrees of perſons, to guard againſt the contempt and violation of the Lord's day. The Lord indeed exerciſeth great long ſuffering and patience towards many notorious Sabbath-breakers, to ſhew us that there is a judgment day to come: But nevertheleſs he makes monuments of ſome, to let us know that *verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

Many more examples might be brought, if it were needful, from all corners of the land; but I truly believe, there are few ſerious obſervers of providence, but might relate many ſad inſtances of the diſcovery of God's diſpleaſure againſt the prophanation of the Lord's day, from their own experience and obſervation.

After all, I hope, there is none that fears God, loves Chriſt, and believes the holy ſcriptures, but will ſee theſe arguments which I have adduced, to be convincing demonſtrations of the neceſſity of ſanctifying the Lord's day, and honouring it as God's Sabbath, to the end of the world.

Now, to ſum up the whole, let us lay all theſe together: The ſolid ground for the morality of the fourth command, the weighty reaſons of the change of the day, and the ſpecial marks of honour that Chriſt hath put upon this holy day; it being the day in which he firſt made the light to ſhine, the day wherein alſo the Sun of righteouſneſs aroſe, diſpelling the clouds of guilt and fear; the day he ſubdued his enemies, manifeſted himſelf to his diſciples, and taught them his will; the day he ſent the holy Ghoſt to his apoſtles; the day he hath called by his own name, and reſerved for his own uſe, and upon which he holds ſpecial communion with his people, and vouchſafes them the marks of his royal favour; the day which God highly honours by his providential diſpenſations.—And will it not then be judged an high affront to almighty God, to pour contempt on that day which he delights to honour? Surely it ought to be matter of grief to all true lovers of God, when they ſee it done. We are told, that, when one of Darius's eunuchs ſaw Alexander ſetting his feet on a rich table of his maſter's he fell a weeping; and being aſked the reaſon of it, he ſaid, *It was to ſee the table of his maſter ſo highly eſteemed, now made a footſtool.* And may we not weep to ſee the day that God hath honoured and bleſſed, and for which he is ſo highly concerned made a footſtool, and trampled on by ſo many profane perſons in our days? To be ſure, God will not ſit with ſuch open affronts as he gets from ſome in this matter.

Thus, I think I have demonſtrated the morality of the fourth command, and the divine inſtitution of the Lord's day for our Chriſtian Sabbath; which, by neceſſary conſequence, proves the abolition of the Jewiſh ſeventh day Sabbath. For tho' there were no other ſcripture warrant for aboliſhing the old Sabbath, (which nevertheleſs there is as I ſhewed before) yet ſeeing it is evident that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *the Lord of the Sabbath*, hath by his reſurrection, example and authority, for ever conſecrated the firſt day of the week, for the ſolemn remembrance and celebration of the Lord's reſt from the great work of redemption, and of that unparalleled deliverance wrought by him for a loſt world, and thereby hath ſet apart the firſt day for our Sabbath; then, of courſe, the old ſeventh day muſt cede, and reſign its ſanctity to it, and be for ever abrogated. The Chriſtian Sabbath muſt neceſſarily extinguiſh the Jewiſh, ſeeing the two Sabbath days cannot ſtand in force together: For by virtue of the fourth command, there is but one day of ſeven to be obſerved for the Sabbath, one day only after ſix working days, and not two after five. And ſince it is the ancient and unrepealed inſtitution of God, that men ſhould labour ſix days of the week, and obſerve but one day for the Sabbath; then ſurely, if we ſhould labour but five days of the week and keep two for the Sabbath, we would expreſsly violate the law. So that no Chriſtians need to have the leaſt ſcruple about the abrogation of the Jewiſh Sabbath.

But tho' the ſeventh day be now diveſted of its ſanctity, hath no more claim to the Sabbath, having reſigned all its dignity and priviledges to the firſt day of the week the New Teſtament Sabbath; yet ſtill it hath the honour of uſhering it in, and of ſerving as a preparation day for it. As the Jewiſh typical worſhip uſhered in the evangelical ſpiritual worſhip; and the Jewiſh deliverances from Egypt and Babylon were preparatory to that more glorious and general one from hell and deſtruction by Jeſus Chriſt, which is this day commemorated. So the Jewiſh ſeventh day Sabbath ſerves to uſher in and prepare us for the glorious feſtival of the Chriſtian Sabbath, which is to continue while *Chriſt hath a church upon earth*, being the only day appointed to be kept in remembrance of him, and as ſerving to uſher in and prepare us for that far more glorious and celeſtial Sabbath above, which ſhall never have an end.

O then endeavour by all means to get and keep up a high eſteem of the Lord's day, that day which God hath exalted above all the days of the week, and above all the Jewiſh Sabbaths and feſtivals whatſomever. Of them in compariſon of the Lord's day, we may ſay in aluſion to that word, Heb. i. 11. 12. *They periſh but thou remaineſt; and they all wax old like a garment, and as a veſture thou haſt folded them up, and they are changed; but thou ſhalt* (maugre all the malice of men and devils) *continue the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.* Theſe were but as morning ſtars, to uſher in the ſun. Other feſtivals, in all their royalty, are not arayed like thee. All the graces triumph in thee; all the ordinances conſpire to adorn thee; the ſacred Trinity do delight in thee: the Father ruleth thee, the Son roſe upon thee, and the Spirit overſhadowed thee. Thus is it done to the day which the King of heaven delighteth to honour; And what ſhall be done to the man that delighteth to diſhonour and put contempt upon thee?

Surely, as *God will not hold him guiltleſs* that breaks the third command, *by taking his name in vain;* ſo he will not hold him guiltleſs that breaks the fourth commandment, by ſpending his day in vain. And tho' the breakers of this commandment may eſcape puniſhment from men, or may even eſcape outward judgments from God in this world; yet there is a day coming, when he will call them to account for it. Oh ſinners! the day of the Lord is like to be a dreadful day to you that deſpiſe the Lord's day.

Queſt. VI. *What is that proportion of time which is to be ſequeſtrate and allowed for the Sabbath day? and when doth it begin and end?*

Anſw. The fourth command requires one day in every ſeven; by which we are not to underſtand only the artificial day from ſun-riſing to ſun-ſetting or from the break of day until the darkneſs of the night come on, and think then the Sabbath is over, and that we are no longer bound to abſtain from our own works; and far leſs are we to think that the Sabbath is no longer than the time of public worſhip doth laſt, and that we are at freedom from the work and duties of the Sabbath when this is over: This ſome ſay in words, and many more in their practice.

But, conſider what abſurdities would follow hereupon: For, if no more time be allowed for the Sabbath, but the time of public worſhip; then it would follow, that God requires no private or ſecret duties from us on that day, ſince theſe will need ſome more time: But that cannot be; for, if private and ſecret duties be required of us on week days, then much more on the Sabbath day.

Again, it would follow, that ſome muſt keep longer Sabbaths, and others ſhorter; nay, the Sabbath of many ſhall not be above an hour or two of the day; for there are miniſters and people who are ſcarce ſo long at public worſhip: But the whole day is the Lord's, and not a part only. You will have your ſervants to work the whole ſix week days for you, from morning to night, and not be contented with their working an hour or two only of theſe days: So neither ſhould you yield leſs to God than you require for yourſelves. Nay, if attendance on the public worſhip were all that is requiſite this day by virtue of the command, it would follow, that a man would be looſed from the obligation of the command, if he were in a place of the world where God is not publicly worſhipped.

But all theſe things being abſurd, I do upon ſolid ground, aſſert, that the whole natural day, conſiſting of twenty four hours, is to be ſet apart for the Sabbath day; and that we ought to meaſure this day, and begin and end it, as we do other days, that is, from midnight to midnight; during which time we are to abſtain from our own works, and ſanctify the Lord's Sabbath: For the fourth command binds us to conſecrate the ſeventh part of every week to the Lord, who challengeth a ſpecial propriety in one of ſeven, and aſſerts his juſt title thereto, ſaying, *The ſeventh day is the Lord's*: And alſo Iſa. lvii. 13. he expreſsly calls it, *My holy day.* It is all holy; and therefore no part muſt be profaned or applied to common uſes. ——It is all the Lord's; and ſo it is unlawful for us to rob him of any part of it, and alienate it to our private uſe.

Object. *But who is able to ſpend the whole twenty four hours in religious duties?*

Anſw. I do not ſay that this is to be done without any intermiſſion; for we do not this in following our employments on other days: A due proportion of every day is to be reſerved for the natural ſupport of our bodies, and particularly for moderate eating and ſleeping, which are works of neceſſity, and muſt be allowed on the Sabbath, as well as other days; with this difference only, that, whereas they are done on other days to enable us for labour, they are to be done on the Sabbath to ſtrengthen us for holy duties; and ſo cannot properly be called our own works: Neither can the doing thereof be called a taking of God's time to our own uſe, ſince this contributes to our better ſpending of God's time, and is truly neceſſary for God's ſervice on the Sabbath. But, beſides the time requiſite for the works of neceſſity and mercy, the whole natural day, as above deſcribed, is holy unto the Lord, and ought to be employed in religious duties; and not a part of the day only: Both Sabbath morning and Sabbath night ſhould be ſpent in prayer and praiſes, as is plain from the 92d Pſalm, which is intituled, *A pſalm or ſong for the Sabbath day,* ver. 1. and ver. 2. we are told, that *It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and ſhew forth his loving kindneſs in the morning, and his faithfulneſs every night.* But more of this afterwards when I come directly to treat of the ſanctification of the Sabbath. And, before I do this, I judge it neceſſary to anſwer ſome objections brought againſt the morality of the Sabbath, and the change of the day.

Quakers, Familiſts, and others holding that there is no difference of days, and ſo denying the divine authority of the Sabbath, I ſhall conſider what they ſay.

Some objections againſt the former doctrine anſwered.

Object. 1. *Every day ought to be a Sabbath to a Chriſtian, and ſo there is no need of a ſet day.*

Anſ. Tho' Chriſtians ſhould ſerve God, and walk with him every day, yet they cannot make every day a Sabbath for the public worſhip of God, ſince God calls them to other neceſſary work and buſineſs thereupon, which are inconſiſtent with the ſolemn ſpiritual employment of the Sabbath.

Object. 2. *Paul, in his epiſtle to the Galatians and* *elſewhere, condemns the obſervation of days under the New Teſtament.*

Anſw. The apoſtle ſpeaks only of the Jewiſh Sabbath and feſtivals, which were ſhadows of things to come, and aboliſhed by Chriſt's coming; but not of the Lord's day, which the apoſtle himſelf obſerved, and did particularly recommend to the Galatians their obſervation, 1 Cor. xvi. 1. 2.

Object. 3. *The Sabbath was given as a type or ſign only to the Jews; therefore it muſt be aboliſhed with the reſt of their types and ceremonies.*

Anſw. 1. The Sabbath is indeed ſaid to be given as a ſign betwixt God and his people, Ezek. xx. 12. But that is not confined to the people of the Jews, (except as to the ſeventh day Sabbath only, of which I ſpoke before) but to be extended to all God's people to the end of the world.

2. There is a great difference betwixt a ſign and a ceremony, which is an alterable thing. The rainbow is called a ſign, Gen. ix. God's moral precepts are called ſigns, Deut. vi. 8. Yet none will ſay that theſe are ceremonies, or alterable things.

3. Some ſigns are ceremonial and alterable; others are moral and perpetual: The Sabbath is not a ſign of the firſt, but of the latter ſort. Indeed, all the ſigns and types of the ſacrifice of the Meſſiah, and juſtification by Chriſt to come, were nailed all to the croſs with him, and abrogated; but all ſigns were not of this kind. The rainbow is given as a ſign of the world's preſervation from a deluge, and is perpetual; the Ten Commandments are given as probative ſigns of our obedience, and are perpetual, and ſo is the Sabbath. Indeed the Sabbath is of a more peculiar ſign than any of the reſt of the commands, and therefore is emphatically called a ſign ſeveral times in ſcripture.

1. It is a ſign of God's ſpecial love and favour to his people: The Sabbath is a great bleſſing and privilege to them; for which Nehemiah gives God thanks in a ſpecial manner, Neh. ix. 14 of which more afterward.

2. It is a ſign of that eternal reſt above, provided for the people of God.

3. The religious obſervation of the Sabbath is a declarative ſign of our ſanctification; therefore it is ſaid, Exod. xxxi. and Ezek. xx. that the Lord gave his people Sabbaths and ſigns, that *they might know that he was the Lord that ſanctified them.* So that it is plain from theſe, that the Sabbath is a ſign to us as well as to the Jews.

Object. 4. *But, ſay Quakers and other ſectaries, there is no holineſs in days, one time is not better than another; and therefore the Sabbath doth not differ from other days in the week.*

Anſw. I grant, one day is not holier than another in itſelf, (as one place is not more holy in its own nature than another) yet it may be holier in reſpect of its uſe. Thus the Sabbath day hath a relative holineſs in it, as it is deſigned and appropriated to God's uſe and ſervice, and therefore muſt not be alienated to uſes of our own; for this would be ſacrilege, which is a heinous crime. Hence it is, that the Lord doth expreſly call the Sabbath a *holy day*, Iſa. lviii. 13.

Object. 5. *But* (ſay they) *doth God require us to be more religious and godly at one time than another?*

Anſw. There are ſometimes that God requires us to give ourſelves more to religion, and to expreſs it more by outward acts of worſhip, than at other times. I grant, that we ought always to be religious, and to ſerve and worſhip God every day of the week; but God, in his wiſdom, hath thought fit to ſet apart a certain ſeaſon, wherein he requires more of the ſolemn, external and viſible exerciſes of religion, and performance of holy duties, than at other times. The reaſons of his ſo doing I mentioned before.

Some objections againſt the change of the day anſwered.

Object. 1. "The ſeventh-day Sabbath was inſtituted "in the *ſtate of innocency*; therefore it is to be held as "*moral* and unalterable."

Anſw. The inſtitution of the Sabbath, or conſecration of *one day in ſeven to the Lord*, may be hence concluded *moral* and perpetual, ſince the reaſon and ground of it is ſuch, as was ſhewed before; but it will not follow, that the determination of the preciſe day of the week is *moral* and unalterable alſo, ſince the Lawgiver, who appointed it, not only could, but actually hath altered it, as was ſhewed already. Every thing that God did bid or forbid our firſt parents, in a ſtate of innocency, was not *moral* or unalterably good or evil in itſelf, as appears from the inſtance of prohibiting to *eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil;* this was a law merely poſitive, and alterable in itſelf. *Laſtly*, Though the Sabbath of the ſeventh-day was appointed in the ſtate of innocency, and probably would have continued unalterably, if the fall had not interveened, and no greater work than that of the creation had been wrought: Yet, after the fall, God made the ſeventh day Sabbath peculiar to the old œconomy or diſpenſation of the covenant, and alterable together with it, upon his accompliſhing the far more glorious work of our redemption.

Object. 2. "The Iſraelites are injoined to obſerve "the Sabbath throughout there generations, *for a perpetual covenant,*" Exod. xxxi. 16.

Anſw. 1. This may be underſtood of the Sabbath indefinitely, and not of the ſeventh day Sabbath.

2. Granting the ſeventh day Sabbath were meant here, yet the perpetuity attributed to it is not abſolute, but periodical; denoting only a great length of time; for ſo we find it aſcribed to circumciſion, the ſhew-bread, and other things which were to be aboliſhed.

Object. 3. "There is no expreſs precept for keeping "the Chriſtian Sabbath in the New Teſtament."

Anſw. 1. The Lord doth not give expreſs command for every particular duty in his word, but hath thought it ſufficient to afford us plain ſcripture conſequences, whence we may gather it.

2. There was no need of any new expreſs precept to be left on record, ſince all the Chriſtians underſtand themſelves to be expreſly obliged by the fourth command to obſerve one day of ſeven as a Sabbath unto the Lord. And, for the particular day, the example of Chriſt, and of his apoſtles, (who delivered nothing but what they received from their Maſter, 1 Cor. xi. 23.) was ſufficient to enter the church upon the uniform obſervation thereof: And, being once begun, they could not eaſily miſtake in the continnance of it. The ſcripture indeed mentions the change of the day, and the keeping of the Chriſtian Sabbath, but briefly

and by ſhort hints, becauſe it was a thing univerſally notour to the whole church.

Theſe things, concerning the morality and perpetual obligation of the law for the Sabbath, being premiſed; I come, in the next place, to the chief thing which I deſigned to handle, *viz.* *The ſanctification of the Sabbath*: And there to ſhew particularly, how this holy day ſhould be ſanctified in a due and ſuitable manner.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the ſanctification of the Sabbath.

THere is a twofold ſanctification of the Sabbath, mentioned in the fourth command, the one by God, the other by man.

As for the firſt, God hath already ſanctified it, as is recorded in the cloſe of the command; *The Lord bleſſed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.* His bleſſing and hallowing the day are both of the ſame import, and ſignify theſe two things;

1. The Lord's diſtinguiſhing this day from others, and his ſetting it apart from common unto ſacred uſes and employments. He hath honoured it with his royal ſtamp, and conſecrated it for the work of heaven.

2. His pitching upon the Sabbath as the day whereon he doth remarkably bleſs and ſanctify men, by filling his ordinances with the ſpecial bleſſings and graces of his holy Spirit, and making them effectual to our ſanctification.

This is a bleſſed day, and a day of bleſſing: For as it is our duty on this day to meet together, and bleſs God; ſo it is God's promiſe this day to meet with us, and bleſs us. He will rain bleſſings upon the obſervers of his Sabbath, grant them his preſence, and make them joyful in his houſe of prayer.

As to the ſecond, the ſanctification of the Sabbath, which is required of us; this is either negative or poſitive. The firſt conſiſts in a holy reſt; the ſecond in holy exerciſes upon the Sabbath.

Before I proceed to handle theſe, I ſhall lay down ſome cautions for the right underſtanding of the fourth command, and for preventing miſtakes. Wherefore, when God doth here appoint us ſix days of the week for our labour, and one day for his worſhip, we muſt not think that it is God's meaning, *1ſt*, That no part of our ſix days is to be ſpent in religious exerciſes; for, under the law, there were ſet portions of every day conſecrated to divine worſhip, in the tabernacle and temple.

Nor, *2dly*, doth he mean that no whole day beſide the Sabbath may be ſet apart for imploring God's mercy in time of diſtreſs, or returning thanks to God for ſome ſpecial favour or deliverance, when the providence of God calls us to it: For we find God himſelf injoining the obſervation of other days beſide the ſeventh, Exod. xxxiv. Lev. xxiii. Numb. xxviii. and commanding ceſſation from labour on theſe days. It is not the deſign of the fourth command to lay us under a peremptory or indiſpenſible obligation of labouring in all the ſix days throughout; but only to injoin us not to labour on any other day but theſe ſix days, and to do all our works upon them, ſo as we be not hindered from ſerving God in a ſolemn manner on the ſeventh.

SECTION I.

Concerning the holy reſt requiſite on the Sabbath.

THis holy reſt upon the Sabbath conſiſts in a total abſtinence from all worldly employments and recreations; and from whatever work, buſineſs or action, that may any wiſe prove a hindrance to the worſhip and ſervice of God upon that day. This is plain, not only from the fourth command itſelf, but from many other ſcriptures, particularly Jer. xvii. 24. Iſa. lviii. 13.

I ſhall here propoſe ſome queſtions upon this ſubject to be anſwered.

Queſt. 1. *Are no ſort of works lawful on the Sabbath day?*

Anſw. There are three ſorts of works ordinarily excepted, as not prohibited by the fourth command, *viz.* the works of piety, of mercy, and of neceſſity.

1ſt, The works of piety, that is, ſuch bodily actions or labour as are neceſſary and ſubſervient to the performance of divine worſhip, or contribute to order or decency therein; theſe are lawful and neceſſary on the Sabbath day: Such were "the killing of beaſts, waſhing and preparing of ſacrifices; the convocating people to worſhip by blowing of trumpets, making ſhort journeys to attend worſhip, *&c.*" under the law. So now, under the goſpel, miniſters toiling their bodies in preaching and praying, people travelling to church, the ringing of bells, and the like, are lawful on the Sabbath day.

2dly, Works of mercy and charity are lawful this day, yea, and neceſſary alſo; for, ſeeing the Sabbath is inſtituted as a memorial of God's great love and mercy to us, we are bound upon it to ſhew charity both to the ſouls and bodies of men, and mercy to the very beaſts alſo: So that "the feeding our bodies, our beaſts, and uſing means for the help of man or beaſt in diſtreſs, and preſerving of their lives, the viſiting the ſick, making collections for the poor," and the like, are lawful on the Sabbath day: For the Jews had allowance for theſe under the law, ſo have we now under the goſpel.

3dly, Works of neceſſity and great conveniency, which could not be foreſeen, nor provided againſt the day before, nor cannot be delayed to another day; ſuch as "fleeing from enemies, or defending ourſelves againſt them; quenching of fire, dreſſing of meat, putting on our cloaths," and the like; theſe are alſo lawful on the Sabbath. The Maccabees of old did not decline to fight on the Sabbath day, nor did the Jews long before their days: For the Jewiſh writers tell us, that the overthrow of Jericho was on the Sabbath; which alſo ſeems to be founded upon Joſh. vi. 3 4. where it is ſaid, *They ſhall compaſs the city ſix days; and on the ſeventh day the walls of the city ſhall fall down, and the people ſhall aſcend up every man ſtraight before him.* Only take theſe cautions concerning ſuch works: See that the neceſſity be real and not pretended, and that ye have no ſecret complacency in its falling out. Take heed that it be not a neceſſity of your own bringing, and which you might have foreſeen and prevented the week before. And, when ye are doing theſe works of neceſſity and mercy, endeavour to keep your hearts in a ſpiritual frame as much as you can, and ſtudy to do them without giving ſcandal or offence to others, and then diſpatch them as ſoon as poſſibly you can, that ye may attend the main work of the day.

Queſt. II. *What are theſe works and actions then, from which we muſt reſt and abſtain upon the Sabbath?*

Anſ. We muſt not only take ſpecial care this day to abſtain from all ſuch ſinful works and actions as are unlawful upon any day; but we muſt alſo reſt from all worldly buſineſs and actions, whether employments or recreations, altho' they be ſuch as are lawful on other days. But more particularly,

I. We muſt reſt from all ſorts of ſervile work or worldly employments that tend to our profit or advantage; ſuch as, *making of journeys, merchandizing, or travelling to markets, carrying of burdens, fiſhing, going of mills, ploughing, ſowing, reaping,* &c. and in a word, all parts of mens ordinary callings. See Nehem. xiii. 15, 16, 17. and downwards: *In thoſe days ſaw I in Judah ſome treading wine preſſes on the Sabbath, and bringing in ſheaves, and lading aſſes; as alſo wine-grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jeruſalem on the Sabbath-day: And I teſtified againſt them in the day where they ſold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre alſo therein, which brought fiſh, and all manner of ware, and ſold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah and in Jeruſalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and ſaid unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Iſrael by profaning the Sabbath,* &c. The Jews were ſtrictly prohibited to do any work this day, even the leaſt work of any ſort; manna muſt not be gathered, nor a few ſticks to a fire; nay, the materials for the tabernacle muſt not be prepared this day, Exod. xxxi. nor any thing that might be delayed or done upon another day. This ceſſation was ſhadowed forth by that river in Judea, called *the Sabbatical river*, becauſe it dried up and ceaſed from running every Sabbath day: which not only Joſephus ſpeaks of, but alſo Pliny, Auguſtus Cæſar in his letter to Tiberius, and others. Let none think that ſuch a total ceſſation from ſecular buſineſs would tend to their worldly diſadvantage; for none were ever loſers in this reſpect, by laying aſide their own labours to attend God's worſhip and ſervice upon his own day. As God took care of Iſrael's ſafety, while they came up to Jeruſalem three times a year to attend the ſolemn feaſts which he had inſtituted; ſo that at theſe times none of their enemies ſhould make any attack upon them, or ſo much as deſire their cities, according to his promiſe in Exod. xxxiv. 24. So will that ſame God, by his kind and watchful providence, take care that his people ſuſtain no damage in their worldly affairs through their dutiful obſervation of this holy day. Nay, on the contrary, they have found this practice to be even profitable to them, with reſpect to their outward temporal eſtate: And there is good ground to think it will always be ſo; for, the more conſcientious any man is in ſanctifying the Sabbath-day, the greater bleſſing he may expect from God upon his labour on the ſix days: And it is not your own labour or toil, but the *bleſſing of God that maketh rich*, Prov. x. 22. Judge Hale, and other godly perſons have atteſted the truth of this point from their own experience, as I have ſhewed before.

The Lord, in his word, is very peremptory and particular in injoining this ceſſation from labour on the Sabbath; and becauſe he knows the eagerneſs of mens hearts upon the world, and their readineſs to encroach upon his holy day with their worldly labour, he condeſcends upon theſe ſeaſons wherein they have moſt tentation thereto, and requires them in *earing time and in harveſt* to reſt on the Sabbath, Exod. xxxiv. 21. Though thoſe be the times when we are moſt throng with worldly buſineſs, yet he will have us in midſt thereof punctually to obſerve the Sabbath, and prefer the pleaſure of communion with God in his ordinances to the joy of harveſt, and to expect that harveſt-work will proſper the better for our religious obſervation of the Sabbath in harveſt time. Alſo the Lord ſpecifies theſe ſeaſons, becauſe then we are under greater obligations to ſtrict keeping of the Sabbath, than at other times; becauſe,

1ſt, The bodies of ſervants and cattle are more toiled then, than at other times; and ſo have the more need of reſt.

2dly, People then have leſs time to worſhip God in their families and cloſets on week days, becauſe of the greatneſs of their labour; and therefore have need to improve the Sabbath the more diligently.

3dly, In harveſt we partake more of the fruits of God's bounty, than at other times; and therefore ſhould be the more thankful to God for his mercies, and eſpecially for Chriſt the mercy of mercies, who alone doth both purchaſe and ſweeten all our mercies to us.

Now, is it not matter of deep regret that (notwithſtanding God's ſpecial command, and our manifold obligations to the contrary) our churches in many places ſhould be thinner, and fields thronger with idle people wandering therein in time of harveſt, than at other times of the year?

Object. "When the weather is unſeaſonable and "tempeſtuous through the week, doth it not become "a work of neceſſity to ſow or reap on the Sabbath, "for preſerving of food to man and beaſt?"

Anſ. If ſome particular mens corns were in hazard of being carried away, or loſt by the inundation of a river, or the like, it were a work of neceſſity to endeavour the preſervation of them upon the Sabbath; becauſe the diſpenſation is extraordinary, the caſe not common nor general, and the damage irrecoverable in any ordinary way. But, as for ſowing, reaping, or gathering in upon the Sabbath, (whatever be pretended from the ſeaſon or weather for it) I judge it unlawful, becauſe the caſe is common and general; the hazard proceeds from the ordinary providence of God; and there is ground to expect God's ſending better weather, according to the gracious promiſe, which we ought not to diſtruſt, Gen. ix. 22. *While the earth remaineth, ſeed time and harveſt ſhall not ceaſe.* But if any diſtruſt God's word, and incroach upon his holy day with their labour, let them conſider that God can eaſily blaſt the works of their hands, and caſt their buſineſs farther behind than their neighbours, who believe and wait upon the Lord, I have a certain account of a rich farmer in this nation, not many years ago, who

In harveſt time (the weather having been very bad for ſome time before, and proving fair and dry on Saturday and the Lord's day) would needs cauſe his ſervants yoke his horſes, and fall to the leading of his corns upon the Sabbath evening: But it pleaſed the Lord that he ſoon got other work to do; for that very night his houſe and goods took fire, and ſo their labour was quickly ſtopt, all hands being called to be employed in quenching of the fire. Many other inſtances might be given: But I proceed.

II. We muſt reſt not only from all worldly employments on the Sabbath, but alſo from all worldly recreations, according to the word of God, and our confeſſion of faith and catechiſms. But this point being much impugned and diſputed by many, I ſhall handle it as diſtinctly and ſatisfyingly as I can.

Recreations are twofold, ſome are natural and neceſſary, ſuch as the refreſhing our bodies with meat, drink and ſleep. Theſe are recreations we cannot live or do buſineſs without upon any day, and therefore are both lawful and neceſſary upon the Sabbath; eſpecially ſince we are thereby better diſpoſed for performing the duties of the day.

But, 2*dly*, There are recreations which are voluntary and not neceſſary, freely choſen by people for their bodily pleaſure and diverſion; ſuch as ſports, paſtimes, or games, whether more public or more private, ſuch as playing at cards, dice, cheſs, tables, *&c.* or any ſort of carnal muſic, ſuch as whiſtling, ſinging, or playing on an inſtrument, or putting off the time with worldly converſe, jeſting, laughing, telling idle ſtories, walking and talking idly in the ſtreets, or ſeeking our pleaſure in the fields, tho' it be after public worſhip is over. Now, all ſuch recreations being our own works, and for our own pleaſure, and not ſubſervient to the duties of God's worſhip, but hinderances thereto, are unlawful on the Sabbath day, as being expreſly contrary to that reſt required in the fourth command, and to that plain word in Iſa. lviii. 13. 14. *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleaſure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and ſhalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleaſures, nor ſpeaking thine own words:—Then ſhalt thou delight thyſelf in the Lord, and I will cauſe thee to ride upon the high places of the earth and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob,* &c. Now, can there be any thing more directly levelled againſt carnal recreations idle talking, walking, *&c.* on the Sabbath day than this is? *We muſt turn away our foot from doing our own pleaſure on it,* i. e. by travelling or walking for pleaſure or recreation; nay, we muſt neither do our own ways, ſpeak our own words, nor find our own pleaſures on this day. But if people will, notwithſtanding hereof, allow themſelves in idle diverſions and looſe recreations upon the Sabbath, I ſee not how they will free themſelves of open rebellion againſt God: For God commands us to remember the Sabbath day, not to delight ourſelves by carnal recreations, but to keep it holy by divine exerciſes; and to ſpend it otherwiſe, is plainly to trample upon God's authority, and declare war againſt him.

Object. "But theſe who are for Sabbath days recreations, will tell me, that they condemn all ſuch recreations in time of public worſhip, as well as we do: For the fourth command obliges us duly to attend public worſhip on the Sabbath, and forbear all worldly employments or recreations in time thereof; but, when that is once over, we may lawfully divert and recreate ourſelves with ſuch recreations as are modeſt and decent, and not unlawful for Chriſtians on other days."

Anſ. This ſuppoſes that the Sabbath laſts no longer than the public worſhip of the day, the contrary whereof I made evident before, and ſhall evince more fully afterwards. I ſhewed that we are obliged to keep holy the whole Sabbath day, not only the time of public worſhip, or from ſun riſing to ſun ſetting, but the whole natural day, conſiſting of twenty-four hours: This being the ſeventh part of our time, and of the week, it is the Lord's, and conſecrated for his uſe and ſervice; and conſequently no part of it is to be alienated from him, or applied for our pleaſures or recreations.

I ſhall further confirm this truth by ſome more arguments.

I. If it was unlawful for God's people under the Old Teſtament to ſpend any part of the Sabbath in carnal pleaſures and recreations, it is unlawful for us alſo under the New; but the former is true: And therefore the latter. That ſuch recreations were prohibited to the Jews, I believe none will deny, that is either acquaint with their ancient rules and conſtitutions, or that reads and believes the ſcriptures, particularly the fourth command, and Iſa. lvii. 13. forecited. All that remains for me to prove is, that we are bound to abſtain from thoſe recreations upon the Sabbath, as well as the Jews; which I do thus: Whatever the Jews were obliged to upon moral reaſons and grounds, that we are bound to as much as they; but the Jews were bound to abſtain from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, upon moral grounds, which concern us as well as them. I ſhewed before that the reaſons of the fourth command are moral, and reach Chriſtians as well as Jews: I mentioned five of them, and truly every one of them levels as much againſt worldly recreations on the Sabbath day, as againſt worldly employments: I ſhall not reſume them all here, but only inſiſt a little on two of them.

1*ſt*, God's liberality in allowing us ſix days for our own uſe: This reaſon binds us as much as the Jews, to conſecrate one day to the Lord for his ſervice. God hath given as gracious diſcoveries of his bounty to us, as to them; and ſhall we be ſo ungenerous or ungrateful, as to incroach upon God's time, or rob him of any part of it, more than they? The very light of nature and principles of ſound reaſon, beſides the command of God, plead ſtrongly for this: That, ſince the Lord hath liberally given us ſix days for our uſe, we ſhould, without grudge, give him one for his ſervice; and, ſince he gives us ſix whole days, it continues morally juſt and rational that we ſhould give him his one day whole too, and that we ſhould ſpend as much of his day in holy duties as is ordinarily allowed on other days for ſervile labour, and that is the whole day, except what is allowed for neceſſary bodily refreſhments, *viz.* eating and ſleeping.

2*d* Ground I ſhall inſiſt on is, *the Lord's propriety in the Sabbath*, or *in one day of ſeven*. This reaſon binds us as much as it did the Jews; the Lord's right to a day in ſeven is the ſame that ever it was, otherwiſe the morality of the fourth command is not the ſame; but I have already demonſtrated the contrary. The Chriſtian Sabbath is called the Lord's day, as well as the Jewiſh Sabbath is called *the holy of the Lord*, Iſa. lviii. 13. to ſhew that his propriety and title is the ſame. And it is obſervable, that the Lord in that one verſe calls it twice his holy day; and it is from this that the Lord takes the principal argument, which he there uſes againſt carnal recreations on the Sabbath; "Ye ſhall not ſpeak your own words, nor find your own pleaſures on this day." Why? It is my holy day, the holy of the Lord: The ſeventh part of the week is mine unalterably, ſet apart for holy uſes, conſecrate for my holy ſervice. This argument is moral, and perpetually obliges all men, Chriſtians as much as Jews. For, if a day in ſeven be dedicated to God, certainly every part of it, yea the whole of it belongs to him; and to alienate any part of it to our own uſe or pleaſures, is ſacrilege, and a direct infringement of the morality of the fourth command. The Lord tells us, Levit. xxvii. 28. *That every devoted thing is moſt holy unto the Lord.* Here is a day both by God and man ſolemnly and perpetually devoted to the Lord; and accordingly the Lord, Iſa. lviii. 13. aſſerts his juſt right and title to it, and twice in one breath calls it his holy day, and, upon this account, prohibits carnal recreations upon it: And muſt it not be great preſumption for any creature, to venture deliberately to rob his Creator of his juſt property, and put that which is holy, and ſolemnly conſecrate to God, to common uſe? Remember what Solomon ſays, Prov. xx. 25. *It is a ſnare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry*: It is a ſnare, *i. e.* it is a moſt dangerous thing, it brings heavy guilt, even God's curſe and vengeance, upon the man that doth ſo. Thus you ſee how the morality and unalterable reaſons of the fourth command reſtrain Chriſtians from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, as much as the Jews. The ſtanding and perpetual rule, which God hath there laid down, can never be altered to the world's end: Still God hath one day, and man hath ſix; but if we take any part of God's day to our own uſe, more than the works of neceſſity and mercy require, then we have more than our ſix, and God hath leſs than his one, which is contrary to the command. Moreover, if it be in the power of man to alienate any part of this day from God, why not the whole of it? and ſo the Sabbath might come to be wholly aboliſhed, which is abſurd.

Object. 1. "The memory of Chriſt's reſurrection on the Lord's day, calls us to more joy and gladneſs upon our Sabbath than the Jews were called to upon theirs."

Anſ. This ſays nothing for carnal ſports or recreations: It is not a worldly joy but a ſpiritual joy, that we are called to this day; ſuch a joy as is expreſſed in pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs. Again if our mercies be this day greater than thoſe the Jews had to commemorate, then we are, in gratitude obliged to a more ſtrict and holy ſanctification of the day, to the honour and glory of the God and fountain of our mercies; which, I believe, no ſerious Chriſtian will think carnal recreations very conſiſtent with.

Object. 2. "But theſe recreations are no where forbidden in the New Teſtament,"

Anſ. It is ſufficient if they be forbidden in the Old Teſtament; for the Old Teſtament, is our rule, as much as the New, in actions which are moral, or not ceremonial: And I ſee not what ſhadow of ground there is for calling abſtinence from carnal pleaſures on the Sabbath, a thing ceremonial, or leſs binding upon us than the Jews: But moreover, if we compare the 58th chapter of Iſaiah with the 56th, it will manifeſtly appear, that the Lord, in injoining his people ſtrictly to obſerve the Sabbath, and abſtain from carnal pleaſures thereon, hath a reſpect to goſpel-times after the Meſſiah's coming. Iſaiah was a moſt evangelical prophet, and ſtill had the goſpel-times in his eyes; wherefore ſome call him the evangeliſt Iſaiah: So that, in recommending Sabbath ſanctification, and calling the Sabbath God's holy day, he doth not confine himſelf to the Jewiſh Sabbath, which was ſoon to be aboliſhed; but hath an eye to the evangelical Sabbath, which was to continue to the end of the world.

Again, this is confirmed by the practice of the primitive Chriſtians: they thought it unlawful to ſpend any part of the Lord's day in unneceſſary diverſions from holy things; yea, they accounted the ſtrict ſanctification of this day the prime character of a true ſaint. Auguſtine ſaith, "It is not enough that we keep three or four hours of this day, but that we obſerve the whole day." The ancient Chriſtians did not think the work of the day was over, when the public worſhip was ended. The younger Pliny tells us, "That they uſed this day to meet before day light, and ſing their hymns to Chriſt." And Tertullian, in his apology, makes mention of their night prayers. They thought themſelves bound to begin the work of the day ſo early, becauſe Chriſt roſe this morning before break of day. They neither thought nor pleaded that they had more freedom for worldly pleaſures, or were leſs obliged to holy exerciſes this day, than the Jews upon their Sabbath.

Nay if we conſider things narrowly, it will be found that Chriſtians are under greater obligations to a ſtrict and holy ſanctification of the Sabbath under the goſpel, than the Jews were under the law, for ſeveral reaſons.

1ſt, We have not only the creation, as the Jews had, but we have alſo the redemption of mankind, which is a greater work, this day to commemorate. Now, if the Jews were obliged to celebrate the day which was inſtituted for the memory of the creation by a total abſtinence from worldly employments and recreations; much more are we bound to a ſtrict ſanctification of the day which is inſtituted for commemorating of both creation and redemption. We have far greater mercies to commemotate this day than the Jews had, *viz.* "the redeeming love of a crucified Jeſus and his glorious victory over death and hell;" and conſequently have greater work and employment, and ought to be the more active and buſy in doing of it; and alſo more delightful work, and therefore ſhould be the leſs inclined to weary or ſit up in it.

2dly, We have a far more pleaſant and excellent manner of worſhip to perform upon the Sabbath, than the Jews had. Their worſhip was attended with manifold rites, waſhings, and ſacrifices, which were both chargeable and toilſome to their bodies; but ours is ſpiritual pleaſant and eaſy.

3dly, The Jews had many other feſtival days to obſerve, by a ſtrict and holy reſt, beſide the Sabbath; but under the goſpel, God hath freed us from the yoke of all other feſtivals, and hath inſtitute none but the Lord's day, which, in gratitude, we ought to obſerve more ſtrictly and religiouſly than the Jews.

4thly, By baptiſm, we come under more ſtrict and ſolemn engagements to keep God's commandments, than the Jews; and alſo we have more ſpecial promiſes of his Spirit to help us in keeping of them, than the Jews had: For, in the New Teſtament times, the Spirit is poured out in a larger meaſure, than in the Old.

So that from the whole I infer, that if the Jews under the Old Teſtament were bound to keep the whole Sabbath day, and wholly to abſtain from their own pleaſures upon it, yea, count the ſervice of the Sabbath, a delight, according to Iſa. lviii. 13. tho' in itſelf it was burdenſome: Much more ought we, under the goſpel, to keep the whole Sabbath ſtrictly, and call it a delight, when the work and ſervice of it is ſo pleaſant and eaſy.

II. Another argument, which I ſhall bring againſt the foreſaid Sabbath day's recreations, ſhall be taken from the nature and greatneſs of the Sabbath day's work; and I ſhall form it thus:

If the work of the Sabbath be ſo neceſſary, weighty and various, that it requires the whole day to be ſpent therein, and challenges all our ſouls faculties to be employed thereabout; then carnal recreations are unlawful thereupon:

But the former is true; therefore, *&c.*

The connexion of the major propoſition is evident, for that which is weighty and neceſſary ought always to take place of that which is not ſo.

As for the minor propoſition, that the work of the Sabbath is ſo great and neceſſary, is plain, if we conſider, that the Sabbath is the great market day of heaven; upon which we ought to take in, and lay up proviſion for our ſouls for the reſt of the week, yea, for eternity itſelf. It is the uſual day of ſinners converſion and acquaintance with God: It is the day wherein we have our ſins to bewail, our needs to get ſupplied, our hard hearts to get melted, our dead affections to get raiſed, our guilty conſciences to get diſburdened, our dark minds to get enlightened, our weak graces to get ſtrengthened: We have this day God's word to teach our families, our children to inſtruct, Chriſt's love to commemorate, death and judgment to provide for, and our Redeemer to treat with about the ſaving of our ſouls. In a word, this is a day wherein we are to make viſits to God, and receive viſits for him. Now, I do appeal to every ſerious ſoul, that knows any thing of real godlineſs, if theſe things be not ſo weighty and neceſſary, as to challenge the whole of the day, and the attendance of all our powers and faculties: And if ſo, then we are bound carefully to avoid every thing that may prove an avocation or diverſion from doing them.

III. Another argument may run thus;

If the worldly circumſtances of the generality be ſuch as they can have but little time through the week for worſhipping God, minding their ſouls, and preparing for eternity; then it is their duty cloſly and diligently to employ the Lord's day for theſe ends, in which God grants them freedom for the ſame:

But the former is true; therefore, *&c.*

The connexion of the major propoſition is certain; for, if our whole lives be little enough for accompliſhing the great work of our ſalvation, the ſeventh day, or ſeventh part of our time, is never to be thought too much.

And for the truth of the minor propoſition, that the circumſtances of the generality are ſuch as above repreſented, I do appeal to the experience of the whole country where we live. How many poor men are there every where, tradeſmen, tenants, ſervants, workmen, *&c.* whoſe worldly poverty and neceſſities are ſo great and many, that they can ſcarce get ſo much ſpare time for their work and labour through the week, as is ſufficient for eating and ſleeping? They are commonly ſo toil'd through the day, that, at night, they are hardly fit for any thing but ſleep. Now, what time have theſe through the week for holy duties and religious exerciſes? what time for reading and praying and learning the principles of Chriſtianity? But ſince God is graciouſly pleaſed to give them the Sabbath, in which they may retire from the world, and employ themſelves wholly in the foreſaid religious concerns; have they not the greateſt need cloſly and diligently to ſpend and improve the whole Sabbath therein, without any kind of unneceſſary diverſion from the ſame?

Are there not many poor ſervants, whoſe maſters are ſo ſevere, that they will not allow them half an hour in a day to ſerve God, or mind their ſouls? and ſhould they not greedily lay hold on the opportunity of the Sabbath for theſe ends, and let no part of this bleſſed day paſs away idly? Now, for miniſters or others to tell ſuch, that the whole Sabbath day is too long for the foreſaid ſpiritual excerciſes, and teach them to ſpend away part of it in carnal recreations or idleneſs, in my opinion, is a moſt compendious way to promote atheiſm, ignorance and profanity amongſt them. And, doth not daily experience confirm this ſad truth? Do we not ſee, that profaning the Sabbath opens a door to all profanity? and that in theſe places where people neglect the Sabbath, or ſpend the half of the day in recreations and idleneſs, there ignorance and immorality of all ſorts abound, and family-worſhip and piety are neglected; whereas on the contrary, in theſe places where the whole Sabbath is cloſly obſerved, and recreations diſcouraged, there we ſee Chriſtian knowledge, morality, the fear of God, and family godlineſs do flouriſh and proſper? Ocular experience ſhews us, that the fourth command is a hedge about all the reſt; and the religious obſervation of the whole Sabbath day is the moſt effectual method for promoting Chriſtian knowledge and univerſal piety. People may hear a ſermon or two on a Sabbath, and yet ly ſtill in their ignorance, if they ſpend the reſt of the day in idleneſs and recreations, and neglect the private means of reading, praying, catechiſing, conference, repetition of ſermons, *&c.* I never expect to ſee knowledge or piety flouriſh in congregations or families, till theſe means be uſed, and pains taken, after the public worſhip is over, to inſtruct children and ſervants. O! doth not the lamentable ignorance of many poor ſouls plead aloud for the ſtrict and diligent obſervation of the whole Lord's day? Had miniſters and others a due ſenſe of the miſery and periſhing ſtate of ignorant ſouls, I am ſure they would preſs it more, and never ſet up to teach them carnal recreations on this day.

O poor men, ſervants and labourers, in the name of God, I exhort you to ſpend more of God's day in heaven's work: You have little time through the week for it; therefore God, in pity to your ſouls, looſes you this day from your weekly work, and cries to you from on high, *Come up hither;* lay aſide the thoughts of things below, and *ſet your affections on things above.* As your bodies reſt this day from labour, let your ſouls think on eternal reſt in heaven, and uſe all the appointed means for attending to it.

IV. A fourth argument I make uſe of is this;

If God prohibits worldly employments on the Sabbath, then certainly he diſcharges carnal recreations:

But the former is true; therefore, *&c.*

The minor propoſition is undeniable; ſo that all I have to prove is the connexion of the major propoſition, which may be eaſily done thus: The great reaſon of prohibiting worldly employments on the Sabbath is, becauſe they hinder the holy employment of the ſoul, and would interrupt the duties of the Sabbath. But if carnal recreations do hinder the duties of the Sabbath, and ſpiritual employment of the ſoul, as much as ſervile labour; then by parity of reaſon they are forbidden alſo: But ſo it is, that they do hinder as much, yea, more than ſervile labour would do. Nay, I may be bold to ſay, that a man may be more ſerious, and have his mind more exerciſed with heavenly meditations, when plowing, ſowing or threſhing, than when he is about carnal entertainments, recreations, or paſtimes; or when he is in vain promiſcuous company, jeſting, ſporting, and telling ſtories, or walking and talking idly in the ſtreets or fields. Theſe do far more diſtract the heart from God's ſervice, than ſervile labour doth: A man will find himſelf more indiſpoſed for prayer and holy duties after them, than after the works of his calling It was the ſenſe of this that made Auguſtine ſay, 'That it were better for maids to 'ſpin, or for men to plow, than for them to dance and 'ſport on the Sabbath day. *Quanto melius eſt arare 'quam ſaltare in Sabbato.*' Aug. *in titulum* Pſal. xcii. He very well knew, that carnal pleaſures are inconſiſtent with devotion, and wholly unfit the ſoul for communion with God, which is the work of the Sabbath. Hence we ſee, lovers of pleaſure, and lovers of God, are ſet in oppoſition, 2 Tim. iii. 4.

I might go on to multiply arguments to this purpoſe; but this truth is ſo clear from ſound reaſon and the word of God, and particularly from Iſa. lviii. 13. to ſuch as believe the ſcriptures, that I think it almoſt needleſs to ſay any more.

But, in regard this truth hath many adverſaries, (and no wonder tho' ſatan muſter up all his forces againſt it, ſince it levels ſo directly againſt his kingdom) I ſhall endeavour to anſwer the chief objections brought againſt it.

Particularly, there is one *J. S.* who calls himſelf a Preſbyter of the Epiſcopal church of Scotland, that in his pamphlets upon the Sabbath, lately publiſhed, pleads for Sabbath days recreations, both as lawful and dutiful, after the public worſhip is over; providing (as he qualifies them) *there be nothing immodeſt or undecent thererein, nor too much time ſpent thereby:* Tho' he neither tells how much time he allows for them, nor what are the immodeſt or undecent things which he diſallows in them; but leaves every man to his own conſtruction and choice therein.

I ſhall conſider the ſtrength of the arguments adduced by him and others for theſe recreations; and I ſhall begin with the chief one.

Object. I. 'To hinder theſe recreations after ſermon 'were to tye us, who are the diſciples of Chriſt, to as 'ſtrict a reſt, and as burdenſome an obſervation of the 'Sabbath, as the Jews were obliged to under the law, 'which were to judaize, and build that again, which 'Chriſt hath deſtroyed.'

Anſ 1. The fourth command being moral and perpetual, as hath been proven, doth oblige us to as ſtrict a reſt and ceſſation from worldly actions, as it did the Jews. I grant indeed, the Phariſees invented a great many ſuperſtitious additions to the reſt of the Sabbath, which were not of divine appointment, and would have had all to conform thereto, as if they had been divine laws. They aſſigned ſuch a preciſe ſpace for a Sabbath day's journey; they frequently would not allow the relieving of mens bodies and beaſts in diſtreſs this day: Some came this length, that tho' they allowed beaſts to be fed or watered, yet, if any of them fell into a ditch, they muſt not draw him out on this day, but feed him where he was till the Sabbath was over. Nay, I have read of Jews ſo ridiculouſly ſuperſtitious, that they would not allow themſelves to be drawn out of pits or dangerous places into which they had fallen on the Sabbath, and therefore have ſmarted with death for their folly. Some held, that it was unlawful to kill a flea, take the ſkin off an apple or do any thing of that kind on the Sabbath day: Nay, further, they taught, that it was unlawful to defend themſelves againſt their enemies this day; by which means they ſometimes became a prey to their enemies: Till Mattathias the prieſt better inſtructed them, as we are told by Joſephus, and the author of the firſt book of the Maccabees.

I ſay, theſe were nothing but human additions; for the ſame things were lawful to the Jews on the Sabbath, that are allowed to us, *viz.* the works of piety, neceſſity and mercy; as manifeſtly appears by the commentary which Chriſt gives upon this command, both by his words and actions. Chriſt defends his practice in healing, and his diſciples in plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath; and ſhews, that the works of neceſſity and mercy, the relieving of men and beaſts in diſtreſs, were lawful on the Sabbath. Our bleſſed Saviour, by his reaſoning againſt the Phariſees on this ſubject intends only to reprove their ſuperſtitious additions, and to ſhew what things were lawful to the Jews on the Sabbath from the beginning, but not what things are now lawful to us under the goſpel; for he gives no more liberty for worldly things this day than what was before, ſince he *came not to deſtroy the law.*

2*dly* I grant indeed, that our Saviour hath freed Chriſtians under the goſpel, from the Jewiſh method of celebrating the Sabbath, by a typical ſervice and ceremonial worſhip, conſiſting of ſacrifices, waſhings, and manifold rites which were a burdenſome yoke. Now, to reintroduce abrogated ceremonies on the Sabbath, is (I confeſs) *to judaize, and rebuild what Chriſt hath deſtroyed;* and whoever are chargeable with this in any degree, let them ſee to it. But what man will call abſtaining from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, an abrogated Jewiſh ceremony? or compare the ſtrict ſanctification of the Lord's day, by the pleaſant evangelical ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, to the burdenſome method of obſerving the Jewiſh Sabbath? Chriſt hath told us, that his *yoke is eaſy, and his burden is light;* and all his experienced diſciples will ſet their ſeal to the truth of it.

For my part, I do not ſee how a man can own the morality and unalterable obligation of the fourth command, and not grant that we are as ſtrictly tied to moral duties on the Sabbath as the Jews, and conſequently to the ſame holy reſt, and diligence in the ſervice of God upon it; ſince the change made by Chriſt's coming is only in circumſtantial or ceremonial things, *viz.* the day of the week, and the nature of the ſervice or ſacrifices requiſite upon it.

Object. "But, beſides the nature of the ſervice and "worſhip, there were ſeveral peculiar thing required "of the Jews upon the Sabbath, not binding upon "us: Particularly, concerning the not dreſſing of "meat, going out of the place, kindling of fire, bearing "of burdens, the nature of the puniſhment of Sab"bath breaking, double ſacrifices, *&c.*"

Anſw. 1*ſt*, If any of the foreſaid things were typical or ceremonial, then indeed it is abrogate by Chriſt's coming, and not binding upon us: But this will nowiſe alter the caſe with reſpect to abſtaining from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, which can never be reckoned typical or ceremonial; it being what is perpetually moral, and neceſſary to the ſuitable ſanctification of this holy day, in all ages of the world.

2*dly*, Let the foreſaid inſtances be narrowly conſidered, and it will be found that there is no ſuch peculiar thing therein as is commonly imagined.

I. As to dreſſing of meat on the Sabbath, the only place whence the prohibition of it is inferred is Exod. xvi 23. concerning the preparing of manna. There are ſeveral interpreters, who think, that the dreſſing of it on the Sabbath is not here forbid; but that they are there ordered to lay up a part of it undreſſed for the Sabbath. But granting, as the moſt part of interpreters do, that the dreſſing of the manna is there diſcharged, this will not infer a diſcharge of dreſſing any kind of meat on the Sabbath: ſince there were ſome things peculiar to the manna, beyond other meat: For,

1*ſt*, There was a particular promiſe made concerning it, that was not made concerning other kinds of food, *viz.* That it ſhould not ſpoil nor corrupt: For, in that hot country, dreſſed meat could not eaſily be preſerved good and wholeſome over night.

2*dly*, There was much more ſervile work requiſite in preparing manna than other kinds of food; it behoved to be *grinded in mills, beat in mortars, and baken in pans,* Num. xi. 8. Now, ſo much ſervile labour about preparing of food was not fit upon the Sabbath, ſince it did not tend to the reſt or refreſhing of the body, but rather to the toiling of it; and likewiſe it took up many hands, and would have hindered them from ſanctifying of the day. So that there is no peculiarity in this prohibition; for, were we in their caſe, and had manna to feed on, it were not lawful for us to prepare it on the Sabbath, more than for the Jews: But it is certain that they did dreſs other meat on the Sabbath, that required not ſuch ſervile labour. Only we are taught by this prohibition, as well as the Jews, to be careful to prepare that meat, which requires much toil and pains, before the Sabbath come; and ſo to order matters about our bodily proviſions the day before, that ſervants may be as little hindered from ſanctifying the Sabbath, and the work of the day as little interrupted as poſſible.

II. As to the ſecond inſtance, the prohibition of *going out of their places on the Sabbath,* Exod. xvi. 29. it is plain from the context, that it is to be meant *of going out to ſeek manna,* it being an unneceſſary ſervile work, and therefore unlawful on the Sabbath day. For tho' the Jews were reſtrained from going through the ſtreets or fields on the Sabbath, for worldly buſineſs, recreation, or putting off the time; yet not from all walking or travelling, when either the works of piety or neceſſity, did require; for a *Sabbath day's journey* was allowed, Acts i. 12. The Phariſees indeed ſtinted it to two thouſand cubits, (which ſome make one mile, others two, according to the different cubits in uſe among them) in regard this was to be the diſtance of the utmoſt part of the camp of Iſrael in the wilderneſs, from the tabernacle, to which they were bound to repair for worſhip on the Sabbath day. But this was no good warrant of ſtinting the Sabbath day's journey to ſuch a preciſe ſpace; ſince it muſt be either more or leſs, according to the diſtance of peoples dwellings from the public ordinances, to attend which a perſon may go many miles, and not prophane the Sabbath. The Shunammitiſh woman, as appears from 2 Kings iv. 23. uſed to travel on the Sabbath to the prophet Eliſha, to attend public worſhip, and wait on his teaching.

III. As to the prohibition of *kindling fire,* Exod. xxxv. 3. If we conſider the place and context, we will find that it is only *kindling of fire for ſervile work,* particularly for the work of rearing up the tabernacle, that they were then about, which is there forbidden: This is the mind of Vatablus, Junius and Termellius, and the beſt commentators on the place. For God is here giving directions for making the tabernacle; and to prevent their thinking, that the nature of the work, or haſte required in doing it, would juſtify their working at it on the Sabbath, he firſt diſcharges all working on that day, verſe 2. and then more particularly, v. 3. he forbids the work of kindling fire, as that of ſmiths, founders, or any others, for preparing materials for the tabernacle. And ſo he will have that work, tho' for a ſacred uſe, give place to that which was more immediately ſacred and neceſſary, *viz.* the preſent ſanctification of the Sabbath. This doth not prohibite kindling of fire for the works of neceſſity or mercy, which preſently tend to the better ſanctifying of the Sabbath; ſince this, for the ſervile work of the tabernacle, would have hindered the preſent ſanctification of it; whereas kindling of fire for warming our bodies, preparing meat, or for ſhewing light, do not hinder, but tend to promote the ſanctifying of the Sabbath. Yet we ſhould take care that we do not extend our liberty this way too far, ſo as to make ſolemn feaſts on the Sabbath, which require much ſervile work, and hinder the duties of the Sabbath: For tho' we be not forbidden on the Lord's day to kindle a fire for dreſſing meat, yet we muſt beware we make not ſuch a flame as ſhall kindle the fire of Gord's wrath againſt us on that day.

IV. As to the bearing of burdens on the Sabbath, Chriſt hath given no more liberty to us this way, than to the Jews; for tho' he commanded the impotent man on the Sabbath, John v. 10. *to take up his bed and walk*, yet this was no carrying of a burden for any ſecular deſign, but a mean required for glorifying of God, and publiſhing the miracle.

V. As to their puniſhing of Sabbath breaking with death, Num. xv. this belonged to the judicial law, which was peculiar to the Jewiſh common-wealth, and doth not bind other nations, except ſo much of it as is of univerſal moral equity; for the peculiar circumſtances of nations require peculiar ſtatutes and puniſhments for ſome particular crimes.——But, in the next place, there appears to have been ſome ſpeciality in that Sabbath breaker's caſe; for we do not find that Sabbath breaking was always ſo puniſhed afterwards. If we read verſes 30, and 31. we ſee God threatening death to all ſuch as ſin preſumptuouſly, and with an high hand: And in the very next verſe, the Sabbath-breaker is brought in guilty; which makes it probable, that his crime was attended with the aggravation of preſumptuous ſinning.

VI. As to the double ſacrifices required on this Sabbath, *two lambs in the morning, and two in the evening*, Num. xxviii. 9. 10. I grant they were a heavy burden, in regard of the great expence and bodily toil the Jews were put to thereby, from which Chriſt hath happily freed us. But, excepting what was typical and ceremonial in their worſhip and ſacrifices, there is nothing here peculiar to them; for otherwiſe we are ſtill as much bound to double ſacrifices on the Sabbath as the Jews: We are bound to double our devotion, our prayers, our praiſes, *&c.* this day, beyond other days. Yea, as I ſhewed before, we are more called to it than the Jews; which alſo is confirmed from Ezek. xlvi. 4. 5. where, inſtead of the four lambs required on the Sabbath in Moſes's time, we ſee that in Ezekiel's temple-ſervice, which points at goſpel times, the Sabbath-offerings were to be *ſix lambs and a ram*; intimating not only the continuance, but the advancement of the Sabbath-ſanctification in the days of the Meſſiah, and that Chriſtians ſhould exceed the Jews in zeal and diligence in keeping of the Sabbath, and ſhould multiply duties, and offer up a greater plenty of ſpiritual ſacrifices, and be more active and intenſe about the works of the Sabbath, than they were: And good reaſon for it, ſince we have both the creation and redemption to commemorate this day, and a more excellent worſhip to perform upon it.

But I proceed to examine the reſt of J. S's arguments for Sabbath days recreations.

Object. II. "Our Saviour ſaith, that *the Sabbath is* "*made for man and not man for the Sabbath*," Mark ii. 27.

Anſ. This word makes not for his purpoſe; for Chriſt adduceth it in defence of his diſciples *plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath*, for ſatisfying their hunger, which was a work of neceſſity; and not in defence of carnal diverſions and recreations.

But, that we may take up the true meaning of the place, we muſt conſider, that, if by Sabbath be underſtood the true ſanctification of the day by ſincere worſhipping and ſerving of God, then certainly man was made for it: But if Sabbath be taken, according to the Phariſees ſenſe here, for the mere external reſt of the day (as Chriſt certainly underſtands it in this place) then indeed the Sabbath was made for man; this external reſt being but a mean for the true ſanctification of the Sabbath, and deſigned for the ſpecial good of man, partly that his body might have ſome repoſe from labour, and chiefly that he might have a ſolemn opportunity to worſhip God, and hold communion with him. Now (ſays our Saviour) it were unreaſonable to think that a law, intended for a privilege and benefit to man, ſhould be improven to his hurt and ruin. The great deſign of the Sabbath pleads for *works of neceſſity and mercy*: For how can God be ſerved, or the ſoul profited on this day, if care be not taken for preſerving the life, and ſupporting the body, in order thereto? But how this text makes for carnal diverſions on the Sabbath, I ſee not; unleſs one ſhould ſay, that Chriſt meant when he ſaid, *The Sabbath is made for man*, that it is made for his corporal pleaſures: which is moſt abſurd, and directly contrary to Iſa. lviii. 13.

Object. III. "The hindering of men from Sabbath-"days recreations is an encroachment upon our Chri-"ſtian liberty."

Anſ. I would gladly know what he means by *Chriſtian liberty*. I take the goſpel-ſenſe of it to be this, that Chriſt hath purchaſed for believers under the goſpel, not only liberty from the dominion, guilt and puniſhment of ſin, the bondage of ſatan, and ſting of death; but alſo hath liberate them from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Old Teſtament ſaints were ſubjected; and likewiſe from the curſe of the moral law; yea, and from the power and obligation of it too, as a covenant of works; ſo as they are neither to be juſtified nor condemned thereby. But that he hath obtained any liberty to us *from the obligation of the moral law, as the rule of life and manners, more than the Jews had*, I know no orthodox Proteſtant that will aſſert it. Now, if the fourth command be a part of the moral law, (as J. S. owns) to pretend to any freedom from the ſtrict obſervation of it, and what is truly moral in it under the goſpel, is unchriſtian licentiouſneſs, and not Chriſtian liberty. Chriſt never purchaſed a liberty to us, to be leſs religious, or leſs diligent in prayer, praiſes, and other duties, than the Jews; for this were no true liberty. Our true liberty lies in a readineſs to obey the holy will of God, our only rightful Lord; and in being in a capacity to purſue our chief good and great end; and the more we are diſabled from this, the more we are in bondage. And hence it is, that the Pſalmiſt ſaith, Pſal. cxix. 45. *I will walk at liberty, for I ſeek thy precepts.* But for any, under pretence of Chriſtian liberty, to walk looſely and licentiouſly, is to deſtroy the end of Chriſtian liberty, which is, *That, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might ſerve the Lord without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life*, Luke i. 74, 75.

Object. IV. "The reſtraining theſe recreations is "not a good *politic* for promoting *godlineſs*; for, in-

"ſtead of this, it drives people to the other extreme."

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Though it were a good politic, I am ſure it is bad divinity: For, *we muſt not do evil, that good may come of it.*

2*dly*, It is no new thing for mens luſts and corruptions to grow more impetuous, and be the more irritated, by the reſtraints and prohibitions of God's holy and juſt laws, Rom. vii. 8. Yet no Chriſtian ever pleaded that theſe laws ſhould be either diſpenſed with or ſlackened upon this account; but ſtill owned the fault to be in our own corrupt natures, and not in God's excellent laws. If all theſe precepts were to be diſpenſed with, that are grating to the luſts of carnal men, then few of them would be binding; for every ſpiritual duty is unpleaſant to them.

3*dly*, If inquiry be made into the ſtate of the flocks of theſe miniſters who uſe this politic, I apprehend it will be found to have but very bad ſucceſs in promoting godlineſs, or even morality, either on Sabbath or week-day. Nay, on the contrary, theſe Sabbath-day's recreations will be found a politic of hell, wherever the experiment is tried, for baniſhing piety, and promoting all ſorts of profanity. Whereas, in theſe places where they are conſcientiouſly ſuppreſſed, Sabbath-holineſs, family-worſhip, and true piety are known to be in a flouriſhing condition.

4*thly*, If magiſtrates and miniſters would cordially join hands in the execution of civil and eccleſiaſtical laws againſt Sabbath-breaking and profaneneſs, the imperious eruptions of mens luſts on the Sabbath would ſoon, through the bleſſing of God, be effectually damm'd up and reſtrained. A reſolute reſiſting of the devil is the beſt way to overcome him; whereas yielding to him in any degree in the ready way to be vanquiſh'd by him.

Object. V. "The Chriſtian Sabbath (ſaith J. S.) is "a feſtival, and conſequently ſolacing ourſelves by a "chearful and mutual converſation together in our "houſes on that day (if there be nothing immodeſt or "undecent thereon, nor too much time ſpent thereby) "is not only lawful, but dutiful alſo."

Anſ. 1*ſt*, I ſuppoſe he means the conveening of friends and neighbours to carnal feaſts and entertainments on the Sabbath, and holding good fellowſhip together, after the manner of the world: for, if he meaned any other converſation, I think he would not *caution againſt the ſpending of too much time therein;* for there is little need of any ſuch caution with reſpect to ſpiritual converſation: Alas, there is little time ſpent therein! J. S. had employed his pen much better, if he had recommended this ſort of converſation on the Sabbath: For that of a carnal ſort, people are apt enough to learn it without a teacher.

2*dly*, I freely own the Lord's day to be a feſtival, but it is for the ſoul, not for the body. This is the *day in which Chriſtians are brought into the banquetting-houſe;* but the *fare* is celeſtial, the *dainties* ſpiritual: On this day they are feaſted and filled, but it is with *the fatneſs of God's houſe, and the rivers of his pleaſures:* This day they are *made joyful*, but not with *carnal joy and mirth;* the pleaſures are *ſpiritual*, the joy is *divine*, I do not ſay *that this day ought to be kept as a faſt day for afflicting the body;* no, it is neceſſary the body ſhould be ſeaſonably refreſhed and ſupported, that it may be ſerviceable to the ſoul in the *work of the day, and ſervice of God*, and may *call the Sabbath a delight*, rejoice in God's goodneſs, and be cheerful in the celebration of the *love and praiſes of our Redeemer*. But to ſay, that *ſet feaſts, carnal entertainments*, and *good fellowſhip, are proper duties on the Lord's day*, is ſtrange doctrine; for then I ſee not how carnal mirth and jollity can be excluded, and ſo God's holy day ſhall be turned into a carnival, deſtructive to the bleſſed ends and deſigns of it. Modeſt and honeſt proviſion for our tables on the Lord's day, is what I do not diſcommend: But I ſay, "Set feaſts, ſumptuous entertainments, and too liberal partaking of the creatures, are not proper on this day; in regard they "are apt to indiſpoſe us for the duties of the day, by "rendering the body dull and ſluggiſh, and inclining "us to drowſineſs and ſleep;" as alſo, the preparing of them doth detain ſervants from the ordinances, and divert them both from public and private duties neceſſary for the *ſanctifying of the Sabbath*. It is obſervable of our bleſſed pattern Jeſus Chriſt, that though he frankly went into the houſes of Phariſees, and others, on week-days, when invited; yet, on the Sabbath day, it is only ſaid, he went into one of their houſes to *eat bread*, Luke xiv. 1. that is, to take ſuch moderate refreſhment as was ſuitable for that day, and the work of it; teaching us, that on this day, we ſhould, like Moſes and Jethro, with the *elders of Iſrael*, Exod. xviii. 12. *eat bread before God*, i. e. with a deep ſenſe of his all-ſeeing eye, and ſpecial caution againſt all manner of exceſs, or any thing that may indiſpoſe us for holy duties.

Moreover, obſerve what manner of *converſation Chriſt had at this Sabbath day's refreſhment:* He indeed ſolaced himſelf and the company with a mutual and cheerful converſation, but it was wholly ſpiritual and heavenly, concerning the feaſt provided for us in the goſpel. This was ſuitable Sabbath-day's converſation that needed not J. S's caution againſt ſpending too much time therein.

But J. S. is ſo zealous for theſe Sabbath-days recreations and entertainments, that he is not content to prove the lawfulneſs of them, but he will have them binding on us, as neceſſary duties. But I would fain know how any man will prove the dutifulneſs of them: Pray, where is the command for them? where is the advantage of them? wherein do they promote the great ends of the Sabbath, God's glory and ſouls edification? I think I have clearly proven the contrary. I ſhall only add this word; I make a ſuppoſition, that a poor ſoul is brought under a law-work, or deep convictions, like the jailor, by means of the ſermons on the Lord's day: Will any man ſay, that it would be his duty, preſently after, to go to theſe feaſts, entertainments and recreations, and thereby hinder or quench the operations of God's Spirit on his ſoul? I would rather think it his duty to *retire from the world and company*, to prayer and ſelf-examination, in order to entertain and cheriſh the Spirit's work on his heart.

Object. VI. "But theſe recreations and entertain-"ments will not hinder the *ſanctification* of the Sab-"bath, but rather help to quicken and prepare us for "our ſucceeding devotions."

Anſ. I am perſuaded that theſe who exerciſe themſelves to godlineſs, and are acquaint with the power of it, will not talk ſo; nay, they will tell, from their ſad experience, that the meeting of promiſcuous companies on the Lord's day, for carnal entertainments, vain walking, talking and ſporting, are ſo far from fitting us for after devotions or ſpiritual exerciſes, that they directly tend to deaden the heart, ſuppreſs convictions, quench any warmneſs of affections and livelineſs of frame wrought in us by the public ordinances, and ſo render us the more indiſpoſed for ſpiritual employments. Inſtead of quickening and diſpoſing our minds for returning to God's worſhip, they do the more increaſe our averſeneſs thereto. Experienced Chriſtians can tell, that private meditation, reading, or Chriſtian conference, are far better means to fit us for our evening devotions on the Lord's day, than carnal recreations.

Object. VII. 'Some intermiſſion for recreation is 'needful; for we cannot be employed in ſpiritual ex'erciſes a whole day: This would be a great toil to 'the ſpirits, eſpecially of ſuch who have been ſore toil'ed with ſervile labour through the week: Nay, the 'beſt are ready to faint and weary in the continued ex'erciſe of piety.'

Anſ. 1*ſt*, The extent of God's precepts is not to be meaſured by our ability or inability; neither can our impotency, to give obedience to God's commands, in the leaſt invalidate or weaken the authority thereof.

2*dly*, By the ſame argument, the Jews might have pleaded, that they were not bound to reſt the whole Sabbath, nor ſpend the whole day in religious exerciſes; for they were liable to the ſame infirmities that are incident to us.

3*dly*, I frankly allow what refreſhment is neceſſary for ſupporting nature, and for the better performance of the duties of the Sabbath: But, for the foreſaid carnal diverſions, they are ſo far from being neceſſary for furthering the work of the Sabbath, that they are great hindrances thereto.

4*thly*, If labouring people need recreation for their bodies, then let them have ſome time on week days for it.———If for their minds, I know no ſuch fit recreation as the joyful commemoration of the love of Chriſt, and our redemption from hell and wrath through his blood, and the chearful ſinging the praiſes of our Maker and Redeemer, which is the very work of the Sabbath. Is it not a recreation for Chriſt's ſheep to feed in his green paſtures, and to be led by him beſide the ſtill waters? to behold the waters of life, clear as cryſtal, flowing betwixt the banks of ordinances? to get a pleaſant proſpect from mount Nebo, of the promiſed land? Is it not a recreation for a condemned man, to come and hear his pardon pronounced? for a hungry man, to get pleaſant food and heavenly dainties? for a ſick man, to get all his diſeaſes healed? Muſt it not be a carnal and ſtupid heart, that will call theſe a burden or wearineſs? There are many who weary not to ſpend whole days at markets, in buying and ſelling; nay, whole days and nights in gaming and drinking: And, will you call a day ſpent in ſuch pleaſant and refreſhful work a toil, which is the higheſt privilege of a rational creature? Surely, no workman can be ſo glad of a day's eaſe from his ſore labour, as a believer ſhould be to have a day's releaſe from his worldly buſineſs, that he may freely and entirely converſe with his God and Saviour, and rejoice in his bounty and redeeming love.

5*thly*, Every Sabbath we meet with many unavoidable interruptions, which take us off from the duties of God's worſhip, tho' we go not to contrive unneceſſary diverſions and recreations for this end. There is much of every Sabbath ſpent in preparing food, dreſſing and feeding our bodies, going to the church, and returning from it, attending children, cattle, &c. O how many are our avocations and intermiſſions in ſerving our Creator and Redeemer on the Lord's day which we cannot ſhun! And, ſhall we think the reſt of the day too much for this important work, that we muſt go ſeek carnal diverſions to drive it away?

6*thly*, I grant, the beſt are ready to grow weary of duty, becauſe of the averſion of our corrupt nature to that which is good; but carnal recreations will never cure this averſion, nor overcome that wearineſs, but will certainly indulge and increaſe the ſame. The beſt way to cure wearineſs (next to the grace of God) is practice and experience in religion, and ſincere wreſtling and ſtriving againſt it. Reſiſting overcomes it; but giving way to it doth increaſe it.

7*thly*, The Lord knows the carnality and wearineſs that our hearts are naturally prone to in the work of the Sabbath; wherefore, for remedy thereof, he hath graciouſly appointed variety of exerciſes on the Sabbath day, that, when we weary of one, another may be our recreation. Are you weary of hearing? then recreate yourſelves with prayer: If of that, then recreate yourſelves with ſinging God's praiſes: If of that, then recreate yourſelves in reading God's word and other good books: If of that, then recreate yourſelves with meditations: If you weary of that, then recreate yourſelves with Chriſtian conference, repeating the ſermons, inſtructing your families, &c. If you weary of public duties, then go to private; if of theſe, go to ſecret duties. Is there not here a delightful variety of pleaſant ſpiritual employments, ſufficient to recreate ourſelves with for one day, without needing the help of any ſenſual diverſion, to put off the precious time of this bleſſed day? How think you to ſpend a whole eternity in ſpiritual exerciſes, when you weary ſo much of one day? Whatever carnal men think, I am ſure a godly ſoul will be far from counting this work a burden: Hearing and reading the ſcriptures is a far leſs burden to him, than recreations and paſtimes would be; for God's 'teſtimonies are his delight, and 'he rejoices in them more than in all riches,' Pſal. cxix. Yea, nothing in the world is ſuch a burden to him on the Sabbath, as his ill heart, his little delight in the Sabbath, and ſhortcomings in the duties thereof; and nothing ſuch a pleaſure and recreation to him, as when he can win above theſe, and get his heart lifted up in the ways of the Lord,

I am ſure, it is no unpleaſant work that God calls us to on the Sabbath; who, but a wicked man, will count it a weariſome thing to think on Chriſt, and his dying love? to hear the ſweet meſſages of free grace, and rejoice in the foreſights and foretaſtes of his everlaſting love. You know the black character of theſe who of old called Sabbath-work a burden, and ſaid, *When will the Sabbath be gone?* Amos viii 5. This temper ſtands in oppoſition to goſpel-holineſs: Therefore I think, *J. S.* and every goſpel miniſter ſhould be ſo far from indulging it, by giving way to carnal recreations and diverſions, that he ſhould do what lie in his power to reprove, diſcourage and remeid it. And if miniſters would be at pains to preach and pray with life and awakening ſeriouſneſs, and afford their people a pleaſant variety of wholeſome diſcourſe concerning Chriſt and eternity, it would be a far better way to cure their weearineſs, than to preſcribe carnal recreations on the Lord's day: For this is a cure that both ſtrengthens the diſeaſe, and is as bad as the diſeaſe.

Object. VIII. 'But walking in the fields on the 'Lord's day ſeems to be a harmleſs practice; why will 'you not allow of that?'

Anſ. Whenever the works of piety, neceſſity or mercy do require it, it is allowable; but to do it idly, for putting off the time or for worldly employments or recreations, is what the word of God condemns. It is not only lawful, but dutiful to walk abroad, if it be for attending public ordinances, viſiting the ſick or other Sabbath duties; for then it is not for *finding our own pleaſure*, which is diſallowed by Iſa. lviii. 13. Exod. xvi 29. And, by the ſame rule, I cannot condemn tender perſons walking abroad, or taking the air, if their health truly require it; for the Lord loves mercy rather than ſacrifice. Nor do I condemn a perſon's going to fields this day, to have opportunity (like Iſaac) in the evening for ſecret meditation and prayer, when he wants conveniency for it within doors; for a walk thus improved, may be a walk to heaven, and is very conſiſtent with walking with God. Only take theſe two cautions;

1ſt, If you walk abroad this day, chuſe to do it alone as much as poſſible; for people going in troops to the fields occaſions idleneſs, vain talking, ſporting, and miſpending precious Sabbath-time. The ſociety of vain perſons helpeth to embolden one another in ſin and folly, and maketh them more incapable of ſpiritual exerciſes, than when ſingle and apart. Yea, I am perſuaded, that theſe companies of people, who ſo commonly go a walking together on the Lord's day, do not ſo much as pretend to be ſpiritually employed. Alas! they who know them beſt, can tell that they are moſt unfit for it at ſuch occaſions. Should any come and ſpeak to them about death and eternity, Chriſt and their ſouls, or propoſe any ſerious queſtion concerning the ſermon they have been hearing, I fear he might expect to be mocked and laughed at by them for his pains.

2dly, Let your walking abroad, in any of the foreſaid caſes, be ſo ordered, that it may not give ſcandal, nor inſnare others: Study to do it ſo privately, that others may not be hardened or encouraged in their looſe recreations on this day by your example: For even theſe things which are lawful, and otherwiſe neceſſary in themſelves, are not to be done when they may prove a ſcandal or temptation to others to ſin; for, in ſuch caſes, we ought to deny ourſelves of our lawful liberty.

Object. "We find two of Chriſt's diſciples travelling "to Emmaus and back again, on the Lord's day; and "Chriſt met with them, and did not reprove them for "it," Luke xxiv.

Anſ. This was the firſt Lord's day of all, and was not then fully inſtitute, or, at leaſt, made known to the diſciples; for they were not aſſured of Chriſt's reſurrection. Again, walking abroad this day, for promoting the works of piety, for declaring God's glory, or preaching the goſpel, is not unlawful: And ſuch was this walking of our Saviour, and his two diſciples, their return to Jeruſalem this day.

Now, having fully handled this point, of the *negative* ſanctification of the Sabbath, or the holy reſt requiſite upon it; I proceed to treat of the *poſitive* ſanctification of the day, and of the holy exerciſes required therein.

Concerning the poſitive ſanctification of the Sabbath, and the holy exerciſes requiſite upon it.

THE reſt of the Sabbath is not a lazy idle reſt: No; it is a holy active ſort of reſt that is required upon it. Tho' we ceaſe from works of one kind, yet we muſt be diligent in works of another kind.

What I have to ſay on this head may be ſummed up in the following directions.

1ſt, Concerning the diſpoſition and frame of the ſoul, needful for ſanctifying the Sabbath.

2dly, Concerning the holy duties requiſite upon the Sabbath.

3dly, Concerning the ſpecial order, method and manner, wherein theſe duties are to be performed.

4thly, Concerning theſe particular ſins, whereby the ſanctification of the Sabbath is hindered, or the Sabbath profaned.

DIRECTION I.

Concerning the frame of ſpirit fit for ſanctifying the Lord's day.

THE moſt ſuitable frame and diſpoſition of ſoul, which I can recommend for ſanctifying the Sabbath day, is that of John the divine, Rev. i. 10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.* It is a moſt comprehenſive expreſſion, and a noble pattern for our imitation; wherefore I ſhall enquire into the meaning and import of it. It is probable it may imply ſomething extraordinary with reſpect to John; he might be in ſome ſingular ſpiritual extaſy or tranſport, which ordinary Chriſtians cannot attain to: Nevertheleſs, the expreſſion imports ſomething attainable, and which ought to be endeavoured by all true Chriſtians on the Lord's day.

To be in the Spirit, may be taken either as reſpecting the Spirit of God, or our own ſpirits, or both: For certainly both the Spirit of God, and our own ſpirits, are neceſſary, and to be much employed, in the ſanctification of the Lord's day: Wherefore taking the expreſſion as including both, I conceive, to be *in the Spirit of the Lord's day*, imports theſe things;

1ſt, A ſpecial dependence upon God's Spirit, for conduct and aſſiſtance, in order to the right performance of the duties of the Sabbath, and exerciſe of the graces therein: For, without the Spirit's aid, we can neither pray, praiſe, hear, read, or do any thing aright.

2dly, The *ſerving of God with our ſpirits*, as Rom. i. 9. or *worſhipping him in ſpirit*, John iv. 24. and performing the duties of the Sabbath with inward ſincerity of heart. *The Lord deſires truth in the inward parts.* He ſaith, *My ſon, give me thy heart;* not, Give me thy ear, thy tongue, thy lips, thy hands, or thy knees; for theſe may be given without the heart: But the heart can never be beſtowed, without theſe as its attendants. This is ſo neceſſary in all our duties, and approaches to God, that God ſaith of it, as Joſeph did of Benjamin, *Unleſs ye bring your hearts along with you, ye ſhall not ſee my face.* You may obſerve Sabbaths, hear ſermons, ſing pſalms, put up prayers, *&c.* but all will be to no purpoſe, Iſa. i. 11. God would rather have the heart without the body, than the body without the heart. Soul prayer, when it is alone, is accepted; but wo to bodily prayer, if it be alone.

3dly, A ſolemn retiring ourſelves from the world, and abſtracting our thoughts from earthly things, that we may be fitted for more immediate approaches to God, and intimate converſe with him on his own day, wherein he uſes to deal more familiarly with his people than at other times.

4thly, A laying ourſelves open to the influences and operations of the Spirit of God, waiting for and thankfully entertaining his motions, convictions, reproofs and conſolations, when they are allowed to us in the ordinances; and carefully guarding againſt every thing that may in the leaſt grieve or offend the holy Spirit.

5thly, A more than ordinary intenſeneſs of heart and affections in the duties of God's worſhip; on Sabbath days, eſpecially, we ſhould be *fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord;* we ſhould call in all our ſtraying thoughts and affections praying with the pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxxvi. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy name;* and Pſ. lxxx. 18. *Quicken us and we ſhall call upon thy name.* This day we ſhould put forth our ſpiritual ſtrength to the utmoſt, perform every duty, and exert every grace, with the greateſt intenſeneſs; we ought to love God with the moſt ſublime affections, obey him with the pureſt intentions, pray to him with the moſt fervent importunity, and praiſe him with the moſt ſpiritual elevation of heart: Nay, do it in ſome ſuitable proportion to the greatneſs of that God, *with whom we have to do* in ſo ſolemn a manner on the Lord's day; for, Pſal. cl. 2. we muſt not only *praiſe him for his mighty acts,* but *praiſe him according to his excellent greatneſs;* we muſt worſhip him like himſelf.

6thly, A willing and chearful performance of Sabbath duties; we ought to call the Sabbath *a delight, holy and honourable,* and go this day with *joy to draw water out of the wells of ſalvation,* and be *joyful in the houſe of prayer.* Holy David was not ſatisfied this day with a bare approach to the altar, but he muſt *go to God as his exceeding joy,* Pſal. xliii. 4. And ought not believers under the goſpel more eſpecially to do this on the Lord's day, who have God in human nature to go to, and have the glorious atchievements of condeſcending and redeeming love to commemorate this day?

The Lord requires us to perform the duties of this day with a frame of mind ſuitable to the ſpirit, freedom and liberty of the goſpel, guarding againſt the ſervile frame of ſpirit which the Jews had in the obſervance of the duties of the law: For *we are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, and was terrible to behold; but unto mount Zion, the city of the living God.* In the ſervice of this day, we ought to keep up impreſſions of God, as moſt acceſſible, familiar to us, and dwelling in our own nature, and as one that doth not ſo much regard our outward performances, as the inward frame and ſincerity of our hearts. The Phariſees pretended to great ſtrictneſs about the outward obſervance of the Sabbath: (and hence they preſumed frequently to cenſure Chriſt and his diſciples practices on this day) but they were ſtrangers to inward ſincerity, and love to God. It is the willing mind and honeſt heart, in Sabbath performances, that God chiefly regards, not a phariſaical ſtrictneſs.

7thly, Being *in the Spirit on the Lord's day* implies, the having of the graces of the Spirit in a more lively exerciſe this day than ordinary: And therefore we ought this day ſolemnly to invite the *north and ſouth winds of the Spirit to come and blow upon our garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out;* and that, particularly in all our approaches to God, we may be poſſeſt with a holy awe and reverence of God's majeſty and greatneſs and a deep ſenſe of our own baſeneſs and naughtineſs, and have our faith acting vigorouſly upon God's goodneſs and mercy in and thro' Chriſt, our hearts melting with evangelical contrition and repentance, our love and ſpiritual deſires flaming forth in all our acts of devotion; nay, all our graces and affections ſhould be this day elevated, more than ordinary to God's ſpecial honour and glory.

8thly, A more than ordinary ſpiritual and heavenly frame of ſoul, ſuited to the work of this day. Since this day is wholly dedicate to God, and ſpiritual duties are the only work of it, our frame upon it ſhould be more heavenly and divine, than upon any other day, or when going about the duties of God's worſhip at any other time; we ſhould this day be much viewing and admiring, with thankfulneſs, the dying *love of Chriſt,* and the glorious *work of redemption* compleated this day by his reſurrection. We ſhould be living this day above the world, and within view of heaven, making this day a little emblem and prelude of the everlaſting reſt of the ſaints above.

9thly, It imports, that there is ſomething of an univerſal ſanctity and holineſs peculiarly requiſite upon this day. Now, this ſanctity muſt be univerſal, with reſpect to ourſelves, with reſpect to the day, and with reſpect to the duties of it.

1. With reſpect to ourſelves; all our thoughts, words and actions this day ſhould be God's in a ſpecial manner; all that we are, all that we have, all we can do, ſhould be wholly devoted to God's worſhip and ſervice on this day, Iſa. lviii. 13. God would not only have our hands tied from working, but alſo our tongues from talking, and our minds from thinking on worldly things this day.

2. With reſpect to the day; we ſhould ſpend the whole of it in holy duties, either public, private, or ſecret. It is not for an hour or two only that we muſt ſtudy to be ſpecially holy, but through the whole day; we ſhould count every moment of Sabbath time precious, and ſuffer none of it to be loſt that we can ſave, ſtill aiming to be doing ſomething for God and our own ſouls.

3. With reſpect to the duties of the day; we ſhould eſteem them all, and make conſcience of them all, ſince they all have a divine ſtamp upon them; reading, hearing, prayer, praiſes, communicating, meditating, conferring, catechiſing, giving alms, *&c.* God is to be found in every one of theſe duties, and therefore none of them is to be neglected; And, when we find him not in one of them, we muſt ſeek him in another; and, if we conſcientiouſly go the round of

duties we ſhall ſurely *find him whom our ſouls love*, Cant. iii. 4.

Laſtly, This expreſſion of being *in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, imports the performing the duties of it with pure and ſpiritual ends, *viz. to glorify God, and enjoy him.* God is the ſole object of our worſhip, and he muſt be the principal end of it too. In our worſhip we muſt *ſeek him*,. Heb. xi. 6. not ourſelves. It is natural for man to worſhip God for ſelf ends; we often perform duties, not only *to be ſeen and eſteemed of men*, but alſo to be ſeen and valued by God for them, Iſa. lviii. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted*, ſay they, *and thou ſeeſt not?* &c. They did not perform duties to glorify God, but to obtain a reward for themſelves, and have a *righteouſneſs of their own to found and plead upon*. Let us ſtudy to be denied to our own duties, and guard againſt a ſelfiſh and legal ſpirit in our Sabbath days perfomances. This will be a dead fly to ſpoil the ointment, and will keep our beſt duties from being ſavoury to God. Let us ſtudy then to perform them all in newneſs of ſpirit and not in the oldneſs of the letter, Rom. vii. 6. Let us uſe them all as means for bringing God and our ſouls together, as means for obtaining communion and fellowſhip with God, and holding ſpecial intercourſe with him, which is the only way to fit us for glorifying God both here and hereafter.

DIRECTION II.

Concerning the holy duties requiſite upon the Lord's day.

THE duties neceſſary upon this day are either public, private, or ſecret.

I ſhall not meddle with the duties of public perſons as ſuch on the Sabbath, or what is ſpecially incumbent upon magiſtrates or miniſters upon this day, in their public ſtations, but ſhall inſiſt only upon theſe duties required of all Chriſtians in common.

Queſt. I. *What are theſe public duties required of us upon the Lord's day?*

Anſ. They are theſe which we are bound to perform in the public aſſemblies of God's people: and indeed the Sabbath is inſtitute chiefly for the ſolemn performance of the duties of God's worſhip, in the public meetings of his people: for the Lord hath a ſpecial delight therein; "he loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob; and wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he will be in the midſt of them." Why? It is in the aſſemblies of God's people for public worſhip, that God receiveth the higheſt praiſes from us; and hence the Pſalmiſt ſaith, "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praiſe thee among much people.—And in his temple doth every one ſpeak of his glory," Pſal. xxxv. 18. Pſal. xxix. 9. And as in public worſhip God receiveth the higheſt praiſes, ſo there it is he beſtoweth the richeſt mercies, Pſal. lxv. 4. "Bleſſed is the man whom thou chuſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we ſhall be ſatisfied with the goodneſs of thy houſe," &c. O what good things are contained in that word, the "goodneſs of thy houſe!" there is pardon, peace, love, grace, life, light, ſtrength, comfort, *&c.* Now, the public duties of the Sabbath, recorded in ſcripture, which God's people ought to meet and aſſemble that day for, are various; and particularly, they are to meet together for reading and expounding the *word of God*; for preaching, hearing, praying, praiſing, partaking of the ſacraments, collecting for the poor, *&c.* for all which we may ſee Lev. xxiii. 3. Pſal. xcii. Iſa. lxvi. 23. Luke iv. 16. Acts xiii. 14, 15, 27, 44. xv. 21. xvi. 13. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 12. But particularly,

I. *Hearing the word* publicly read and preached with reverence and attention, is a principal duty on the Sabbath; nay, our life depends upon it, Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. It is the great mean God hath appointed for the converſion of ſouls, Rom. x. 14, 17. Whatever men think of it, it is the powerful inſtrument of our ſalvation, Rom. i. 16. The waters of the ſanctuary run only through the channels of the word; the mines of grace are found only, in theſe climates where the goſpel-ſun ſhines. The Lord if he pleaſed, could immediately, by his Spirit, break open ſinners hearts; but he hath determined to honour his word in this work, as is plain in Lydia's caſe, Acts xvi. 9, 10, 14. Reading the word and ſermons at home is good; but hearing the word preached is the ordinary mean God hath appointed and promiſed to bleſs for converſion: And if this be ſlighted, or prove ineffectual, no other way can be contrived for it, as we are told, Luke xvi. 29, 31. So that tho' a glorified ſaint or angel ſhould come down from heaven, and preach upon the beauty of Chriſt, and glory of heaven, in the moſt lively and demonſtrative manner; yet, if a preached goſpel do not perſuade ſinners, neither would that. Or, tho' a damned ſoul ſhould come up from hell, and preach the evil of ſin, and torments of hell, in the moſt pathetic manner; yet neither would that perſuade, if the word do it not. Why, the one is God's inſtituted mean, the other not. Let us then have an high eſteem of God's ordinance, and embrace all occaſions for attending it. *Be ſwift to hear*, Jam. i. 19. Let none dare to count that mean weak, or deſpicable, which the wiſe God hath inſtituted to ſave ſouls, 1 Cor. i. 21. *It pleaſed God, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, to ſave them that believe.* And how comes believing but by hearing? Reading good ſermons (as one ſays) is like milk cold out of the diſh, but preaching is like milk warm from the breaſt, which is far more nouriſhing to the child. Let us always then as *new born babes deſire this milk, that we may* both live and *grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

II. Another of the public duties of the Sabbath is public prayers with the congregation.

Prayer is a principal part of God's worſhip, and therefore is frequently put for the whole, Zech. viii. 21. 22. Acts xvi. 23. Hence God's temple of old was called the houſe of prayer. Public prayer is moſt neceſſary for averting judgments, obtaining bleſſings, and preſerving love and unity among Chriſtians; alſo it is a ſolemn owning the God whom we ſerve in the face of the world, and ſo highly glorifies God. The bountiful Lord is well pleaſed to ſee many beggars thronging at the beautiful gate of his temple waiting for an alms from his hand. And their joint prayers are moſt prevalent with him, far more than private prayers: for a petition preſented by a ſingle ſubject, is not ſo prevalent as that which is made by a whole city. Peter is caſt in priſon to be executed, Acts xii. but the church meets and prays him out of his enemies hands. The united prayers of the church are moſt powerful to procure God's bleſſing and preſence; therefore, reader, ſee that you make conſcience in joining therewith, and be not abſent from them. It is a moſt graceleſs practice in ſome, they either come not into the church till the public prayers be over, or they go out after ſermon before public prayers be made. I am ſure, ſuch can expect nothing by the ſermon but a curſe, ſince they join not with the prayers for a bleſſing upon it to themſelves or others.

III. Duty is the ſinging of pſalms, and praiſing God with the congregation. Praiſing God by ſinging is often injoined in ſcripture; yea, no leſs than four times in one verſe, Pſal. xlvii. 6. It is comely for the people of God; they are called ſinging birds Cant. ii. 10. they are ſuch as ſhould ſing all the months of the year; yea, even in the dead month of affliction: So did Paul and Silas in a priſon at midnight, when their backs were ſore with ſcourges, and their feet faſt in the ſtocks, Acts xvi. 25. But in a ſpecial manner ſinging praiſes to God is our duty in public aſſemblies, Pſal cxlix. 1. Luke xxiv. 53. And in theſe, *both princes and people, young men and maidens, old men and children*, are bound to act a part in this heavenly concert, Pſal. cxlviii. 11 12. 13. And, above all days, the Sabbath is moſt proper for this duty, Pſal. xcii. title, Pſal cxviii. 24. It is a day of thankſgiving and holy joy: We have God's praiſes to celebrate for the wonders of creation and redemption, we have the glorious victories of the Captain of our ſalvation to extol and magnify; and therefore the duty of ſinging praiſe this day is highly neceſſary. By this duty we not only glorify God, but we edify one another, Col. iii. 16 The melody and conjunction of many ſerious ſouls tend to raiſe and elevate the heart. Yea, it was one mean of Auguſtine's converſion; he ſays, 'He wept when he heard the pſalms ſung by the church.'

Singing is a reading with meditation, and gives free vent to the thoughts and affections, and helps to excite and actuate the graces; it is the breath or flame of love or joy; it is the eternal work of heaven, the muſic of ſaints and angels there, Rev. v. 9. 10. 11. xv. 3. And what are church-aſſemblies here, but the place of our apprenticeſhip and preparation for heaven? I know nothing in the world that more reſembles heaven, than a company of God's people harmoniouſly ſinging his praiſes *with grace in their hearts, making melody to the Lord;* for then the ſoul rejoiceth in divine goodneſs, meditates on divine promiſes, extols divine excellencies, and mounts up to God in acts of faith and love. Let us then make conſcience of this heavenly duty in the public aſſemblies, and perform it with heart and tongue; for were it not a rare exerciſe, God would not honour it to be the only work of heaven, to the excluſion of prayer, repentance, reading hearing, communicating, *&c.*

IV. Partaking of the ſacraments is another public duty of the Sabbath.

1ſt, The firſt day of the week our Chriſtian Sabbath, is the proper day of celebrating the memorial of redeeming love in the Lord's ſupper, Acts xx. 7. This was the ordinary practice of the primitive Chriſtians in ancient times: and, becauſe of their conſtant breaking of bread on this firſt day of the week, it wont to be called *dies panis*, Auguſt. Epiſt 118. So fired were the hearts of Chriſtians in thoſe early times with love to and zeal for their glorious Redeemer, who had ſo lately poured out his blood for their redemption, that when they aſſembled together upon the firſt day of the week, the day he had inſtituted for his honour, they could not think of parting, until, by the breaking of bread according to his example, they had celebrated the memorial of his dying love, his atoning blood, his victorious reſurrection and triumphant return; which alſo they deſigned as a pledge of their mutual love to and communion with one another. And tho' theſe firſt Chriſtians were animated with more life and love, and were habitually in a better frame for partaking of this love-feaſt, than, alas, we now are; yet we muſt own, that we are under the ſame obligations of love and gratitude to our dying Redeemer, and have the ſame need of the frequent application of his blood, and of a confirmed intereſt in his death, that they had; and conſequently ought to dedicate many more Lord's days to the celebration of this memorial feaſt of his ſupper, than now we do: Eſpecially ſeeing the partaking of this ordinance is the proper work of the Lord's day, and one ſpecial deſign of the inſtitution of this holy day.

2dly, Baptiſm is moſt proper on this day: The day is holy, and the ſacrament is holy. Children ſhould be brought to the congregation and baptized in face thereof; for, ſince baptiſm is the door to Chriſt's houſe, it is fit to be entered when the family is conveened, or the church aſſembled, that ſo the receiving of new members thereinto may be homologate by them; that the parents engagements may have the more witneſſes to them, and the children have more prayers put up for them; and alſo, that the whole congregation may be edified by this ſolemn ordinance, and excited to remember and improve their own baptiſms. Of which afterward.

As to the feaſting part of this ſolemnity, I do not think it proper on the Lord's day: This may well be delayed till the day after.

V. Making public collections for the poor, is a proper duty on this day, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. This day being inſtitute to *keep up the memorial of Chriſt's infinite charity to mankind*, and for our *meeting to receive new bleſſings and mercies from him*, we are, in gratitude, bound on this occaſion to be liberal to his poor: This doth not wrong but promote our Sabbath-day's frame. Let no Chriſtian then neglect this duty, which is ſo plainly commanded by Chriſt, and has been practiſed by the Chriſtian church for near theſe two thouſand years.

Think it not enough that you give ſomething privately to the poor this day, and that this may excuſe you from any public contribution: For this would be a ſlighting of an expreſs command, and making one duty to juſtle out another; and beſides, would tend to fruſtrate Chriſt's inſtitution of deacons and church-rulers, who are appointed to receive and diſtribute the collections for the poor, according to their various neceſſities. When the apoſtle joins the Corinthians to *lay by them in ſtore on the firſt day of the week, that there might be no gatherings when he came;* it is plain, he chiefly means their *depoſiting their charitable contributions with the church-rulers:* For, if it were not ſo, there would ſtill be need of gatherings when he came.

I grant indeed, it were very proper for every man, beſides the public charity he gives on the Lord's day, likewiſe to ſet apart ſomething this day, and lay it by him in ſtore, according to his gains and incomes through the week, as a ſtock or fund, out of which he might give to pious and charitable uſes, as occaſion ſhould require; and ſo, the ſtock being prepared before-hand, you will give the more bountifully and more willingly to ſuch uſes, than otherwiſe you will find in your hearts to do. If not only rich men, but even tradeſmen, labourers and ſervants, would thus lay up every Lord's day ſome very ſmall thing by them, they might, without any ſenſible damage to themſelves, have ſomewhat to give to proper and needy objects: And I am perſuaded this would not be the way to impair, but to increaſe your means.

Queſt. II. *What are the private duties required of us upon the Lord's day.*

Anſ. It is not enough that we ſpend ſome part of the Lord's day in public worſhip; but ſince (as I proved before) the whole day is conſecrated to God, the reſt of it is alſo to be kept holy, and taken up in holy duties, in private and ſecret.

Domeſtic and private duties are neceſſary on this day, both for preparing us for the public ordinances, and for improving and reaping advantage by them.

Theſe duties are, *family worſhip*, by *reading the word*, *ſinging the praiſes*, and *calling upon the name of God*, *family catechiſing*, *repetition of ſermons*, *chriſtian conference*, &c.

I. *Family worſhip* is a duty incumbent on maſters of families every day, but more eſpecially upon the Lord's day. It is to be regreted, that there ſhould be any need to adduce arguments to prove this: But ſince there are ſome who call themſelves miniſters, who either deny it, or elſe have not ſo much conſcience or courage directly to aſſert it in their preachings or writings; (they neither preſs the performance of this duty, nor reprove the neglect of it in others; and, as it is generally ſaid, they do not practiſe it themſelves; whereby many are encouraged to ſlight family worſhip, and think it no neceſſary duty, to the great hinderance of the advancement of piety) I ſhall therefore prove it to be the duty of all maſters of families, eſpecially on the Lord's day; and that, in the firſt place, from the fourth commandment.

The fourth commandment is principally directed to maſters of families; becauſe families, as ſuch, are chiefly to be concerned in the keeping of it, both negatively, and poſitively. For as the command injoins every maſter of a family, with *all that are within his gates, his ſon, his daughter, his man ſervant*, &c. to forbear all manner of work on the Sabbath; ſo it likewiſe injoins them to *remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.* Now, to keep the *Sabbath holy to the Lord*, without all doubt, implies the woſhipping of God: This cannot be underſtood only of worſhipping of God in the public aſſemblies, for theſe cannot be always had; yet ſtill the command for ſanctifying the Sabbath is binding on families. Again, the public worſhip takes up only a part of the Sabbath; but families are bound to ſanctify the day throughout. This cannot be duly done by the members of the family worſhipping God apart in ſecret; for families, as ſuch, are bound to do it: The command binds a maſter to do it jointly with his family, as well as it binds a miniſter to do it jointly with his congregation. Moreover, if the command did only bind a maſter of a family to worſhip God in public, and in ſecret, upon the Sabbath, then he would be no further concerned in ſanctifying the Sabbath than any other member of his family; alſo, he would ſanctify the Sabbath as much in communion with the members of other families as thoſe of his own, which were moſt abſurd. But it is plain, that the command lays it eſpecially on the maſter of the family to take care of the ſanctifying of the Sabbath in his family; which muſt be by worſhipping God, as well as by reſting from labour; otherwiſe he would do no more than is required of the beaſts: And this he can never account for, unleſs he do it in communion with his family, go before them in it, and by his example, direct and encourage them in the holy worſhip and ſervice of God upon his holy day. We have Joſhua's practice ſufficiently explaining this precept, Joſhua xxiv. 15. He ſaith not, *My houſe ſhall ſerve the Lord*; but *I and my houſe will do it*; i. e. We will jointly worſhip God, and ſanctify his Sabbath, which are the principal parts of his ſervice. This he would do, and we ought all to do, tho' there were no public worſhip in the world. And this is confirmed by Lev. xxiii. 3. which requires the Sabbath to be religiouſly obſerved in all our dwellings or private houſes, as well as in holy convocations; by every family apart, as well as by many families together.

But I ſhall demonſtrate the indiſpenſible neceſſity of this duty of family worſhip, from ſeveral other topicks.

I. The light of nature and ſound reaſon pleads for it on many accounts. 1. It teacheth that all ſocieties ſhould jointly honour thair founders. Now God is the Author and Founder of families, Pſal lxviii. 6. *God ſetteth the ſolitary in families*; and ought not families to worſhip him who inſtituted them, and that for this very end that *they might glorify him, and ſhew forth his praiſe?*

2. The light of nature teacheth maſters of families to uſe all proper means for preventing the hurt of the family, and reſcuing them from danger: And it is plain, that family prayer is a ſpecial mean for this effect. The light of nature taught the heathen mariner, with his ſhip's crew, Jonah i. 4. to uſe joint prayers to ſave them in a ſtorm: And we ſee it was the maſter of the ſhip that called them to this duty. Now, ſhall a heathen maſter of a ſhip do more in his ſociety, by nature's light, than a Chriſtian maſter of a family will do in his, who is privileged with the clear *light of the goſpel?*

3. The light of nature teacheth men to do all they can to promote the good of their families, to provide food and phyſic for their ſervants and childrens bodies? And doth it not teach them alſo to uſe means, to preſerve their ſouls from wrath, and further their eternal well being? And what mean more proper for this end, than family worſhip and conjunct prayer? O maſters of families, your examples herein will have happy influence upon your children and ſervants, both to excite them to pray, and teach them how to pray.

4. Nature's light directed the heathens to have their Lares and Penates, or houſhold gods, whom they worſhipped in a ſpecial manner, and to whom they offered ſacrifices for the protection and welfare of their fami-

lies: So we find in ſcripture, that Laban and Micah had their Teraphim or houſhold gods. Now, tho' theſe were vain helpleſs gods, yet it ſhews they belived a neceſſity of family worſhip. Alas! heathens will riſe up in judgment againſt many who are called Chriſtians.

II. We are commanded in ſcripture to *pray everywhere*, and *with all manner of prayer*, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Eph. vi. 18. Now, if we muſt pray in all places, then ſurely in our families: if with *all manner of prayer*, then ſurely with *family-prayer*.

III. Maſters of families are bound to love God *with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themſelves*; and conſequently are bound to bring their families along with them to the worſhip of God. God's people are filled with ſuch love and zeal, that they frequently call the inanimate creatures to join with them in God's praiſe, Pſal. lxix. 34. Pſal. cxlviii. 2. *&c.* and how much more ſhould they call their neighbours and fellow-chriſtians? How oft doth David invite and exhort others to praiſe God with him? And will not maſters of families, who love God and their neighbour, invite and exhort thoſe to whom they are ſo nearly related, to join with them in the praiſe and worſhip of God.

IV. Families have many joint errands to the throne of grace, which call for joint family prayers and praiſes: They often ſin together, and therefore it is fit they confeſs and mourn together. They need many family-bleſſings, and it is fit they jointly ſeek them: They are expoſed to many family dangers, therefore they ſhould jointly deprecate them: They receive many family mercies, which call for family-thankſgivings: They work in their employments and labour together, and it is very fit they ſeek a bleſſing on them together.

V. All churches ought to worſhip God in a joint and ſolemn manner: Now, the Spirit of God frequently calls Chriſtian families *churches*, which honourable title they would by no means deſerve, if they had not communion together in the worſhip of God.

VI. It is plain from 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, 12. that as miniſters are bound to rule the church, ſo maſters of families are bound to rule their families; which is not only by inſtructing them, but going before them in God's worſhip, and being their guide and mouth in prayers and praiſes. For every head of a family is a prophet, prieſt and king, in his own houſe: He is a prophet to teach and inſtruct his houſhold; a prieſt, to interceed and pray for them; and a king, to protect and govern them; and eſpecially, to maintain God's worſhip and true religion among them.

VII. It is clear from 1 Pet. iii. 7. that huſbands and wives are bound to pray together, and conſequently the whole family: For there they are dehorted from ſtrifes and contentions, becauſe of their tendency to hinder their conjunct prayers.

VIII. The examples of the ſaints in ſcripture do invincibly prove family worſhip to be our duty. We read not only of Abraham's inſtructing his houſhold, and commanding them to worſhip God by themſelves, but alſo, whereſoever he ſojourns with his houſhold, he builds an altar, and with them *he calls on the name of the Lord*; as is clear from Gen. xii. Gen. xiii. Gen. xxi. 33. I took notice of Joſhua's family devotion a little before. David, Pſal. ci. ſaith, *He will walk in his houſe at home with a perfect heart*; and we find him coming home from the public worſhip, 2 Sam. vi. 20. to bleſs his own family, which was certainly to go about family worſhip with them, and pray for God's bleſſing on them. We find Daniel about this work three times a day, Dan. vi. 10. It was openly family-prayer which he performed; for if it had been ſecret prayer, ſtrangers would not have known ſo well of it, nor would they have found him at it, as it is ſaid they did: So great a prince would have had ſervants in his outer rooms, to have ſtopt them ere they came ſo near as to hear him at his ſecret devotion. We have our great pattern Jeſus Chriſt ſinging pſalms, and praying with his family, *viz.* his diſciples, Mat. xxvi. 30. Luke ix. 18. John xvii. This was Cornelius's practice, Acts x. 2. it is ſaid, *He feared God with all his houſe*; which implies that he *worſhipped God with all his houſe*, for fearing of God comprehends *worſhip*.

Laſtly, We find Paul, Philem. ii. 3. making mention of the church in Philemon's houſe, which was his religious praying family: And then, ver. 22. he ſpeaks of their joint *prayers, through which he truſted he ſhould be given to them*.

Since then the duty is ſo clear, let us be concerned and zealous to promote the *worſhip of God in our families*. Conſider how zealous ſome are to promote a falſe or ſuperſtitious worſhip: God bids the prophet look and wonder at their diligence, Jer. vii. 17, 18. There we ſee both fathers, children, huſbands, wives, and all are taken up about it. Where, alas! is there any family ſo earneſt for the true worſhip of God.

OBJECTIONS againſt family-worſhip anſwered.

Object. 1. "We pray in ſecret, and that is ſufficient."

Anſ. 1. This is not ſufficient, as hath been proven; one duty will not ſupply the want of another: Family prayer is our duty, as well as ſecret prayer; and you ought to go the round of duties, and ſlight no known duty, if you would proſper in any duty.

2dly, Secret prayer, O man, would be your duty, although you had no family; yea, although you had no tongue nor faculty of ſpeech. O maſter of a family, why hath God bleſſed you with a family, and with the faculty of ſpeaking, but that you might be more capable to glorify him with and before others? Hath not Chriſt, in that excellent pattern of prayer, taught you to pray conjunctly, by ſaying, *Our Father which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread?* Have you any charity to your neighbours, any love or pity to the ſouls of your family, and will not take them alongſt with you to the throne of grace? Did you enjoy any communion with God in ſecret, or taſte any ſweetneſs in the duty; would you not invite them to came taſte and ſee that God is good, and partake of the ſame heavenly chear with you?

Object. 2. "We have not gifts to pray before others."

Anſ. 1*ſt*, The great hearer of prayer doth not look to gifts as we do; no, he looks to the heart Say not then, becauſe you cannot pray as a miniſter, or ſuch a gifted man, that ye will not pray at all; bring a humble and broken heart to God, and he will accept of you, tho' you had but two or three words, or broken ſentences. It is not fine words, or eloquent expreſſions, that God is delighted with; it is the ſincerity of the heart.

2dly, Uſe the one talent, trade with it, and it will increaſe; do as you can, and God will teach you to do better; I never knew any that tried it ſincerely, but God helped them. Can ye not ſay with the diſciples, *Lord, teach us to pray.* Yea, ſay but the Lord's prayer, if ye can ſay no more, and, if ye do it ſincerely, more ſhall be given.

3dly, Make uſe of the helps which God affords you for prayer. 1. Acquaint yourſelves with the ſcriptures, frequently read the Pſalms, and particularly the xxv. li. lxxxvi. cxix. pſalms, and others, where you will find variety of fit expreſſions and petitions to be uſed in prayer. *Take with you* theſe *words* which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, they are the moſt acceptable words. Likeways ſtudy the Ten Commands, view the large extent and meaning of them, and duties required, and ſins forbidden in each of them, and they will furniſh you with vaſt matter of confeſſion and petition. Alſo ſtudy the Lord's prayer, and the import of the ſeveral petitions thereof, for there are many petitions wrapt up in every one of them.

2. Study well the attributes and works of God, and they will afford manifold matter, both for prayer and praiſes. View the *work of creation*; and more eſpecially, the *work of redemption*, the eternal contrivance of it, the *glorious Mediator, his nature, his offices, life, death, ſufferings*, and *infinite love; his fulneſs, graces, offers, promiſes*, and *well ordered covenant;* and then, I am ſure, you will not be barren of ſuitable matter, and words for prayer. "A very child (as one ſaith), "when he ſees a merchant's pack opened, where there "are variety of things which he deſireth, will learn, "without book, to ſay, O father, buy this, or give "me that." So the ſoul will not want what to ſay, that ſees the treaſures and riches of Chriſt opened.

3. Study to be acquaint with yourſelves, your hearts and lives: Conſider your ſtate and circumſtances both in ſoul and body, and the providences of God towards you. Think upon the vanity and inconſtancy of all worldly things, the frailty of man, and brevity of life; and particularly, think much on the four laſt things, *death, judgment, heaven* and *hell*, and you will have abundance of matter for prayer.

Beſides all which, there are four words ye ſhould always keep in mind when you go to prayer, which would prove a laſting fountain for ſuitable matter to you, *viz.* your *ſins, miſeries, wants*, and *mercies*.

1ſt, Your *ſins*. Have you not a great multitude to confeſs, and ſeek mercy for, *ſins original* and *actual*, of *omiſſion* and *commiſſion*, of *heart* and *life?* What indwelling corruptions, and heart-plagues have ye to lament, *hardneſs, deadneſs, carnality, unbelief, backſliding, hypocriſy*, &c. Look into your lives, and behold what ſins ye have committed, and what duties ye have omitted, and make particular confeſſion of them.

2dly, Your *miſeries*. How many have ye to complain of, and beg deliverance from in prayer? Are you not born in a loſt ſtate, a child of wrath, an heir of hell, under an unſupportable burden of unpardoned guilt, moſt lothſome and polluted in God's ſight; under the tyranny of ſatan, liable to all the miſeries of this life, cares, toils, loſſes, croſſes, ſickneſs and death; yea, expoſed to the wrath of God, the curſes of the law, the ſword of juſtice, to a ſtrict and ſevere judgment-ſeat, to unquenchable fire, and everlaſting burnings, and to baniſhment from God's favour, and preſence to all eternity?

3dly, Your *wants*. Are ye not poor beggarly ſinners, full of wants and neceſſities? *In us dwells no good thing.* Do you want the bread of life, the balm of Gilead, pardon of ſin, peace with God, deliverance from wrath, a new nature, a ſoft heart? Do you want *eye ſalve, white raiment, gold tried in the fire?* Do ye want *faith, love, repentance, victory over luſts?* &c. And have ye not matter for prayer and ſupplication? Have ye not temporal wants to lay before God? Ye can tell them to your friends, and complain to them, tho' they afford you little help; ought ye not far rather go to God with them, who is both able and willing to help? Do you want health to your bodies, bread to your families, proviſion for your children, a bleſſing on your labours? Then ſeek them from God: *The ravens cry to him, and he hears them*, how much more will he hear you?

4thly, Your *mercies*. God daily loads you with his mercies, they are new to you every morning: It is of the Lord's mercies, that your houſes are not conſumed with fire, in the night, and ye buried in the ruins thereof; that ſudden death doth not ſmite your children, ſervants, cattle or relations; that you waken in ſafety every morning, and not in everlaſting flames. Doth not the Lord ſet a hedge about you, and all that you have, and preſerve you from devils, enemies and manifold dangers; give you health and ſtrength, bleſs the work of your hands, cover a table for you, and rain manna about your tents? And have you not plenty of matter for thankſgiving? Yea, he hath contrived a way to ſave you, ſent his Son to redeem you, makes preſſing offers of his ſalvation, and waits patiently for your repentance. Now, if you think on theſe mercies, can you want words in prayer to bleſs God for them? I ſay then, remember your *ſins, miſeries, wants* and *mercies*, and ye will never be ſcarce of matter for prayer.

Object. III. "We have not confidence to pray before others."

Anſ. 1ſt, Mind what Chriſt ſaith, *They that are aſhamed of him before men, he will be aſhamed of them before his Father in heaven.*

2dly, Many are aſhamed to pray before others, who are not aſhamed to ſin, curſe, ſwear, drink drunk, and break the Sabbath before others.

3dly, Why ſhould you be aſhamed to pray before your own family, theſe you conſtantly converſe with, and of whom you have the command? Will you have confidence to plead this frivolous excuſe, at the day of judgment?

But, *laſtly*, You will not plead ſuch excuſes in things relating to the body. If your children and family were ſtarving for want of bread, ye would neither want words nor confidence to make known your caſe to a rich friend; if you were mortally ſick or wounded, you would freely tell your caſe to a phyſician; if ye were drowning, ye would call aloud for help: And now, when ye and your families are ready to periſh in your ſins, will ye not make known your caſe to God, and cry with the diſciples, *Lord ſave us, or elſe we periſh?* The common beggars, that go from door to door, will riſe up againſt you; they think no ſhame to cry at the rich man's door, hear them who will; they want not words enough, ye need not teach them what to ſay; their pinched bowels make them both eloquent and importunate; they weary not to ſtand and cry, tho' they be but expecting a ſmall morſel: And ſhall we, whoſe needs are far greater, whoſe expectations are far higher, want words or confidence to cry and knock at God's door, ſince he declares that our importunity is nowiſe a trouble but a pleaſure to him? Are not everlaſting life, and deliverance from hell, worth the ſeeking? Shall men do more for the welfare of their dying bodies, than we for the ſalvation of our immortal ſouls?

Object. IV. 'We have not time to ſpare for family-worſhip, our labour is ſo great, and buſineſs ſo throng.'

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Is not the worſhip and ſervice of God the greateſt buſineſs you have to do in the world? All other things are trifles in reſpect of this.

2*dly*, Better want time for ſleeping, for eating, or any thing, than want time for this, which is far more neceſſary than any thing elſe.

3*dly*, God, in his providence, may ſoon caſt greater hindrances in the way of your worldly buſineſs than this, as ye ſuppoſe, would be: He may ſend fevers among children and ſervants, that will ſtop your labour much longer than a little time ſpent daily in family-worſhip would do. When ſickneſs or death comes, they will not be put off by telling that you have no time for your labour to be ſick; no, ye muſt find time to be ſick and ly on beds, tho' it were in the throng of harveſt. And muſt ye, whether ye will or no, find time to be ſick and die; and will you find no time to pray with your families, in order to prepare you and them for ſickneſs and death? And further, it is likely, that if ye prayed more in your families, your labour would be leſs ſtopt by ſickneſs and other troubles; you ſhould have fewer croſſes and perplexities in your buſineſs; and, whatever they were, you might expect they would be ſanctified. Family prayer would be a ſweet vent and eaſe to the mind, under all family cares and anxieties.

4*thly*, Family prayer will not hinder your buſineſs, tho' in the throng of harveſt. What ſtop would it be to your work, to be every morning and evening a quarter of an hour upon your knees with your family? Nay, it would further it, and procure a bleſſing on the work of your hands. And I have obſerved, that in theſe parts of the nation where huſbandmen and tradeſmen take time for family worſhip, they are in a more flouriſhing condition in worldly things than in thoſe parts where it is neglected. Remember, that all the ſucceſs of your labour depends on the ſpecial bleſſing and providence of God, and there is no way more likely to obtain this than family prayer. If God vouchſafe not his bleſſing, your labour will be labour in vain, Pſal. cxxvii. 1. 2. How ſoon may God blaſt all the labours of prayerleſs perſons?

5*thly*, Whatever you pretend from want of time on week days to excuſe you from family-worſhip; yet there is no ſhadow for this objection upon the Sabbath day, in which you have no other buſineſs but to ſerve and worſhip God. He is graciouſly pleaſed to free you this day from your labour, that ye may apply yourſelves intirely to his worſhip without diſtraction. O ye that are ſtraitened for time thro' the week for family and ſecret prayer, be buſy on the Lord's day in the performances thereof, and be thankful to God for allowing you this day for theſe exerciſes.

In the name then of the great God who hath founded families, and is the *God of all the families of Iſrael*; and in the name of his Son *Jeſus Chriſt, in whom only the families of the earth can be bleſſed*; I beſeech and obteſt all you that are maſters of families, to honour the Creator and Redeemer of the world in your families; erect him a family altar, and dedicate your houſes to be temples for the worſhip of God. Perform this duty conſcientiouſly every day, but more eſpecially upon the Lord's day; let your family ſacrifices this day be doubled. I ſhall add ſome more motives to it.

I. This is the way to procure you all ſorts of family-bleſſings. Would you have God to build your houſes, bleſs your ſubſtance, dwell in your families, and be a guard to them night and day? Would ye have your relations comfortable, your affairs ſucceſsful and your enjoyments ſweet? Then ſet up and keep up family-worſhip, make your houſes little churches.

1*ſt*, You may expect family protection. If you, by family prayer, lodge your families 'under the ſhadow of the Almighty, you need not be afraid of terrors that fly by night or by day:' for you are under the tuition of him *that keeps Iſrael, who neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps*. Praying families are preſerved from many more evils and miſchiefs than they are aware of; ſometimes divine providence makes a viſible diſtinction between them and others. I have read of a little town in the canton of Bern in Switzerland, conſiſting of 90 houſes, that in the year 1584, was all deſtroyed by an earthquake, except the half of one houſe, where the maſter of it, with his family, were at the time on their knees at family prayer. This is a noble pillar for ſupporting your houſes.

2*dly*, You may expect *family proviſion: your bread ſhall be given you, and your water ſhall be ſure; you ſhall dwell in the land, and verily have food.* God feeds the ravens that cry to him, and will he not much more feed Chriſtian families that cry, *Lord, give us this day our daily bread?* O poor tradeſmen, who can hardly get your credit kept and families maintained; O poor tenants, who can ſcarcely get your farms paid and children provided for, by all your ſore toil and labour; will you try family-prayer ſincerely? I dare ſay, that the Lrod, who *bleſſed the houſe of Obed-edom, and all that pertained to him, becauſe of the ark of God which he lodged*, will from that day forth bleſs you, proſper the work of your hands, and make your affairs more ſucceſsful: It will not hinder your labours, but procure a bleſſing on them. I ſay then, make a fair trial, and I hope in a little time you ſhall find a ſenſible change in your affairs. Some have obſerved this in their experience.

3*dly*, You will have the more comfort and ſatisfaction in your family relations; this is the way to keep up your authority among them, and to procure you more reſpect from them. If a maſter of a family exert his authority to bring thoſe under his charge to attend family worſhip, he will find them more obſervant of his other commands; children would be more obedient, and ſervants more faithful; the fear of that God, whom they daily worſhip with you, would be an awe band upon them, to do their duty to you, and act for your intereſt.

II. Family worſhip is an excellent mean to advance religion and reformation through the whole land. If every one would begin with his own family, reform it, and plant piety therein, what happy cities and pariſhes would we ſoon have? If you would recover decaying piety in the land, and baniſh curſing, ſwearing, drukenneſs, Sabbath-breaking, *&c.* out of the town and pariſh where you live, then begin with your own family; ſet up prayer and religion therein. Satan and vice will not dwell contentedly beſide prayer. The way to make a clean ſtreet is, for every houſe to *ſweep before their own door*. Religious families are excellent nurſeries to the church, and ſeminaries of piety. Do you wiſh then to ſee religion flouriſh, and reformation carried on? and do you deſire to be inſtrumental therein? then worſhip God, promote piety in your own family: Your example might influence your neighbours about you to the like; it would excite your children and ſervants to ſecret prayer; and, when they come to get families of their own, they will readily do as you do, and ſo will their children and ſervants after them: And thus you will be inſtruments of handing down religion to the riſing generation, and for *turning many unto righteouſneſs*. O if God would perſuade the hearts of people, both in town and country, to ſet about family worſhip, how ſoon would religion put on another face? The ſtreets and fields would not be ſo thronged with old and young on the Sabbath, people walking and diſcourſing idly, and boys playing and ſporting themſelves; the church would be better frequented, and people more attentive and devout in time of ſermon, and public-worſhip. Family-worſhip alſo is a notable help to prepare us for public worſhip and the right obſervation of the Sabbath.

But the domeſtic ſanctification of the Sabbath, enjoined by the fourth command, includes more duties than prayer, reading the word, and ſinging of pſalms in families: And ſo I come to ſpeak of others.

A ſecond domeſtic DUTY *on the Sabbath, is family catechiſing and inſtruction.*

Maſters of families are bound to inſtruct and teach theſe under their charge, *viz.* their children and ſervants, in all things neceſſary to ſalvation. Yea, they are bound, not only to inſtruct them in the knowledge of the principles, but alſo to enjoin them the performance of the duties of the Chriſtian religion, and to admoniſh and reprove them for the neglect thereof. The neceſſity of this duty may be proven by many arguments.

1ſt, From the law of nature, that binds us to do what we can to promote the welfare and happineſs of our children and families, and to help them, when in miſery and diſtreſs. Children are a part of the parents wrapt up in another ſkin; and therefore parents ſhould do for them as for themſelves. 'Tis not enough that ye provide for their bodies; for the very birds and beaſts, do this, nay even 'the ſea monſters draw out the breaſt, 'and give ſuck to their young ones?' Lam. iv. 3. but you ought to provide for their ſouls, which are their better part, yea, a thouſand times more precious than their bodies. You would think it barbarous cruelty in a parent to ſuffer his child or ſervant to ſtarve for want of bodily food; O but it is far more cruel, to ſuffer their precious ſouls to pariſh and ſtarve for want of ſpiritual food, or neceſſary inſtructions.

2dly, From the clear light of God's word, that binds this on maſters of families as a duty. We ſee, the fourth command obligeth maſters to be anſwerable for their children and ſervants, touching the ſanctification of the Sabbath, and the ſervice of God on that day; which certainly imports their inſtructing them in their duty. The Lord commits their ſouls to their care, and they muſt accont for them to him. When God gives any of you a child, he charges you, as Pharaoh's daughter did Moſes his mother, Exod. ii. 9. *Take this child, and nurſe it for me; and I will give thee thy wages*: Or as the prophet ſaid to the king, 1 Kings xx. 39. *Keep this man; if by any means he be miſſing, thy life ſhall go for his life.* If this child or this ſervant periſh in his ſins or ignorance thro' your neglect, his blood will I require at your hands. Nay, we have expreſs ſcripture precepts binding you to this duty; read Deut. vi. 6. 7. Prov. xxii. 6. Eph. vi. 4. Alſo we have the examples of the ſaints, who were careful in performing this duty. God takes ſpecial notice of it in Abraham, to his everlaſting commendation, Gen. xviii. 19. *I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him; and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord*, &c. It was David's practice, Pſal. xxxiv. 11. Prov. iv. 3, 4. and alſo Hezekiah's, Iſa. xxxviii. 19.

3dly, You are concerned, in common juſtice, to inſtruct your children, that ye may, ſo far as lieth in you, repair the injury done them, by your conveying original corruption to them. Has God provided a cure for them in the goſpel, and will ye not do ſo much as ſhew it to them? If you had raſhly given a wound to any of their bodies, would ye not in haſte provide a cure, or ſend for a phyſician? and will ye do nothing for their ſouls, that are dying of the wounds of ſin given them by you?

4thly, It doth highly contribute to advance Chriſt's kingdom in the world, to train up a ſeed for his ſervice. This is likely to prove a more ſucceſful mean of reformation, than any other that can be uſed, either by magiſtrates or miniſters, laws or ſermons. Therefore, as Pharaoh ſought to deſtroy the Iſraelites by killing their young ones; ſo ſatan, who is filled with ſpite againſt the kingdom of Chriſt, knows there are no ſuch compendious ways to ruin it, as by perverting youth, and ſuppreſſing family-religion: This is a blow at the root, which cauſes him to employ all his power and policy this way.

5thly, It is alſo very much for your own intereſt and comfort, to inſtruct your families in the knowledge of Chriſt, and ways of religion. Ye may expect, that your children and ſervants will prove dutiful to you. Well educated children will take care of their parents in time of old age, ſickneſs or poverty: whereas theſe, that are not ſo, often neglect their parents in the foreſaid caſes, or wiſh them dead. If you conſcientiouſly inſtruct your children and ſervants, God will reward you for it, even in this life. Abraham, as we heard, made conſcience of it; and God bleſſed him with a dutiful ſon Iſaac, and a faithful ſervant, Eliezer of Damaſcus. What an unparalleled inſtance have we of Iſaac's profound obedience to his father's commands, in ſubmitting patiently to bear the wood, yea to be bound, and laid upon the altar to be ſacrificed? And, what a wiſe and faithful ſervant was the ſteward of his houſe, Eliezer, whom he truſted with all he had, and with the great concern of his ſon's marriage, which he managed with great prudence and integrity, and prayed earneſtly for the good ſucceſs of it? So that, if ye ſow the ſeeds of piety in children and ſervants, yourſelves ſhall reap the fruit thereof, even in this world.

Again, it will be very comfortable to you on a death-bed, to leave a religious praying family behind you. What tho' you leave your wife and children poor? yet if you leave them praying, God will provide for them while here, and ye ſhall ſhortly have a joyful meeting with them in heaven. Your children here will *riſe up and call you bleſſed;* they will praiſe you, and follow your pious example: And as you took care to hand down religion to them, ſo will they do to their children and ſervants, when they come to get families; and, when you are bleſſing God in heaven, they will be bleſſing God for you on earth. Nay, they will meet you at a judgment-ſeat with bleſſings in their mouths: Your children will bleſs God that ever they had ſuch parents; your ſervants will bleſs him that ever they had ſuch maſters, that ever they ſaw your faces, or came under your roof. It has been known, that many, at a dying hour, have bleſſed God, for determining their lot to fall into ſuch and ſuch religious families, where firſt they became acquainted with Chriſt and religion.

A third domeſtic DUTY on the Lord's day, is godly conference.

According to Iſa. lviii. 23. we ought not this day to ſpeak our own words; and conſequently we ought to ſpeak religious words, and entertain ſpiritual diſcourſe, when we are together, concerning Chriſt and heaven; or about the ſermons we have heard, telling one another what we remember thereof, and that which did moſtly edify us.

Godly conference is well pleaſing to God; he notices and records all the good words his people do ſpeak, Mal. iii. 16. When the two diſciples going to Emmaus were about this exerciſe on the Lord's day, Chriſt is ſo well-pleaſed, that he comes to them, and makes the third man; he entertains them with heavenly diſcourſe and opens their underſtandings to know the ſcriptures. We ſee, when Elijah is ſo employed with Eliſha, 2 Kings ii. 11. he is taken up and tranſported gloriouſly into heaven. This is a heavenly exerciſe, and the employment of the glorfied in heaven: It was Chriſt's work, when he was transfigured on mount Tabor, and met with Moſes and Elias: he conferred with them upon the bleſſed ſubject of his death and ſufferings. O how holy and fruitful was Chriſt always in his diſcourſe? *His lips dropt as the honey comb, and his tongue was as choice ſilver.* He ſpiritualized earthly things, and turned them into heavenly inſtructions; when he conferred with the woman at the well of Samaria, concerning the water of that well, John iv. he quickly drew her from *ordinary water* to the *water of life*. And, when eating bread in the Phariſee's houſe on the Sabbath day, Luke xiv. he diſcourſed of *eating bread in God's kingdom*, So let all the diſciples of Chriſt, on this day, imitate his example: See that your *ſpeech be ſeaſoned with grace*, and your *lips* like thoſe of *the righteous* that *feed many*. Speak much this day to the commendation of Chriſt, and invite others to acquaintance with him; and, when you ſee it for edification, communicate the experiences you have had of his love; *Come here, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my ſoul.* Pſal. lxvi. and thus one live-coal will help to kindle another.

Upon this day of holy reſt, Chriſtians ſhould be oft thinking and ſpeaking of the everlaſting reſt above, and conferring together of the way to it, and their meeting there. Do you believe you are going to that reſt, and yet never ſpeak of it? If two or three of you had entered into an agreement to go to America, and ſeek the golden mines which are there, would ye never be ſpeaking of that country, or deſirous to hear of it before your going? O Chriſtians! are ye ſhortly to be *caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and ſo to be for ever with the Lord?* and will you not *comfort one another with theſe words?* according to 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. 18. It hath likewiſe been the practice in many places, when religion comes to be in eſteem, for young perſons to meet together in the evening of the Lord's days for godly conference upon ſpiritual ſubjects or the ſermons they have heard, and for prayer and praiſes to their mutual edification. And it is always obſerved, that ſuch religious meetings on Sabbaths or week days, are ſet up in pariſhes where the goſpel begins to thrive, juſt as naturally as birds draw together in the ſpring; young converts are Chriſt's *ſinging brids*. Cant. ii. 12. And the ſcripture affords good ground and warrant for ſuch meetings, Mal. iii. 16 Pſal. lxvi. 16. Pſal. cxix. 63. Jer. xxiii. 35. Acts xi. 5, 12. Heb. iii. 13. Heb. x. 24. 25.

A fourth domeſtic DUTY on the Sabbath, is a holy care in maſters of families to reſtrain all profanation of the day by children and ſervants, or any within their gates.

The fourth command expreſſly requires this. Tho' you be not magiſtrates, yet God has clothed you, who are heads of families, with power and authority in your families, to ſee to the honour of this day: Uſe it then for God, as ye will be anſwerable. Let none under your charge profane this holy day, by working, ſporting or playing; or by idleneſs or neglect of the duties of the day. See that they duly attend public ordinances and family worſhip; ſuffer them not to abſent therefrom.

O maſters of families, concur frankly with the miniſter of the pariſh, to ſuppreſs the abuſes of this day: you will ſee them, and know of them, when miniſters cannot: Teſtify againſt them in your ſtations, and this will make the miniſter's work the more eaſy. O what a ſad thing is it in many places, to ſee miniſters left to fight againſt ſin alone, without having one to join with them, or once open a mouth againſt it! Hence it is, that many are turned impudent in ſinning, particularly in Sabbath breaking, and value not a miniſter's rebuke. Alas! have ye neither love to God nor your nighbours ſouls? Have ye no concern for God's glory, nor grief to ſee him diſhonoured? Have you no charity to your near relations, no love to your own children, no concern for your ſervants or neareſt neighbours, no deſire to keep them from falling into everlaſting burnings; that you will not ſpeak one word to prevent it, or warn them of their hazard?

Let none ſay, with curſed Cain, *Am I my brother's keeper?* For God requires you to be doing good to all in your ſtation, and to *love your neighbour as yourſelf*.

And the fourth command expreſsly makes you accountable for all within your gates.

Object. 'I have ſtubborn ſervants, that will not be 'reſtrained by my admonitions or reproofs.'

Anſ. 1. You ſhould be more careful in the choice of the members of your family, and particularly of your ſervants, ſince God gives you a free choice in this matter. Conſider David's care therein, Pſal. ci. 6. 7. *Mine eyes ſhall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he ſhall ſerve me. He that worketh deceit, ſhall not dwell within my houſe; he that telleth lies, ſhall not tarry in my ſight.* Do ye think that he, or ſhe is fit for your ſervice, that cares not for God's ſervice? Can you expect a bleſſing on the work of their hands, who are enemies to God? A godly ſervant (tho' I confeſs he is rare enough to be found) is a greater bleſſing than many think; he not only works for his maſter with his hands, but with his prayers alſo, as did godly Eliezer, Gen. xxiv. 12. and to be ſure he did his maſter Abraham as good ſervice by his prayers as by his prudence.

But, 2. If it be your lot to be concerned with ſtubborn and diſobedient ſervants, let them know that you have authority from God, to oblige them to keep the Sabbath, by attending ordinances in public and private, and to reſtrain them from profaning this day; and, if they will not be reclaimed, to expel them from your houſe: If they neglect or miſmanage your work, would ye not uſe your power and authority with them, to cauſe them help their faults? And, were you in as good earneſt for God's ſervice on the Sabbath, as for your own upon week days, I am perſuaded ye might bring your children and ſervants to ſerve God, and keep this day far better than they do.

Queſt. III. *What are the duties requiſite upon the Lord's day?*

Anſ. It is not enough that we worſhip God this day in conjunction with others, whether in the congregation or in families: The right ſanctification of the Sabbath includes ſecret duties alſo, ſuch as prayer, reading, meditation, *&c.* That religion is not true, which is all viſible to the world; for the life of religion lies in the ſecret intercourſes which are betwixt God and the ſoul, that the eyes of men do not penetrate into. Secret duties are the beſt trial of our ſincerity; the Lord, that ſeeth in ſecret, takes ſpecial notice of them, and, if duly performed, he will openly reward them. Let us therefore make conſcience of them, and that eſpecially upon God's holy day, which is entirely ſet apart for holy duties: And labour to time duties ſo this day, as one duty may not juſtle out another. As you muſt not let family duties interfere with public duties; ſo you muſt take care that ſecret duties do not interfere with family ones. But more particularly,

1ſt, Secret prayer is a duty neceſſary on the Lord's day, both for preparing us to attend the public ordinances, and for improving and reaping benefit by them afterwards. I do not mean, that this duty is to be confined to the Sabbath only: No; it is neceſſary every day, according to David's example, Pſal. lv. 17. but that is eſpecially requiſite as a part of the worſhip of this day. Prayer is ſo neceſſary, that it is put for the whole worſhip of God, Acts ii. 21. It is the character of a converted ſoul, *Behold he prays,* Acts ix. 11. but it is the mark of an atheiſt, that *he calls not upon God,* Pſal. xiv. And, in a ſpecial manner, ſecret prayer is what every carnal man hath an averſion to. The devil can allow men their church prayers, their family prayers; but, for cloſet prayers he cannot away with, eſpecially when they are frequent and conſtant, becauſe they are too much an argument of ſincerity. A hypocrite takes no delight in ſecret prayer, nor in any duty but what is ſeen of men, and will gain him a name. But reader, if thou art ſincere, thou wilt conſider that God's eye is upon thee in private, as well as in public; and therefore wilt ſeek to approve thyſelf to God in ſecret duties, as well as public. As ſecret prayer was our Saviour's conſtant practice while on earth, ſo it was his ſpecial injunction to all his followers, Mat. vi. 6. You need not fear that your ſecret prayers will be forgotten: No; God is everywhere; he has an ear to hear your ſecret groans, and an eye to ſee your ſecret tears: Yea, he has a bottle to preſerve them, ſo as a drop of them ſhall not be loſt.

In our ſecret addreſſes, which are more ſtated and ſolemn, let us carefully remember the three parts of prayer, confeſſion, petition and thankſgiving. Let us confeſs the ſins we are guilty of, cry for the mercies we want, and thank God for theſe we enjoy. Let us mind that this is not only a commanded duty, but our dignity and privilege. What a honour is it for duſt and aſhes to be allowed acceſs to the great God; for a worm to ſpeak freely to its Creator; for a poor beggar to converſe familiarly with the King of heaven? O ſinner, would not all thy neighbours envy thee, if thou wert ſo honoured by an earthly king? Be exhorted then to value and make uſe of this liberty.

2dly, Conſider at what a dear rate Chriſt hath bought this freedom for us: How much did it coſt him to erect a throne of grace, to which we may repair with confidence? And, will not we make uſe of this privilege with thankſgiving?

3dly, Conſider the profit of it: It is like the *merchant ſhip,* Prov. xxxi. 14. *that brings our food from afar.* By it we trade with heaven, and bring down Chriſt's unſearchable riches: It is a key to open the treaſure of God's mercies to us in the morning, and to lock us up under God's protection at night. By it we prevail with God, ſcreen ourſelves from wrath, and put ſatan to flight. In a word, prayer is a key to heaven, a ſhield to the ſoul, a ſacrifice to God, and a ſcourge to the devil.

4thly, It is the way to make up and preſerve acquaintance with God, which will be of great uſe to you in the time of trouble, or at the hour of death: It is no ſmall encouragement to you to addreſs one for help, with whom you have had long acquaintance and familiarity, and of whoſe kindneſs you have had frequent experience. But prayerleſs man, it will be a moſt melancholy caſe, when you are going out of the world, to be put to cry to that God you have been an utter ſtranger to all your life; or to be forced to appear before that God you never loved, or deſired to converſe with; or to be fain to challenge acquaintance with him, who will utterly diſclaim you, and ſay, *Depart from me, I never knew you.* But, O praying ſoul! that haſt acquaintance with God, death will have another view to thee; thou mayſt look on it, as

Jacob did on the waggons ſent to carry him to his friend Joſeph, and ſay, "Now I am going to God, whom I know; I am going to meet with that Friend, with whom I have had a long acquaintance, to whom I have paid many a viſit, and with whom I have had ſweet ſecret converſe, and whom I have longed to ſee, and who will embrace me in his arms, and welcome me to glory."

5thly, Conſider what a mercy it is, O man, that God is yet calling thee to prayer, and continuing thee in the land of prayer, when ſo many thouſands, as deſerving, are beyond prayer, and loſt for ever. O then pray now, while thou haſt time to pray, health to pray, helps to pray, and encouragement to pray. Read the gracious promiſes of life and ſalvation to you, if you do it, Pſal. lxix. 32. Rom. x. 13. Make this world a time for prayer, and the next ſhall be a ſeaſon for praiſe. Doſt thou think to be ſaved without prayer? Doſt thou expect to have thy life without begging it at God's hands? O what oil will it add to thy flames in hell, when conſcience will tell thee, *If thou hadſt prayed thou hadſt not been there?* Well then, now thou haſt a ſeaſon for prayer; but, remember, it will not always laſt: If thou improve it not, expect that God will turn a deaf ear to you in the day of your calamity, at a death bed, or a tribunal. Read, and tremble at that word, Prov. i. 26, 27, 28. God ſays, *He will not hear you when you cry*. And, if he refuſe to hear you, then, who will hear you? Angels will not, ſaints will not, neareſt relations will not, hills and mountains will not: And, what a wretched, forlorn and forſaken creature wilt thou be? There will be none to own thee then, if thou acquaint not thyſelf with God by prayer now. See the anſwer the fooliſh virgins got, when they came after the door was ſhut. Matth. xxv. See what an anſwer the rich man got, when he begged for "a drop of cold water to cool his tongue," Luke xvi. "Seek God, then, when he may be found; call on him while he is near:" Otherwiſe your late untimely cries will not be regarded.

Object. "O, ſay ſome, we have not the gift of prayer, we cannot pray."

Anſ. I have ſaid enough in anſwer to this a little before. I ſhall only add one word; Art thou a Chriſtian, O man, and canſt not pray? Thou mayſt as well ſay, thou art a ſcholar, but canſt not read; a ſoldier but canſt not fight. Prayer is as eſſential to a true Chriſtian, as breath is to the body: Why? prayer is the very breathing of the ſoul to God. So it is called, Lam. iii. 56. O man, have you nothing to ſay in prayer? then go to God, and tell him ſo; ſit down on your knees, and ſay, *Here a poor ignorant creature, that cannot pray; Lord, teach me to pray.* The publican made a very ſhort prayer, Luke xviii. *God be merciful to me a ſinner*; yet it was accepted ſince it came from a humble heart. O! if your heart be broken, your words will be accepted, altho' they be broken and few. The ſillieſt begger will find ſomething to ſay at your door, tho' he expect but a crumb; and can you find nothing to ſay at God's door, when you have a ſoul to ſave, a hell to ſhun, and Jeſus Chriſt and a kingdom in your view?

But, beſides that ſort of ſecret prayer which is more ſtated and ſolemn, there is prayer that is more ſudden and ejaculatory, when we lift up our hearts to God with ſome ſhort petitions, on any occaſion or emergency. Ejaculatory prayers are uſeful on every day, but you ſhould have them more frequent on the Sabbath-day: For, ſince on this day you muſt *not think your own thoughts, or find your own pleaſures*, heavenly breathings and pious ejaculations ſhould iſſue forth continually: By ſeeking pardon for ſuch a ſin, ſtrength againſt ſuch a luſt, victory over ſuch a tentation, and grace to ſpend Sabbath time ſuitably. Are you going to the church, or returning from it? Are you reading, hearing, communicating, praiſing, or about any other duty? Be frequently making uſe of this kind of prayer, particularly begin and end every duty with it; look up before for aſſiſtance, and look up after it for acceptance, and that infirmities in it, for Chriſt's ſake, may be pardoned. Theſe prayers, of all others, are the freeſt of diſtraction, they being put up and over before ever ſatan be awakened to tempt us. As for other prayers, our preparations to them, tho' only by the alteration of our poſture, give notice to ſatan what we are about to do; but ejaculatory prayers are ſo quickly darted up to God, that they will be in heaven before ſatan can ſhoot any of his darts againſt us.——They are uſed to keep up communion with God in the intervals of other duties, and for keeping the heart in the fear of God all the day long. As the prieſts under the law were not only to *offer up the morning and evening ſacrifice duly, but to keep the fire burning on the altar all the day*; ſo we muſt not ſatiſfy ourſelves with ſolemn and ſtated duties only, but ſhould ſtudy to keep in the fire always by holy thoughts and ejaculations. Chriſt ſaith of the ſpouſe, that *her lips drop dew as an honey comb*, which is either ſtill dropping, or in a continual forwardneſs to drop. Some of God's people have more devotion this way in their ſhops, than others have in their cloſets; and while walking in the ſtreets, or working in the fields, than others have when praying on their knees: They have ſtricter communion with God this way at their common tables, than others have at a communion table.

A ſecond ſecret DUTY on the Lord's day is reading of the ſcriptures, and other good books.

This is a duty neceſſary every day, but eſpecially on the Lord's day: It is the character of the *bleſſed man*, that *his delight is in the law of the Lord, and he meditates therein both day and night*, Pſal. i. This ſhould be particularly verified of us on the Sabbath. Read the word, that you may be taught what to believe of God, what duties you owe to God, and what ſins you are guilty of againſt him. Who can ſet forth the excellency and uſefulneſs of it? It is a *glaſs* to diſcover our ſpots, a *lamp* to guide us in the dark, a *fire* to warm our cold affections, a *magazine* to ſupply us with armour againſt our ſpiritual enemies. It is a *phyſic-garden*, wherein grow all ſorts of medicinal herbs for our ſpiritual maladies; The promiſes are as fragrant flowers and ſpices in this garden; believers take many a pleaſant walk among theſe beds of ſpices. It is an *apothecary's ſhop*, out of which we may have eye-ſalve for our blindneſs, ſovereign cordials in all our ſoul-diſtreſſes. David found this to his ſweet experience, Pſal. cxix. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickned me.* Here are ſuitable cordials, for all our various caſes, be it deſertion, temptation, poverty, ſickneſs, reproach, perſecution, *&c.* Here are the waters of the ſanctuary for cleanſing us from our pollutions: Here is the heavenly rain, for making ſoft and tender our hard hearts. The ſcriptures are both food and phyſic to our ſouls; here is *meat for ſtrong men*, and *milk for babes*. “The two teſtaments (as Auguſtine ſaith) are “the two breaſts which we muſt ſuck for ſpiritual “nouriſhment.” And there is none of God's children that will call them dry breaſts or empty ciſterns; they have often afforded them ſtrength, nouriſhment, light, life and comfort: O how highly have God's people in all ages prized God's holy word, and the liberty of reading it! It hath been *ſweet as honey to their taſte*. I have read of one, who being a priſoner in a dark dungeon, when light was allowed him for a ſhort time to take his meat he would take his bible, and read a portion of it, ſaying, *He could eat without light, but he could not read without it.* I am perſuaded there is no better way in this world for improving the faculty of ſight, and benefit of light, than by reading the word of God. So far as time can allow you upon the Sabbath, I judge it very profitable to read other good books alſo, ſuch as our Confeſſion of Faith, Vincent's Catechiſm, Vincent on the laſt Judgment, Guthrie's trial of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, Allan's Alarm, Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, Pearſe's preparation for Death, Fox's Time and the end of Time, Doolittle's Call to delaying Sinners, Baxter's Saints everlaſting Reſt, his Poor Man's Family-book, Gray's Sermons, Flavel's Touch-ſtone of Sincerity, his Saint indeed, Mead's Almoſt Chriſtian, the Treatiſes of Doolittle, Campbell and Henry upon the Sacrament, Rutherfoord's Letters, the Fulfilling of the Scriptures, Clark's Martyrology, Beard's Theatre of God's Judgments. Theſe and ſuch like books, next to the holy bible, I recommend to the peruſal of all private Chriſtians, as being eaſy and plain to common capacities, and ſome of the moſt generally uſeful, inſtructing, awakening, ſoul-ſearching, and heart warming pieces that I have ſeen among human writings, and which have been bleſſed to the edification of many thouſands.

A third ſecret DUTY on the Lord's day is meditation upon divine ſubjects.

This duty is proper every day, much more on the Sabbath, which is ſequeſtrate for divine employments. It is the character of the *bleſſed man*, that *he meditates in God's law day and night*, Pſal. i. 2. It is an uſeful and neceſſary duty; it excites the affections, and quickens the graces; it ſtrengthens faith, Pſal. cxix. 92. It nouriſheth hope, and inflames our love; deep muſing makes the fire to burn. Meditation is a great help to every duty, Pſal. cxix. 59. It helps to read and hear the word aright, and to know the truths thereof practically; it helps to pray, and yields *matter* to the *tongue*, Pſal. xlv. 1. It prompts us to confeſs ſin, and mourn for it, Pſal. li. 3.

Be perſuaded then to engage your hearts to this neceſſary but much neglected duty; for, tho' it be moſt uſeful and profitable, yet I know no duty more ſlighted and forgotten. The beſt of God's people have cauſe to lament this moſt bitterly before the Lord: Who can ſay with David, Pſal. cxix. 97. *O how love I thy law, it is my meditaion all the day.* As for the generality of the world, they have no ſenſe of the obligation of this duty upon their ſpirits; they live without thinking, and that proves their ruin. O! if ſinners would retire from company, and ſpend ſome little time now and then in ſecret thinking, it would thro' the bleſſing of God, work ſome change in them. I remember a paſſage I have read of a dying father, that on his death bed left it as a charge upon his only ſon, who was a great prodigal, *That he ſhould ſpend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking*; and, to encourage him to undertake it, he gave him liberty to chooſe any ſubject he pleaſed. The ſon thinks this an eaſy taſk, and engages to do it; and accordingly ſets himſelf to perform his promiſe: One day he thinks on his bypaſt pleaſures, another day he contrives his future delights: After a while, he begins to reaſon with himſelf what was his father's deſign in laying this taſk upon him; at length he thinks his father was a wiſe and good man, and therefore intended and hoped that among the reſt of his meditations, he would ſome time or other think of religion. When this had truly poſſeſt his thoughts, one thought and queſtion comes upon the back of another, about his bypaſt life and future ſtate, that he could not contain himſelf in ſo ſhort a confinement as a quarter of an hour, but was that night without ſleep; yea and afterwards could have no reſt, till he became ſeriouſly religious.

O careleſs ſinner, if you think it too much to ſpend a quarter of an hour every day, I would beg it of you to ſpend a quarter of an hour every Lord's day in retired thinking upon ſome ſpiritual ſubject: Who knows what it might produce? Do you ſay that this is a hard taſk? Will it not be far harder to ly in hell a whole eternity thinking on your bypaſt folly, when there is no remedy? O ſinner, will you periſh for want of thinking?

Be not ſcared at the difficulty of it; for tho' at firſt this duty ſeem hard, and corrupt nature ſhew averſion to it, yet preſs your heart to it, and afterwards you ſhall find it pleaſant: Tho' it be difficult to climb this mount of meditation, yet, when once we get up, we will be ready to ſay with Peter on the mount of transfiguration, *It is good for us to be here.* David found it ſo, *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet*, Pſal. civ. 34. The more we meditate on God, the ſweeter we will find him: Yea, ſo ſweet did he find this duty, that he ſpent whole days in it, Pſal. cxix. 97. and, as if the day had been too little, he borrows a part of the night too, Pſal. lxiii. 6.

Object. “Alas! ſome ſay, our minds are barren of “good thoughts.”

Anſ. 1ſt, If you would accuſtom yourſelves more to the duty, you would have leſs ground of complaint this way. *2dly*, When your hearts are barren, there are two ſubjects you can never exhauſt: Fix your thoughts upon any one of them, *viz.* God's mercies to you, and your ſins againſt him. The Pſalmiſt acknowledges them both to be innumerable, in the ſame pſalm, Pſal. xl. 5, 12.

Queſt. *What ſubjects of meditation are moſt proper for the Sabbath day?*

Anſ. Natural things may be ſpiritualized, and *common things* may afford us ground for ſpiritual inſtructions, if we had our eyes inlightned, and minds ſpiritually exerciſed. But it is fit that on the Sabbath, we chuſe theſe ſubjects of meditation that are moſt edifying, and moſt ſuitable to the great ends of the day. In general, we ought this day to think upon God, upon ourſelves, and upon eternity. But more particularly,

I. Meditate upon the goodneſs of God: Both that which is common, and manifeſted to you in his works of creation and providence, and that which is ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing, diſcovered to you above others. That this is a ſuitable ſubject for the Sabbath, is clear to any that reads the xcii. pſalm with its title.

1ſt, Think upon his common goodneſs to us, repreſented in that great looking glaſs of the creation. He hath made the world a commodious habitation for us, arched it over with the beſpangled heavens, and floored it with the ſolid earth. He hath ſet up great lights in it for our accommodation: He hath placed a tabernacle for the ſun, at a due diſtance from the earth and the upper heavens, to enlighten the ſtars above and enliven the earth below. And, that we might neither be ſtarved with cold, nor burnt up with heat, he gives us the clouds as fans to ſcreen us from the ſcorching heat, and as ciſterns to water the parched ground: He gives us the wind to purify the air, the ſea to be a pond for fiſh, the valleys to be granaries for corn, the mountains to be a treaſure of minerals, the rivers to be as veins to carry refreſhment to every part of the earth. Let us admire both the goodneſs and wiſdom of God diſplayed in his wonderful works, Pſal. civ. 24. *O Lord how manifold are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all: The earth is full of thy riches.* The Pſalmiſt alſo ſaith, *The heavens declare the glory of God*, Pſal. xix. 1. and indeed we may look up and read it in theſe ſhining capital letters of *ſun*, *moon*, and *ſtars*. His *being* is legible in their *exiſtence*; his *wiſdom* in their *frame*; his *power* in their *motion*; his *goodneſs* in their *uſefulneſs*, and his *faithfulneſs* in their *continuance*. The book of *nature*, as well as the *ſcriptures*, ſhews much of God to us. " This book " (as one ſaith) conſiſts of three leaves, *heaven*, *earth*, " and *ſea*; the creatures therein are ſo many *letters* " whereby we may ſpell out the *attributes* of God: " Some whereof are *capital letters*, and more legible " than others. *Man* is a capital letter on earth, the " *ſun* in the heavens, and the *whale* in the ſea."

Again, we ought to meditate upon his goodneſs manifeſted in his *works of providence*. He hath curiouſly formed us in the womb, and carefully watched over us therein. He preſerved us ſeveral months in that dark cell, without air or breath. He brought us ſafe out of it, and preſently thereafter provided two bottles to ſuſtain us, and ever ſince hath ſuccoured us in diſtreſs, reſcued us from danger, ſupplied us in wants; yea, he hath fed us at his own table, and made us live upon his coſt, Acts xvii. 28. He hath given us all the creatures for our uſe and ſervice, yea, the moſt glorious of them; the angels are our miniſtering ſpirits, the lower heavens ſerve to give us breath, the middle heavens to give us light and heat, and the higheſt heavens afford us a dwelling place. The ſun ſhines, the fire burns, the wind blows, and the water flows; nay, all the creatures are at work, both day and night, and all for the ſervice of a poor worm of ſix foot long.

If a friend give us our bread for a month or two, we think ourſelves much bound to him; but how much more beholden are we to God, who keeps an open free table for us all the days of the year, and all the years of our life, and even to us when enemies to him? Behold, theſe who have their mouths opened wide againſt God, he mercifully puts bread in their mouths. How great is God's goodneſs to us! and, how great is our ingratitude to him! I know not which of them we ſhould moſt wonder at. God gives us peace, money, health and wealth; but, inſtead of ſerving him therewith, many offer them up in a ſacrifice to the devil and baſe luſts, according to Hoſ. ii. 8. God gives ſome folk ſtrength, and they waſte it among harlots; to others money, and they waſte it in drunkenneſs and prodigality; to others power, and they waſte it in oppreſſion; to others honour, and they abuſe it to pride and vain-glory. Many make uſe of the mercies of God as darts to ſhoot againſt the heavens; they pervert and miſapply them for diſhonouring God, wounding Chriſt, and grieving the Spirit; for debauching their bodies, damning their ſouls, and daſhing both tables of the law in pieces before God's face. And yet, even while they are doing ſo, God is guarding them by his providence, and feeding them by his bounty. *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works* to ſuch undeſerving and ill-deſerving creatures! We ought this day to *triumph in the works of his hands*, according to Pſal. xcii. 5. and cry, *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?*

2dly, Meditate this day upon God's ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing goodneſs to us beyond others, both with reſpect to ſoul and body: He hath not dealt ſo with any nation as with us. Both our national and perſonal mercies are ſingular, and ought this day to be remembered by us. Hath not God delivered many of you from death, when ſome dangerous accident, or violent ſickneſs, was threatening to break the ſlender twig of life, and to let you fall into the grave, and into hell both at once? Hath he not mercifully recovered you, and given you further ſpace and place for repentance.

Hath not God long preſerved this land from the famine, ſword and peſtilence, and ſuch deſtroying judgments as have been making havock in other nations about us, laying heaps upon heaps? He hath mercifully removed that dearth and ſcarcity wherewith we were almoſt conſumed ſome years ago, when the poor ſwooned in the ſtreets, and fainted in the high-ways for want of bread. God hath ſecured our lives, liberties and eſtates from rapine and violence, and lengthened out our peace and tranquility, when other nations have been turned into a ſeat of war and ſea of blood.

Conſider the goodneſs of God to us this day, that we are not among the Jews or Pagans on earth, that never heard the news of Chriſt; or among the damned in hell, who are beyond the reach of the offers of Chriſt. Let us alſo bleſs God, that we live not under the Old Teſtament times, but under the New; not under that darker and harſher diſpenſation of the covenant by Moſes, whoſe firſt miracle was the *turning of water into blood*; but under the clearer and ſweeter diſpenſation of the Meſſiah, whoſe firſt miracle was the *turning of water into wine, that chears the heart of man*; and hath mercifully freed us from the heavy yoke of Levitical ſacrifices and ceremonies.

Let us alſo this day thankfully remember God's goodneſs in delivering us from the yoke of Antichriſtian tyranny, popery, idolatry, and perſecution, and frequently blaſting the helliſh plots and contrivances of our enemies againſt the goſpel and proteſtant religion, and preſerving us from being invaded in our conſciences, or cut off from the wells of ſalvation, and barred from the ſprings of ordinances, and having our teachers murdered or driven into corners. Let us bleſs God, that we have the peaceable enjoyment of pure ordinances under the protection of proteſtant magiſtrates, and are allowed to ſerve God according to our conſciences, to read the bible in our own tongue, and examine the doctrines delivered to us by this rule; and that we are not under the tyranny of bloody papiſts, forced to hide or burn our bibles, to bow to ſtocks and ſtones; or baniſhed our native land.

Let us bleſs God that we live in a land of light, *a valley of viſion*, while others about us *ſit in darkneſs, and in the region and ſhadow of death;* and that he allows us ſuch rich goſpel feaſts, while others are viſited with *cleanneſs of teeth*, and *a famine of the word of God:* That every Sabbath day there is a free market of grace publicly proclaimed in our ears, whilſt others enjoy ſilent Sabbaths; yea, though we have ſlighted his goodneſs, and lothed the manna and honeycomb, his goodneſs is renewed and continued with us. *What ſhall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?*

II. Another ſubject of meditation upon the Lord's day is the work of man's redemption this day compleated by Chriſt's reſurrection.

This is the ſubject the angels are prying into; and ought not we much more, who are the perſons immediately concerned? Chriſt never teſtified ſuch love to them, he never forgave them one ſin, he never ſhed one drop of blood for them; and ſhall not we, for whom he poured out ſtreams of blood, and to whom he hath forgiven ten thouſand talents, be employed in prying into this myſtery?

1*ſt*, Meditate upon the *ſpring* of this work, *God's infinite free love*, that moved him to pity loſt mankind, and contrive a way to redeem him; when, in the mean time, he paſſed by a world of fallen angels, who were the elder brothers by creation, had a more natural claim to the inheritance, and might have been far more ſerviceable to their Maker than we: Yet behold, there is not one word of their redemption, no ſacrifice provided for them; there is not one devil ſpared, not one of all the thouſands of fallen angels recovered; God preſently took vengeance on them all: But O how did his bowels yearn, his heart pity and his eye ſpare poor fallen man in his miſerable condition! Indeed he drove Adam out of paradiſe, but it was a wonder he drove him not preſently out of the world into hell, where he had a little before plunged far more excellent creatures than Adam was. *Chriſt took not on him the nature of angels*, but he was content to clothe himſelf with the rags of human fleſh, that he might become our Saviour. O glorious incomprehenſible love!

2*dly*, Think upon the wiſe contrivance of our redemption. It would have eternally nonpluſſed the wiſdom of angels, to find out a method how to ſatisfy God's juſtice, and ſecure man's happineſs both at once, how to ſave the life of the law breaker, and yet maintain the honour of the Law maker: But here's a way to do both, here's a device for reconciling juſtice and mercy, and ſatisfying both their demands. Sin is ſeverely puniſhed, as juſtice required; and yet the ſinner is pardoned, as mercy pleaded. It would never have entered the thoughts of angels, that God would have parted with his Son and their Lord, to die a curſed death for vile worms; it would have been blaſphemy for any to have thought or ſpoken it. Tho' fallen man might have had the liberty to chuſe any way of redemption he pleaſed, he could never have propoſed this. Indeed, when he had been periſhing, he might have cried, *O Son of God, have mercy on us;* but who would have ſaid, *O Son of God, come make thyſelf a man, come die a curſed death, come ſuffer hell's pains for me?* This noble device bred only in the breaſt of the eternally wiſe God; for had he waited till men or angels had deviſed a way for our redemption, we had been miſerable to all eternity. But what do I ſpeak! the *wonders* of man's redemption can never be told: Here's a large ſubject for meditation and admiration, that can never be exhauſted by men or angels to all eternity. Let this work be the delight of our ſouls, eſpecially on the Lord's day. O believers, think much this day upon the love of our Redeemer; remember what he hath done and ſuffered for you; conſider how much he hath given and forgiven to you; view what he hath laid out and laid up for you; think what he hath performed and promiſed to you; and ſo you will not want matter of meditation.

III. Another ſubject of meditation on the Lord's day is our *ſtate*, and here we may take a view of man's *fourfold ſtate*. 1*ſt*, What he once was in a ſtate of *innocency*. 2*dly*, What he now is in a ſtate of *nature*. 3*dly*, What he may be in a ſtate of *grace*. 4*thly*, What he ſhall be in a ſtate of *glory*.

O ſinner, retire this day and think on your miſery. If thou be yet in a ſtate of nature, thou art without God and without Chriſt in the world, thou ſleepeſt and walkeſt in danger of hell; thou lieſt ſtill under the heavy load of unpardoned guilt, there is not one of all the numberleſs millions of your ſins forgiven, and they are heavier than ten thouſand milſtones hung about your neck; for every one of them hath the fearful curſes of the law hanging at them; and in the mean time thou lieſt on the very brink of the fiery furnace, like a man ſleeping on the top of the maſt in time of a ſtorm; there is but one ſtep betwixt thee and eternal death, nothing but a rotten threed of life keeps thee from dropping into everlaſting burnings. Thou knoweſt not, when thou riſeſt in the morning, but ere night thou mayſt make thy bed in hell; and when thou lieſt down, thou canſt not tell but thou ſhalt wake in the flames; all the men in the world, nay all the angels in heaven, cannot aſſure thee of the contrary. O what a doleful condition is this, to be always in a ſtate of damnation, not ſure to be one hour out of hell! A ſerious meditation upon your natural ſtate, O ſinner, might cauſe your heart of ſtone to tremble.

But haſt thou any happineſs while thou art on this ſide of hell? No ſurely, for your beſt worldly comforts and enjoyments are accurſed to you; *Thou art curſed in the city, curſed in the field, curſed in thy baſket and thy ſtore, curſed in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy ground*, Deut. xxviii. 15. Nay, every bit of bread thou eateſt, the curſe of God goes down with it. All your bleſſings turn into curſes, and your mercies into judgments; *your table is a ſnare to you,* *the word is the ſavour of death*, and the ſacraments are ſeals of condemnation to you. The beſt actions you perform are but an abomination to God; they bring the more guilt upon your head, and *treaſure up the more wrath againſt you*. Better you had periſhed in infancy than continue to live in a Chriſtleſs ſtate; for, the longer you live, ſtill the more miſerable you are: For every day, every night, every hour you live, you heat the furnace hotter by your new actions, which are all ſins, even the very beſt of them. O is this a ſtate to be continued in? Canſt thou ly down contentedly to ſleep another night in this condidtion? God forbid that thou live and die in this ſtate; for, if thou doſt, thou wilt riſe in the ſame condition at the laſt day. Nay, your ſtate then will be more dreadful than ever, for then thou wilt ſee above thee the judge frowning, beneath thee hell gaping, within thee conſcience gnawing, without thee the world burning; on the right hand your ſins accuſing, on the left hand the devils terrifying, the good angels keeping thee out of heaven, and the evil angels pulling thee down to hell. O poor Chriſtleſs ſoul, continue to think on this ſubject till your heart begin to melt, your eyes to weep, and your tongue to cry, *O what ſhall I do to be ſaved? O that I knew where to find Chriſt! O to be found in him! I would give ten thouſand worlds to be ſure of this; it will be terrible if death or a tribunal find me before I be found in him.* Is it not worth your while to ſpend ſome time upon this ſoul concerning ſubject? Hath not God given you reaſon for this very end, and will you not exerciſe it? can you think to be ſaved otherwiſe? Do you expect that God will carry you to heaven like a ſtone, or ſave you without or againſt thy will? Doth the world and your bodies deſerve to be remembred the whole day, or whole week or year throughout? and doth not God and your ſoul deſerve to be thought on one day in the week, or one hour of the day? Say not that you have no ſpare time for this work; for, if you will ſpare none of your own time for it, I beſeech you to ſpend God's time well this way. Is it not better to ſpend ſome part of the Sabbath in thinking upon your ſouls ſtate, than in thinking upon the world? Spiritual things alas! trouble you little on week-days, and why ſhould worldly things intrude upon God's day?

2dly, Think upon your happineſs, if you be in a ſtate of grace, and in Chriſt; you are delivered from ſin's guilt, from ſatan's fetters, from the law's curſes, from death's ſting, and hell's terror. Thou haſt now peace with God; juſtice itſelf is thy friend; all thy enjoyments are ſweetned by Chriſt's love; all your afflictions ſanctified by his blood. God himſelf is your God, your Father, your Friend, your Portion; yea, all things are yours.

IV. Death is a proper ſubject to be meditated upon on the Sabbath day; for in the xcii. Pſalm, wherein the exerciſes of the Sabbath are deſcribed, God calls and teaches us to conſider our latter end. Firſt, the end of the workers of iniquity, who, tho' *they ſpring up as graſs*, and *flouriſh* for a ſeaſon, *ſhall* yet in the end *be deſtroyed for ever*, v 7, 9. And again, the latter end of the godly, whoſe horn, tho' it be abaſed to the duſt for a while, yet in the end, *ſhall be exalted*. It is one principal work of miniſters this day, to be proclaimers of mortality, and remembrancers of death, according to, Iſa. xl. 6, 7, 8. So then it is our duty every Sabbath to have ſerious thoughts of death. Think with yourſelves, What if this be the laſt Sabbath that ever I will ſee on earth? I may be called to die, before I be called to hear another offer of Chriſt. Have I ſitten the goſpel ſummons this Sabbath, to come and embrace Chriſt, or to ſurrender my heart to him? What if I get a ſummons by death to come and appear before him before the next Sabbath? this I cannot ſit. Death is a bold meſſenger, he cannot be deforced; when he comes and takes a man by the throat, the proudeſt, ſtouteſt and ſtrongeſt in the world muſt go, whether willing or unwilling, all is one. There are many in the world, at the church, in health this Sabbath, who will be on a death bed or in eternity the next; and, why may not I be one of them?

Think ſeriouſly upon your latter end: Think what will be your caſe in a parting hour, where you will take up your lodging, whether in Abraham's boſom, or in the devil's arms? 'O what will be my thoughts, 'when I am taking my laſt look of huſband, wife, 'children and relations? What will be my cordial, 'when the world fails, when friends are weeping 'about my bed, when my ſenſes are loſing their office, my heart and eye ſtrings are breaking, and all 'turning dim and dark about me? O what if my 'ſleepy conſcience awake then, and my old buried 'ſins revive and fall on me, to tear me in pieces?' O what will Chriſtleſs ſinners do in that hour, when there is but one ſingle ſtep betwixt their departing ſouls and the [illegible] of devils? O it is fearful to die in your ſins, as it is threatened, John viii. 24. *If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins.* O better die in a dungeon, among toads and ſerpents, than die in your ſins; for theſe are ſerpents that never leave ſtinging, and will faſten ſo upon thee, as never to part with thee again; they will go to the grave with thee as thy companions, to a tribunal with thee as thy accuſers, and to hell with thee as thy tormentors. O it is terrible to die out of Chriſt, and without ſight of an intereſt in him; to make a leap in the dark over a bottomleſs gulf, not knowing where your feet may light; or to launch into the great ocean of eternity, without ſight of a landing place for your ſoul. O how will the poor ſoul ſhrink back into the body in ſuch a caſe, when it begins to awaken out of its dream, and look out into another world, ſaying, *How ſhall I venture forth, where I ſee nothing but darkneſs and horror, or a flaming ſword ready to meet me?*

Think upon the continual hazard you are in of death; its arrows are flying thick about you, and many are falling ſlain on every hand of you; and God knows but the next dart may hit thee: And what if thou be unprepared, and hell follow the pale horſe?

Think upon the ſottiſh ſtupidity of many, who, tho' they ſtand tottering day and night upon the brink both of the grave and hell, yet can ſpend whole weeks, yea months, without a ſerious thought of eternity: Yea, in the houſe of mourning, and in the ſight of the dead, they can think, talk, jeſt and laugh, and never have one grave thought or word about their latter end. Fooliſh ſinners are rightly compared to a company of blind men dancing about the mouth of a very deep pit, which they do not perceive, nor hear the *groans of thoſe who fall to the bottom of it*: Now and then one drops in, but ſtill the reſt continue the dance. This day a ſwearer dies, and tumbles into hell; the next a drunkard, the next a whoremonger: But ſtill their companions in ſin go on in their mad career, till they drop in too.

Think what a fearful ſurprize death is to many careleſs ſinners; it lights upon them like a falcon out of the air; they muſt flit, and they were not thinking on it; they have their lodging to ſeek, and they know not where. O it is ſad to be turned out of the clay tabernacle, and to be put to knock, and cry, *Lodging, lodging for God's ſake;* and yet get no other anſwer but a frown, or, *Depart from me, I know you not!* What cauſe have we to pray, 'Lord, Let us not have our work to do, when our day is done; our weapons to ſeek, when our enemy is at the gates; our oil to buy, when the market is ended, and the bridegroom come.'

Think alſo upon the happineſs of a dying believer, who can go forth half way and meet death, and bid it welcome, as a friend. Death ends his ſorrow, and begins his joy. It is an outlet to miſery, and an inlet to happineſs; it frees him of his greateſt grievance in the world, that is ſin. As ſin was the womb that brought forth death, ſo death is the tomb that buries ſin; thus God in his wiſdom, cauſes the daughter to deſtroy the mother; and hence it is, that death is put in the believer's inventory of goods, 1 Cor. iii. 22. *Death is theirs.* It is their Father's ſervant ſent to carry them home to their Father's houſe; a palace all beſpangled with light, where they ſhall ſigh no more, and, which is infinitely better, where they ſhall ſin no more for ever. They ſhall be troubled no more with an ill heart, nor a tempting devil; they ſhall complain no more of darkneſs, and diſtance from God; but ſhall ſpend a whole eternity in praiſes, doxologies, hoſannas, and hallelujahs to God and the Lamb. Think on the bleſſed change, O believer, that death will make in thy circumſtances ere long. It will tranſport thee from a cottage to a palace, from a wilderneſs to Canaan, from a ſtormy ſea to a ſafe ſhore, from a vile dunghill to a glorious city, a city whoſe walls and foundations are of precious ſtones, its ſtreets of gold, and its gates of pearl; whoſe light is the Lamb, and whoſe temple is God. Haſt thou not cauſe then to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who has provided this city for thee, and found out a way to it; who by his death has unſting'd death, and by his blood has paved a way through its dark valley for thee to walk in, and fear no ill? O believer, fear not tho' the trance be ſomewhat dark, the paſſage is ſafe, and the end is light; the day is ſhort betwixt thee and home, 'tis but wink and ſee God.

Laſtly, Think often how holily and ſpiritually you will wiſh you had ſpent this day, when you come to a death bed, and death and eternity begin to ſtare you cloſly in the face. You will then begin to wiſh, O that I had ſpent more of my time, and eſpecially of the Lord's day in meditation and prayer! O if God would try me again, how ſerious and diligent would I be! Conſider, on the other hand, what a pleaſant death-bed the righteous will have, who have ſpent the Sabbath religiouſly! what ſatiſfaction they will have in the review thereof! and what comfort in the proſpect of an everlaſting Sabbath above, to which they are haſtening! They will be rejoicing when others about them are weeping; they will be ſmiling when their eye ſtrings are breaking, and inward ſtrength failing. They will be longing to be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all. It was a choice ſaying of one near death, 'My head is in heaven, my heart is in heaven, it is but one ſtep more and I ſhall be all in heaven.' And muſt not the latter end of ſuch be peaceable and pleaſant? Many doubtleſs with Balaam, would wiſh to die their death, however ill they like their life; many like that young man, who ſaid to his looſe companion (after they had viſited holy Ambroſe on his death bed, and ſaw how cheerfully he was triumphing over approaching death) *O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambroſe!* But it is vain to think to dine with ſatan and luſts in this world, and hereafter to ſup with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob *in the kingdom of heaven; for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap,* Gal. vi. 7.

V. Another ſubject of meditation on the Sabbath-day, is the *everlaſting reſt and employment in heaven.* You are called this day to have frequent thoughts of it, ſince the Sabbath is an emblem thereof, and ſerves to keep us in mind of it. Take care then, O believer, to ſpend every Sabbath in the view of heaven, and live every Sabbath as it were to be your laſt, and behave this day as one that believes you may be in heaven before the next Lord's day celebrating an eternal Sabbath.

Let your worſhip this day below put you in mind of that more perfect worſhip above, where you ſhall ſee him whom you worſhip, and enjoy immediate communion with him. O the difference betwixt that worſhip there, and ours here, is great! There is no wearineſs there in beholding God, no wanderings nor excurſions of the heart from God, no inclinations there to drouſineſs or ſleep in worſhip, no dull or low conceptions of God, no deadneſs of heart or frame; their harps are never out of tune, their hearts are always up, and fit for the high praiſes of God. There is no note lower there than *Glory to God in the higheſt;* every ſaint ſings his hallelujahs on the highſt key, and all of them join harmoniouſly in the work of praiſing God with one heart and ſoul. Are congregational aſſemblies of ſaints ſo pleaſant on earth, eſpecially when they jointly and melodiouſly ſing God's praiſe? O what will it be then when they all meet above in that great *general aſſembly of the church of the firſt born,* together with the *innumerable company of angels,* and there with one heart and voice ſing God's praiſes? How raviſhing will it be, to hear that eternal muſic of the bride-chamber, that ſweet melody of the church triumphant, where there is no jarring ſtring, no diſpleaſing ſound, no diſcord between heart and tongue, no willows there to hang their harps upon, no bad news to be heard, no ſad ſight to be ſeen, no evil to be felt or fear'd to all eternity. Poor diſcouraged believers, are ye now troubled with ill hearts and vain thoughts? Are ye plagued with wandering and wearying hearts in duty? Theſe complaints ere long ſhall be taken out of your mouths; read Eph. v. 27. the church above *hath neither ſpot nor wrinkle.* Once the glorified ſaints faces were as black and wrinkled as yours, but now they have none: Once their hearts were as bad as yours, but now they are as fixed *pillars in the temple of God, they go no more out.*

Take a view this day by faith of the glorious company above, behold Chriſt upon his white throne, Paul with his crown of righteouſneſs, and all the faithful ones in Abraham's boſom: How glorioully do they ſhine in the kingdom of their Father! The ſun is a very glorious creature, but it would be uſeleſs there, it would not be ſeen for the brightneſs of the Lamb; nay, every ſaint ſhall be as glorious as that ſun. Who can tell the happineſs of the inhabitants of that place, where every head wears a royal crown, every hand a palm of victory, every eye o'erflows with joy, and every tongue with ſongs of praiſe? O believer, think with yourſelf, what a difference there is betwixt your ſtate and theirs! “ Oh, I am ſighing, they are ſinging; I am ſinning, “ they are ſerving God; I am groaning out my com“ plaints, they are trumpeting forth God's praiſe; I “ am in darkneſs, and cannot ſee God; they dwell in “ light, and ſee him face to face. O my Lord, muſt “ I ſtay behind, when they are going? Muſt I ly “ groaning and ſighing here, while they are triumph“ ing above, and dividing the ſpoil? My Lord is gone “ and left the earth, and entered into his glory; my “ brethren and friends are gone to their bleſſed reſt, “ and muſt I wander in the wilderneſs, abſent from “ home, far diſtant from my Father and my God? “ Shall I be ſatisfied in this ſtate? No, I will look after “ them with a longing eye, I'll ly knocking at the gate “ till God open to let me in; I'll ſtill pant, breathe, “ and cry, O Lord, how long! How is my pilgramage “ prolonged! How am I detain'd in this valley of tears, “ wandering in the dark, and can ſcarce get any ſight “ of Canaan! When ſhall the days of my baniſhment “ be fininiſhed, that I may get home to my country “ and friends above? O when ſhall I ſit at the foun“ tain head, and drink plentifully of the living ſtreams “ that make glad the city of God?”

O believer, rejoice in the forethoughts of that day, when thou ſhalt meet with thy Father and thy brethren, and when thou ſhalt ſee thy elder Brother on the throne ready to paſs ſentence in thy favours. O how ſweet will it be, when he is frowning and thundering againſt the wicked, to ſee him turn and ſmile on thee as thy Redeemer! O what love will be in his looks! what melody will that ſentence ſound in thy ears, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father!* &c. How raviſhing a ſurpriſe, O believers, will it be to meet with your godly acquaintances, with whom ye prayed, praiſed, and converſed here! O then, may ye rejoice together and ſay, “ This voice of joy we now hear, is not like “ our old groans and complaints, nor like the oaths, “ curſes and reproaches our ears were grated with on “ earth. What is become of our hard hearts, our “ worldly unbelieving hearts? Where are all our “ luſts, corruptions, tentations and burdens now? “ What is become of a body of death, indwelling “ ſin that lay ſo long on us as a dead weight? What “ is become of the church's enemies we often com“ plained of?” O! theſe are all gone, they ſhall trouble you no more; you ſhall triumph over them, as Iſrael did on the other ſide of the Red-ſea, when they ſaw the Egyptians drowned and lying dead upon the ſhore: Theſe Egyptians, O believer, whom thou once ſaweſt to thy great vexation and trouble, *thou ſhalt ſee then again no more.*

I might mention many other ſubjects of meditation proper for the Sabbath; ſuch as the evil of ſin, the vanity of the world, the worth of the ſoul, the ſufferings of Chriſt, the laſt judgment, and many others, which the ſermons you hear that day will bring to your remembrance: But, fearing that I have been too tedious already upon this head, I muſt paſs them, and proceed to another private duty neceſſary on the Lord's day, which is,

IV. *Self-examination.*

This duty is near of kin to the former, it being a ſort of reflexive meditation, the mind turns inward and communes with itſelf, according to Pſal. iv. 4. It is abſolutely neceſſary that we ſhould take ſome time to commune with ourſelves, and aſk what we are, what we have been, and what we have done, Jer. viii. 6. And is not the Sabbath a fit time for this duty, when we retire from the noiſe of the world, and are not diſturbed with ſecular affairs? This is a moſt important duty, and nearly concerns our eternal well-being; but yet it is a duty very much neglected. Many have lived fifty or ſixty years in the world, that never ſpent one hour in communing with their own hearts: There are many going out of the world, who never yet began to enquire why they came into it, and never yet aſked the queſtion at their ſouls, Are you to flit hence, or live here for ever? Why came you hither, and where are you to lodge when you go hence? Many live in a crowd of worldly buſineſs, are hurried from one thing to another, leap out of their beds to the world in the morning, and from the world to their beds again at night, and ſo never find one minute on the week days to take their ſoul aſide; and for the Sabbath, tho' they have time for it, yet ſuch is their averſion to the work, they ſhift it all they can, and avoid meeting with themſelves; they rather converſe with any in the world, than with their own hearts. It is againſt ſelf-love and carnal eaſe for a man to turn his own accuſer and judge: Therefore many would rather drudge and toil their bodies whole days and weeks at the foreſt labour, ere they ſpent one quarter of an hour at this exerciſe; and ſo they live their whole lives ſtrangers to themſelves. We would think it ſtrange to hear of two men that converſed every day for fifty or ſixty years ſpace, and yet all this while did not know one another; and yet this is the caſe betwixt many and their ſouls; for as long as they have lived together, they are utterly unacquainted, they never turn inward to converſe with themſelves, they have no ſerious thoughts about their own ſtate or condition. It is ſaid of the rich man in the parable, Luke xvi. that *in hell he lift up his eyes*, as if he had never conſidered nor bethought himſelf till that time; and indeed it is the want of retired conſideration, and people's ſerious bethinking of themſelves, that is the ruin of many thouſands. O then, reſolve in God's ſtrength, that, in ſpite of the devil and your own corruption, you and your ſouls ſhall have a meeting, and live no longer aſſunder; that ye will imitate David, Pſal. cxix. 59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.* Seeing then you have free time for this duty on the Lord's day, take your ſouls aſide, and enquire into their ſtate; ſay, “ O my “ ſoul, where art thou? Art thou under a covenant of “ works, or a covenant of grace? Doſt thou belong to Chriſt's family or the devil's? Art thou in the narrow or broad way? Suppoſe I ſhould die this night, (for God knows if ever I ſhall ſee the morrow's light) what hope will I have in a dying hour? Where will death land me? Whether with God in heaven, or with devils in hell? Would Chriſt ſmile on me in the dark valley, or be my Advocate at God's bar? Is there any ſaving change yet wrought on my heart and life by a work of converſion? God forbid I undergo my great and final change till this happy change be wrought. Can I ſay, I am not the man that once I was; *once I was blind, but now ſee?*" Study and enquire into the marks of the converted and unconverted, with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs and anxiety of ſoul, and ſee which of them you can apply to yourſelf; cry, that God may open a window in your breaſt, to let you ſee into your own heart, and ſoul's ſtate; and, whatever you be deceived in, beg it of him, that he may not ſuffer you to be deceived in this momentous point, where your ſoul and your all is at the ſtake. And, if you find yourſelf in a bad ſtate, *give no reſt to your eyes, nor ſlumber to your eyelids*, till in God's ſtrength you reſolve on a thorow change.

Laſtly, It is incumbent on every private Chriſtian on the Lord's day, to practiſe the works of charity and mercy, both to the ſouls and bodies of men. Study to promote the edification of others by good counſels, inſtructions, admonitions and reproofs. Comfort the afflicted, ſupply thoſe that are in ſtraits, viſit the ſick and thoſe that are in miſery. Theſe are proper duties on the Sabbath, and God is highly pleaſed with them, James i. 27. If we practiſe theſe duties conſcientiouſly, we may both do good and get good; we may both give direction and comfort to the diſtreſſed, and receive inſtruction and comfort to ourſelves: Tho' we may not enquire at the dead, yet we may learn many wholeſome leſſons from the dying. And would to God that both the perſons viſiting and viſited were more ſpiritual in their converſe than ordinarily they are! for then this duty would be found very edifying and profitable. But if, when we viſit the ſick this day, we ſpend the time in worldly diſcourſe, and not for the ſpiritual advantage of the ſick, and others preſent, we profane the Sabbath, inſtead of ſanctifying it.

Do we ſee ſome oppreſſed by continual ſlumbering and ſleeping, when death is ſuppoſed to be near, ſo that they cannot think on their everlaſting ſtate? let this teach us to remember our latter end, and awake our ſouls to their work, while we are in health.

Do we ſee others troubled with ravings? let it teach us to employ our reaſon for our ſouls advantage while we have the uſe of it.

Do we ſee ſome ſadly diſcompoſed with extreme pains and agonies? let it mind us to diſpatch our work while health and eaſe remain with us.

Do we obſerve their ſight failing, tongue faltering, or hearing growing worſe? O let this teach us to *make a covenant with our eyes*, and *turn* them *away from beholding vanity*; to uſe our tongues for God's glory, and beware of abuſing them now, while we have the uſe of them; and to employ our ears for hearing ſpiritual inſtructions, while they are in caſe for it.

DIRECTION. III.

Concerning the ſpecial order, method and manner, wherein the duties of the Sabbath are to be performed.

THE Lord requires us, not only to take heed to the matter of our duties, but alſo to the manner of them; not only to do what is good, but to do it well. As we moſt ſeek God *in due ordinances*, ſo we muſt ſeek him *in a due order*, 1 Chron. xv. 13. Very much depends upon the circumſtances of our actions, therefore we muſt look narrowly to them.

That we may take a view of the ſanctification of the Sabbath complexly, and the order and circumſtances of the duties therein required; there are three things to be conſidered;

1. What is requiſite in order to prepare for the Sabbath, before it come.
2. What is requiſite in performing the duties of the Sabbath when it is come.
3. What is requiſite at the end of the Sabbath, or when the work thereof is over.

I. *Concerning our preparation for the Sabbath.*

AS to the firſt, that it is needful to prepare for the Sabbath, cannot be denied, if we conſider the word *remember* prefixed to the commandment, *Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.* We muſt remember it before it come, ſo as to provide for it. Moſes calls the people, Exod. xvi. 23. to mind that *to morrow is the reſt of the holy Sabbath*.

Again, if we conſider the nature of the Sabbath-work, and our unfitneſs for it, preparation will be found very needful. We are called this day to make ſolemn and near approaches to that God who is a glorious Spirit, and to hold communion with him who is infinitely holy; and is it not very neceſſary that we who are naturally carnal, and much involved in worldly buſineſs thro' the week, ſhould endeavour to abſtract our thoughts from earthly things, that we may draw nigh to ſo great a God upon this holy day? For holy performances God requires us to make holy preparations; and therefore David ſaith, Pſal. xxvi. 6. *I will waſh mine hands in innocency, ſo ſhall I compaſs thine altar, O Lord.* The mariner that intendeth a voyage, he not only provides his tackling, but he is careful before he ſail, to put his ſhip off from the land, that he may catch the firſt fair wind. In like manner, O Chriſtian, if thou wouldſt lanch heavenwards upon a Lords day, be concerned to get the veſſel of thy heart put off from the earth on the evening before.

Wert thou a perſon of great quality and eſtate, and the king ſhould ſend thee word that he would dine with thee to-morrow, thou wouldſt make preparation for his entertainment the day before, by cleanſing the houſe, and putting all things in order, ſuitable to the dignity of ſo great a prince. Now, when King JESUS gives thee notice before hand, that on ſuch a day he is to ſup with thee, wilt thou not teſtify thy reſpect to ſo great a potentate, by making preparation for him? When Chriſt prepares a table for thee in the goſpel, and furniſhes it with all the dainties of heaven, pardon, peace, love, grace, and eternal life; ſhouldſt thou not empty thy ſtomach, cleanſe thy heart, adorn thy ſoul, and make ready to feaſt with thy Redeemer? At this goſpel table others ſit and feed, their ſouls are *filled with marrow and fatneſs, and their mouths praiſe the Lord with joyful lips;* but, alas! many have no ſtomach, they can eat little, and ſavour nothing. Their ſtomachs are foul, their hearts unclean, the world fills their thoughts; they taſte no goodneſs in hearing, in prayer, praiſes or any duty of God's worſhip: Why? They are at no pains before hand to empty their minds of the world, and prepare for this heavenly fare.

Reader, were I to counſel thee how to improve a market day, ſo as thou mightſt gain much wealth and treaſure, I doubt not but thou wouldſt hearken to me: And wilt thou not regard me, when I am to adviſe thee how to ſpend the Lord's day, the market day for thy ſoul, ſo as thou mayſt get the true treaſure, even durable riches and righteouſneſs? Lay aſide worldly cares, remember, and prepare for this market day, before it come, and beg ſkill from God how to improve it aright to the enriching of thy ſoul. Anciently there were laws obliging people to lay aſide their work at ſuch a particular hour on Saturday's afternoon, that they might remember and prepare for the Sabbath: Likewiſe it was a cuſtom in ſome places to have public divine exerciſe and worſhip on the Saturday's evening; ſo that, at the ringing of a bell for it, people gave over their work, and repaired to the church to worſhip God, and hear ſomething ſuitable and preparatory to the Sabbath. I cannot but commend this practice, as a good way to conclude and ſhut up all the labours and cares of the week, and publicly to give God thanks for proſpering the works of our hands, and alſo to confeſs and mourn for the carnality of our hearts, and our little minding of Chriſt and heaven in our weekly buſineſs, and our manifold ſhort comings in our duties both to God and man, and our forgetting and not practiſing thro' the week the ſermons we heard the preceding Sabbath: Likewiſe it is a good way to take off our hearts from the world, and to compoſe and ſpiritualize the thoughts for the work of the approaching Sabbath; and alſo to pray and wreſtle together for a bleſſing on the ſame, and for ſpecial aſſiſtance to miniſters and people in the duties of the day, that the enſuing Sabbath may be one of the beſt Sabbaths we ever had, and that it may be one of the days of heaven to our ſouls.

But more particularly, the preparation needful for the Sabbath conſiſts in thoſe things;

1ſt, In your diſpatching and ordering your labour and buſineſs through the week with ſuch prudence and foreſight that it may nowiſe hinder or diſturb you on the Sabbath day.

2dly, In leaving off your work timeouſly the night before, and going ſeaſonably to reſt, that both your ſervants and you may be in caſe to riſe early on Sabbath morning, and not to be drowſy or ſleepy thro' the day. It is a great incroachment upon the Sabbath that ſome are guilty of, they ſit up and work later on Saturday's night than any other night of the week, they ly longer on Sabbath morning than any other day, they go ſooner to bed on Sabbath night than any other night, and they riſe ſooner on Monday morning than any other day of the week. Now, what is this but a grudging God his due time, a wearying of his day, and making it as ſhort as you can, and ſeeking to win it, if poſſible, from off the Saturday's night and Monday's morning?

Under the law, the latter part of the day, preceding the Sabbath, was called *the day of preparation for the Sabbath,* Luke xxiii. 54. imitating that it is our duty to prepare for the Sabbath before it come, and to do it upon the day preceding. Likewiſe, we find that Nehemiah ordered the gates of Jeruſalem to be ſhut when it began to be dark before the Sabbath, Neh. xiii. 19. thereby teaching us timeouſly to give over our trafficking and worldly buſineſs on the evening before the Lord's day, and not to follow our buſineſs too late, leſt our thought be too much embaraſſed with ſecular affairs, and we thereby indiſpoſed for the religious duties of the enſuing holy day.

3dly, It would be a good way to prepare for the Lord's day, ſometimes to take your children and ſervants on the Saturday's night, when you call them together for family-worſhip, and inſtruct them concerning the end and inſtitution of the Lord's day which is approaching, and the nature of the ſervice that is requiſite upon it. The Lord commends Abraham, for 'commanding his houſhold and children after him to 'keep the way of the Lord,' Gen. xviii. 19. And he frequently directs the Iſraelites to inſtruct their children concerning the meaning of their rites and obſervations; and particularly concerning the paſſover, he ſaith, Exod. xii. 26. 27. *And it ſhall come to paſs, when your children ſhall ſay unto you, What mean you by this ſervice? that ye ſhall ſay, It is the ſacrifice of the Lord's paſſover, who paſſed over the houſes of the children of Iſrael in Egypt, when he ſmote the Egyptians, &c.* So in like manner, concerning the obſervation of the Lord's day, you ſhould tell your families, "The day of ſacred reſt, "now approaching, is a memorial of God's wonderful love to us, that when we were loſt and undone "by ſin, curſed by the divine law, and excluded out "of God's reſt, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt undertook a "great work for us to make up our peace, become our "ſurety, and bear the curſe and wrath due to us; and "when he had ſo done, and finiſhed his work of redemption, he, on the firſt day of the week, entered "into his reſt by his reſurrection, and thereby made "known to us that we ſhould keep this day as a day "of holy reſt to him, in remembrance of his glorious "work, and as a pledge of our celebrating an everlaſting Sabbath with him above, in admiring his love, "and ſinging his praiſe: And therefore let us make "ſuitable preparation for this ſolemn day, and the duties of it." Alas! the omiſſion of ſuch inſtructions as theſe to young perſons, doth cauſe the obſervation of this day, with many, to be built only on cuſtom and example; and hence follows the great neglect of Sabbath ſanctification, which is ſo common among us.

4thly, If you would prepare for the Sabbath, call off your thoughts timeouſly on Saturday's night, from worldly cares and buſineſs, that you may think on the great work of the approaching day; and labour to put yourſelves in as ſolemn and as ſerious a frame, as if you were to die and ſtep into eternity, and clear counts at God's tribunal, or as if you were viſibly to tryſt and meet with God, and ſolemnly treat with him concerning your ſalvation.

As godly Nehemiah took care to ſhut the gates of Jeruſalem on the evening before the Sabbath, that no burdens might be carried in on the Sabbath day; ſo ſecure you the gates of your hearts on the Saturday's evening, that no worldly thing may enter to diſturb you in the performance of the great and ſolemn duties of the Sabbath.

5thly, Look back on the by paſt week and examine your actions therein as particularly as you can, and repent for all the ſins thereof, whether omiſſion or commiſſion, and flee to the blood of Chriſt to be cleanſed from the guilt and filth of them, that ſo you may be prepared to appear before a holy God, who is *of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity.* O ſeek to get all quarrels through the week removed, that you may have a reconciled God to meet with upon the Sabbath.

6thly, Study to have a deep ſenſe of your wants upon your ſpirits, that you may get ſuitable ſupplies for them upon the Sabbath. If you were going to a great market next day, you would be thinking the night before what you wanted or needed thereat: The Sabbath is the great market day for your ſouls, when you may hear Chriſt crying, as Rev. iii. 18. *I counſel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayſt be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayſt be clothed,* &c.

7thly, Think upon the great deſign of the Sabbath, the commemoration of Chriſt's redeeming love; and entertain ſerious and thankful thoughts of the goodneſs of God manifeſted in the glorious work of redemption; and with godly Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 14. bleſs God for giving you the Sabbath, ſince it is ſuch a pleaſant and profitable day for the ſoul.

8thly, Beg earneſtly for God's help to ſanctify the Sabbath, and that God may put you in a ſpiritual frame for the work thereof, and that you may have grace to leave all your worldly cares *at the bottom of the hill, while you go up into the mount to worſhip God, and return again to them.* Beg that the ſins of the by gone week, and the miſimprovement of former Sabbaths, may not hinder God's preſence upon the enſuing Sabbath. Pray that miniſters may be directed to a ſuitable word for your ſouls caſe, that your hearts may be prepared, your enemies reſtrained, and God's ordinances bleſſed, ſo that it may be a good day, *a day in God's courts,* are *better than a thouſand elſewhere.*

And then having ſo ordered and diſpoſed matters, lay yourſelves down to ſleep in Chriſt's arms, and under his protection, leaving your hearts in heaven, that when you awake next morning, you may be ſtill with God. Study to ſleep, as well as *eat and drink, to the glory of God.* Go to bed with this deſign, that your bodies may be refreſhed, and fitted to ſerve your ſouls in the ſervice of God upon the enſuing day.

II. *Concerning the duties of the Sabbath.*

AS to the ſecond thing propoſed, What things are requiſite in doing the work of the Sabbath, when it is come? This is a large ſubject; I ſhall reduce all I have to ſay upon it to three heads;

1ſt What is neceſſary before the public worſhip.
2dly, What is neceſſary in time of public worſhip.
3dly, What is to be done after the public worſhip is over.

As to the *firſt*, take theſe directions;

I. When you awake on Sabbath morning, rejoice at the approach of this bleſſed day: As the birds chirp and ſing at the dawning of the morning's light, ſo let believers account the light of this day ſweet, as being a day of ſignal mercies, a day of communion with God, a day wherein the Spirit's dews fall upon the ſoul. As *Abraham rejoiced to ſee Chriſt's day*, John viii. 56. ſo ought you this morning, ſaying with the pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxviii. 24. *This is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

II. Let your ſouls be breathing forth holy meditations and ejaculations upon your very firſt awaking: Lift up your hearts in thankſgiving to God for that comfortable reſt and ſleep he hath vouchſafed to you the night paſt: for *it is he that giveth his beloved ſleep*; and who renews his mercies to us every morning. Likewiſe give up and dedicate yourſelves wholly to God and his ſervice this day: And, betwixt your walking and riſing, you may have ſuch meditations as theſe: ———" O if I could ſay this morning with Iſaiah, " chap. xxvi. 9. *With my ſoul have I deſired thee in the " night, and with my ſpirit within me will I ſeek thee " early!*——Let me this morning awake early from " ſin to righteouſneſs, 1 Cor. xv. 34. or that in Rom. " xiii. 11, 12. *It is high time to awake out of ſleep. The " night is far ſpent, the day is at hand; let me caſt off " the works of darkneſs, and put on the armour of light.*" Or, think on your awaking out of the ſleep of death, and riſing out of the grave at the ſound of the laſt trumpet, what a ſolemn wakening that will be: Or think of God's goodneſs to thee, that thou awakeſt in life, health and ſafety this morning; ſay, " What " a mercy is it, that God has kept my houſe from " firing, and falling on my head! that he has chained " up ſatan my enemy, that he could neither hurt nor " fright me in a viſible manner! Many have lien down " this night without ſleep, and been full of toſſings to " the dawning of the day; but, bleſſed be God, I " have laid me down in peace, I have ſlept and waked " again, and my ſleep hath been refreſhing. How " would I value this mercy, if I were in ſickneſs, and " could not get ſleep!———Many have lien down " and ſlept, but never waked again in this world; " ſad, if it be in the flames of hell! But, O what ſhall " I render to the Lord, that I wake again in the land " of prayer, and of hope; and upon a Lord's day " morning, wherein I hope to hear again the joyful " ſound, and ſee his power and glory in the ſanctuary?"

If it is a ſummer morning, when the ſun may be up and ſhining when thou awakeſt, then think, " Chriſt " the light of the world roſe early this morning from " the dark grave, wherein he lay buried for my ſake. " The Sun of righteouſneſs was up this day before the " natural ſun."—O think, " This is the day wherein God ſaid, *Let there be light, and it was ſo.* Is " the light ſo ſweet, and is it ſo pleaſant a thing for " the eyes to behold the ſun? O how much more to " ſee Chriſt the bright Morning-ſtar this day by the " eye of faith, to ſee the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhining " in the firmament of goſpel-ordinances! Let me riſe " and prepare for this ſight; O that my eyes may be " cleared, and the mote taken out of the eye of faith, " that I may this day ſee him, in compariſon of whom " the ſun is but a dark clod of earth! O my ſoul, riſe " from the earth this day, get the moon under thy " feet, and clothe thyſelf with the Sun; draw nigh " to God in Chriſt, and ſet thy affections on things “above; thou art capable of communion with God, do not debaſe thyſelf in raking always in the dunghill of this world, in licking the duſt with the ſerpent, or feeding on huſks with the ſwine, as if thou hadſt no higher end to ſerve than the world. Why wilt thou ly among the pots, and wallow in the puddle, when cryſtal ſtreams are ſo near?”

Or think, “How happy are the angels, who are exempted from the neceſſity of ſleep! They never reſt, nor weary of God's work, but *praiſe him day and night*. Behold, the ſun never wearies to ſerve his Creator: How many thouſand miles has the ſun travelled ſince the laſt night I went to reſt, that he might bring the light of a new Lord's day to me a poor undeſerving creature! And, ſhall not I riſe with chearfulneſs to celebrate this day, and ſerve my God and Saviour upon it? It is a mercy the natural ſun is riſen; but a far greater that the *Sun of righteouſneſs* is up, and hath aſcended to his meridian, that he may the better diffuſe the influences of light and heat upon poor cold and blind ſouls, ſuch as I am: I will get up this day, and ly in his way as he paſſeth by, and cry with the blind man, Son of David, have mercy upon me.”

Laſtly, The morning ſun may mind thee of the danger of ſecure Chriſtleſs ſouls. The ſun ſhone bright on Sodom that morning it was deſtroyed: Little did they think that fair morning, that the clouds would gather on a ſudden, and drop fire on their heads; neither knoweſt thou, O Chriſtleſs ſinner, what a ſtorm of wrath may fall on thee before night: Wherefore flee preſently out of the Sodom of a natural ſtate, to the Zoar of Chriſt's righteouſneſs.

III. Riſe full as early this day as on other days, and be as ſoon at God's work this day as you are at your own work on other days: God is the beſt Maſter, his work the ſweeteſt, and his wages the greateſt. Yet alas! there are many who ly long on the morning of the Lord's day, they are loth to riſe and fall to God's work; when they riſe, they have no time for ſecret and family duties before the public worſhip: So that they are either ſlightly performed, or wholly neglected. O fooliſh ſinner! doſt thou think thy worldly buſineſs more worthy of thy early riſing, than thy ſpiritual employment? Or, wilt thou ſhew greater regard to thy worthleſs body, than to thy gracious God, and thy precious ſoul? You owe thanks to God, that you have had the bypaſt week for your own affairs, and that now you have the proſpect of another for them, and that God lets you ſee the firſt day of it; but O conſider, that your Creator and Redeemer puts in for ſome time with you: All your time is not your own, neither is it in your own hands? God alone is the Author and of Diſpoſer it. Well then, now is the time, this is the day that he requires: O let him have it wholly, ſeeing he gives you ſix times as much for yourſelves. And grudge him not the morning of his own day.——Remember that promiſe, Prov. viii. 17. *They that ſeek me early ſhall find me*. In the morning the ſpirits are moſt freſh and lively, and fitteſt for contemplations aad prayer. We are told, Exod. xvi. 13. that in the morning the dew and manna fell: Wouldſt thou have the dew of a bleſſing to fall on thy ſoul, and to make thee as a watered garden? then riſe early to wait for it. This was the practice of the ſaints; Job roſe early and offered his ſacrifices, Job i. 5. David prevented the dawning of the morning with his prayers, Pſal. cxix. 147. Chriſt roſe early this day before the ſun. And for what end did he riſe? Even to juſtify and ſave his people. O believers, did your Saviour riſe early this morning to juſtify you, and will you not riſe early this day to glory him? This is the great deſign of the Sabbath. And the xcii. pſalm, which is intituled, *A ſong for the Sabbath day*, ſaith, *It is good to ſhew forth God's loving kindneſs in the morning*. Timeouſneſs at God's work on this day, or diligence in it, will not prove prejudicial to health; for, ſince God hath pronounced a ſpecial bleſſing upon the Sabbath, you have ground to expect that leſs ſleep, food and refreſhment, than at other times, will be bleſſed for your ſupport in his work, and that you ſhall live in the doing thereof.

IV. When you are up, haſten to put on your clothes, and ſpend as little time this day in dreſſing yourſelf as poſſible, that you may have time for ſecret duties, and retired converſe with God. But, ſince the body muſt be clothed this day, let your thoughts be well employed in the time you are doing it: Think on ſin, that was the cauſe of your ſoul's nakedneſs, and of your body's need of apparel. Remember from whom you have your clothes, to cover, keep warm and adorn your bodies, even from God, it is *his wool and his flax*; therefore give thanks to him for your raiment, as well as your food. And tho' your clothes be not ſo fine as you would wiſh, yet mind, that *theſe of whom the world was not worthy, wandered about in ſheeps ſkins and goats ſkins*: And, if you be not ſo outwardly ſplendid as others, ſeek that decking which will *make you all glorious within*. When others are following vain faſhions, ſeek ye to be *covered with the robes of Chriſt's righteouſneſs*. And, ſince you are this day to make a ſolemn appearance before God your heavenly Father, you muſt be ſure, like Jacob, to come in the garments of your elder Brother, otherwiſe you cannot expect your Father's bleſſing. Put no confidence in your own righteouſneſs; for it is no better than rags, or a garment full of holes, the leaſt whereof is ſufficient to let in the curſe of God upon you Therefore *put on the Lord Jeſus*, if you would this day appear before God, and be accepted of him. Take care alſo, that your bodies this day be gravely and decently apparelled, and beware of pride and vanity this way, if ye would have God to own you; the adorning which he recommends, is not that *of plaiting the hair, wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which it in the ſight of God of great price*, 1 Pet. iii. 3. 4. Moſt people on the Sabbath are concerned to adorn their bodies with their beſt cloathes; but, alas! who among you is careful to attire his ſoul as he ought on this day, when he is going to meet the bleſſed Redeemer of ſouls, the King of glory?

Mind your ſouls chiefly this day, and take care, whatever you be doing about your bodies, that your hearts be employed in ſpiritual meditations. Do you comb your head? you may think how numerous your ſins are; they are *more than the hairs of your head*, ſo that *none can reckon them*, Pſal. xl. 12. And to be ſure, if you cannot reckon them, you are far leſs able to reckon for them. Do you waſh your hands? think on the neceſſity of *waſhing your hands in innocency, that ſo ye may compaſs the altar of God*: For theſe that would *aſcend the hill of God, and ſtand in his holy place, muſt have clean hands and pure hearts.* Holineſs both in heart and life is abſolutely needful, in order to our enjoying communion with God in ordinances.

V. As ſoon as poſſibly you can, retire this morning for the duties of *ſecret prayer, praiſe, reading the word, meditation,* and *ſelf-examination.* Much of the Sabbath and eſpecially the morning of it, ſhould be ſpent in praiſing and thankſgiving, upon account of God's goodneſs both common and ſpecial, manifeſted in the works of creation and redemption. It is a moſt neceſſary and proper duty, to *ſhew forth God's loving-kindneſs on the Sabbath morning,* Pſal. xcii. 2. Thankſgiving is the great end of the day, and of the mercies of it; *the redeemed of the Lord* ought this day to ſing, *His mercy endureth for ever,* Pſal. cvii. 2. for God ſent his Son to redeem us for this very end, that he might have from us *the praiſe of the glory of his grace,* Eph. i. 6. 12. 14. And if you deny him praiſe, you do what you can to diſappoint him of the deſign of this wonderful work: Many ſerious ſouls think the Sabbath ſhould be ſpent only in prayer, mourning, mortification, *&c.* and almoſt wholly neglect the duty of praiſe, which ought to be the principal, and wherewith God is beſt pleaſed. Remember, that praiſe is not only the end of the day, but the end of your lives; yea, the deſign of all God's works: God made man the tongue of the creation, to trumpet forth aloud what the reſt of the creation do but ſilently whiſper.

Directions in performing the foreſaid duties.

BEfore I proceed further, I ſhall give ſome ſpecial *advices* concerning the duties of *ſecret reading, prayer,* and *ſelf-ſearching.*

I. *Of reading the word.*

1ſt, As to the *reading of God's word,* if you would do it with profit, then, 1. Look up to God for his bleſſing upon it: When you begin, pray that he may *open your eyes to ſee the wonders of it,* and that he may *open your ears and hearts to hear and comply with it as the voice of God.*

2dly, In reading the word, quicken yourſelves to all poſſible attention. As children will rouze up themſelves at the reading of their father's will, out of expectation of ſome portion or legacy bequeathed them therein by their father; ſo ought you to rouze up yourſelves in reading of the word, in reading of the many rich and precious legacies which our Saviour hath bequeathed to you, in that laſt will and teſtament of his, ſealed by his own blood.

3dly, Read the word with holy reverence, as if Jehovah himſelf ſtood by, and ſpake theſe words unto you; for reading is a kind of holy conference with God, and therefore ought to be gone about with a holy awe and concern. I do not mean that this reverence is to be ſhown to the paper and print, but the matter contained therein; tho' even theſe, as the dead bodies of ſaints, ought not be uſed diſhonourably, as I have heard ſome graceleſs merchants do, by rolling up their ſmall wares in leaves of the bible. Is this like the practice of the ancient martyrs, who made more account of a leaf of the bible than of treaſure? And indeed the leaves of the bible, in ſome ſenſe, are the field where the treaſure is hid, and the pearl of price may be found; they are the ſwadling clothes of the holy Jeſus. And therefore, in the next place,

4thly, Have an eye to Chriſt in every thing ye read, for he is the end, ſcope, and ſubſtance of the whole bible, and every thing in it is reducible to him.

5thly, Read it with application to yourſelves, as if God ſpoke to you by name and ſirname in every line of it. Read it as if it were a letter ſent ſtraight from heaven to you, to warn you againſt ſin, and to perſuade you to faith and holineſs. Let us accept of its reproofs and admonitions with thankfulneſs, and ſay, What a mercy is it that we may read our Father's will in our mother tongue, and that God ſpeaks his mind ſo plainly to us in his word?

6thly, Mark the ſpecial paſſages of the word, either theſe that are moſt important in themſelves, or moſt applicable to you. Mark the duties injoined, and ſins forbidden, with the promiſes to the one, and threatenings againſt the other: Faſten theſe upon your memories, and hide them in your hearts; meditate on them, and pray that God may keep them in your minds, ready for uſe againſt the time of need.

II. *Of ſecret prayer.*

As for ſecret prayer, take theſe directions, if you would ſpeed in it.

I. See that you be new creatures, and born again, if you would pray aright. A child, while in the womb, cannot cry; ſo no more can you cry, *Abba, Father,* while in the womb of a natural ſtate. An unconverted man's prayers are not accounted prayers before God: The long prayers which Paul had, while a Phariſee, were not reckoned prayer at all; but, when he is a converted man, we are told then, with a *Behold, that he prayed,* Acts ix. 11.

II. Be frequent in this duty, for your needs are many. God hath erected the *throne of grace for the time of need,* Heb. iv. 16. And he hath left the more needs upon us, that he may the oftener hear from us; he loves to hear his people's voice, and great need have we to let him oft hear it; for we have many luſts to be ſubdued, many graces to be ſtrengthened, many doubts to be reſolved, and many grievances to be redreſſed: Therefore be frequent in your addreſſes to God. Frequency begets familiarity, and familiarity confidence; we go boldly to his houſe, we often viſit. Euſebius tells us of the apoſtle James, ſirnamed the Juſt, that he kneeled ſo oft and ſo long in ſecret prayer, that his knees became as callous and inſenſible as a camel's. And he tells us of the firſt Chriſtian emperor, Conſtantine the Great, that he kneeled very much in ſecret prayer: And for an example to others, that he had his image in his coins, pictures and ſtatues, repreſented in the ſame praying poſture, with his hands ſpread abroad, and his eyes lift up to heaven. King David was frequently in this exerciſe, Pſal. lv. 17. *Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud.* And, if that be not enough, he ſays, Pſal. cxix. 164. *Seven times a-day will I praiſe thee, becauſe of thy righteous judgments.*

III. Affect privacy and retirement in it. Strive to let no ear hear but God's; for his ears are open to the moſt whiſpering prayers that can be put up: Not that we ſhould be aſhamed of our duty, but that we may evite miſconſtruction, and hide pride from our eyes; for, when there is a deſire that men ſhould take notice of our prayers, God takes no notice of them, unleſs it be to abhor and reject them. But if you be ſo circumſtanced, that you cannot pray without being obſerved, you cannot help it; for it is better to hazard the cenſure of others, than the neglect of prayer: Only take care there be no oſtentation in the doing of it.

IV. Pray with holy awe and reverence of God, before whom you ſiſt yourſelves. Labour for as much devotion and ſeriouſneſs in prayer, as if you were taken up and preſented before God on his royal throne, with millions of glorious angels miniſtering to him; or, as if you ſaw death and the grave on the one hand, and heaven and hell on the other; or, as if you heard the ſaints ſinging in heaven, or the damned roaring in hell. Do you not believe theſe things as well as if you ſaw them? and why are you not as ſerious as if you did ſee them?

V. Study to pray in faith, eying the power, mercy, and promiſe of God, and relying upon the mediation and righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt; for theſe who pray thus, ſhall not ſeek God in vain. This kind of prayer is like Jonathan's bow, 2 Sam. i. *that never returns empty.*

VI. Pray with fervency and importunity: Why? for ought you know, this may be the laſt Sabbath you may ſee, the laſt ſermon you may hear, and the laſt prayer you may put up. Pray therefore as a dying man would and ſhould do. Remember how fervent you have ſeen ſome dying perſons in prayer, and labour for the ſame frame and fervency. You ſhould ſeek this day, to have ſuch a feeling of ſpiritual wants, and to have your bowels ſo pinched with a ſenſe thereof, that, like the hungry and almoſt ſtarved beggars, you may cry aloud for the bread of life. Let your prayers be the travail of your ſouls, and not the labour of your lips. Let your hearts be ſuitably affected in all the parts of prayer; never leave confeſſion without ſome ſorrow for ſin, nor petition without ſome ſenſe of the worth of mercies, nor thankſgiving without ſome ſolace and joy in God, the Author and Fountain of all our happineſs. Let your affections correſpond with your expreſſions, and continue inſtant in prayer. You ought this day, like Samſon, Judg. xvi. to *bow yourſelves with all your might* in prayer, to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple, and the ſtrong holds of ſin in your ſouls. *Lift up your hearts with your hands to God in the heavens, and ſtir up yourſelves to take hold of him*: Caſt yourſelves down at his feet, and ſay, as once a great man did to his prince, 'I am 'reſolved never to riſe till I obtain mercy.'

VII. Uſe arguments with God in prayer, either taken from God's power and mercy, or from your miſery and neceſſity. Doſt thou doubt, O man, if thou be converted? then ly ſobbing before God, like that leper, Mat. viii. 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make 'me clean;' *q. d.* Lord, thou mayſt do as thou wilt; but this I know, tho' thou ſhouldſt never help me, that thou canſt do it. Thou haſt power enough, yea, it is eaſy for thee, and will be no manner of trouble to thee, to change my heart, and give me an alms of mercy. Thou haſt mercy as well as power; I have heard a good report of thy mercy, that *the King of Iſrael is a merciful King and delights not in the death of a ſinner*, and that *his mercy endures for ever.* Lord, here a poor condemned rebel come in upon the proclamation, to accept of the King of heaven's indemnity: I lay myſelf at thy feet, content to accept of mercy upon any terms: *Haſt thou not one bleſſing for me, even for poor me, O my Father?* If there be not enough of merit in Chriſt to ſave me, I do not ſeek ſalvation; but in him I know there is a fulneſs of redundancy, a treaſure that cannot be emptied. And, Lord, art thou not willing as well as able? Haſt thou not opened thy ſide, that I might look in and ſee the yearning of thy bowels? yea, I have heard them many times ſounding towards loſt ſinners: Why then ſhould I go dwell with everlaſting burnings? 'What profit, 'Lord, is there in my blood? The dead cannot praiſe 'thee, they that go down to the pit cannot celebrate 'thy goodneſs.' Is it not better to make me a friend, than let me be an enemy? Is it not better that I ſhould eternally ſing thy praiſe, than live for ever blaſpheming thy name? 'Lord, what ſhall I do to be ſaved? Is there 'no balm in Gilead for a wounded ſoul?' Is there no hope for a diſtreſſed ſinner? Is there no city of refuge for a purſued criminal? Lord, I am come like a ſtarving beggar to the laſt door for relief, if thou help me not I muſt periſh at thy threſhold, I can go no further. Could we believingly make uſe of ſuch arguments as theſe, Chriſt's pitiful heart would burſt out in midſt thereof, and ſay to us as to the woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. *O woman great is thy faith, be it to thee even as thou wilt.*

VIII. As on Sabbath morning we ſhould addreſs God with more ſolemnity and intenſeneſs, and with greater length than ordinary; ſo alſo with ſpecial petitions for the day.——1*ſt*. Pray for yourſelves that God may give you hearts and frames to *ſanctify a Sabbath to the Lord*; that he may prepare your hearts for hearing, ſtrengthen and ſanctify your memories, go alongſt with you to the ſanctuary, and allow his preſence there. Before you enter upon the public work of this day, labour to get your hearts poſſeſſed effectually with theſe truths: That God muſt work his own work in you and for you, or it will never be done; and without him you can do nothing: That there is no healing virtue in the waters of the ſanctuary, unleſs the Angel of his preſence deſcend and move them: That as in the firſt creation the Spirit moved on the waters, and then the living creatures were formed; ſo the Spirit muſt move upon the waters of ordinances, before they can produce or increaſe ſpiritual life: and as he muſt move upon the ordinances, and give virtue to them, ſo he muſt move upon your ſouls in attending on them. Pray earneſtly then, that God may give you his Spirit to prepare you for hearing of his word, and to aſſiſt you in hearing; and particularly, that he may give you attention to hearken, underſtanding to conceive, wiſdom to apply, judgment to diſcern, faith to believe, memory to retain, and grace to practiſe what you ſhall hear; that ſo the word may prove unto you *the ſavour of life unto life*, and not *the ſavour of death unto death.* O pray fervently, that it may not be your condemnation to go to the ſanctuary every new Sabbath to get new bands laid upon you, to get your hearts more hardened, your affections more deadned, and your ſouls ſlain by the words of God's mouth; but that the word may be attended with ſaving power, for your conviction of ſin, and your converſion to God in Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator. Be ſo intent for Chriſt's preſence this day, that no Lord's day may ſatisfy you without the Lord of the day. O what is the beſt day that ever was, without the Ancient of days? What are the ordinances of God, without the God of ordinances? What are the aſſemblies of ſaints, without the Maſter of aſſemblies? What's a ſermon, without a Saviour? What's a communion table, without a communion with God? What's a Sabbath day, without the Lord of the Sabbath? Proteſt therefore in a humble but an importunate manner, that you will be ſatisfied with nothing this day, without his preſence; ſay with Moſes, Exod. xxxiii. 5. *If thy preſence go not with me carry us not up hence.* And cry to him with the church, Iſa. lxvi. 1 *O that thou wouldſt this day rend the heavens! O that thou wouldſt come down, that the mountains might flow at thy preſence.*

2*dly*, Pray for him that diſpenſeth the word, that God may open to him both a door of utterance, and a door of entrance; and particularly, that God may direct him to ſpeak ſomething that may be ſuitable to your caſe. It is a great loſs to yourſelves, as well as to miniſters, that you pray ſo little for them: What is the reaſon that many times miniſters are ſtraitned in delivery, do not reach your hearts nor ſpeak cloſly to your caſe? it is becauſe you pray not for them. Mind that ſad threatening, Ezek. iii. 26. where the Spirit ſaith to the prophet. *I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou ſhalt be dumb, and ſhalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious houſe.* O pray againſt this ſad judgment, and beg that God may looſe the miniſter's tongue and put a word in his mouth for you. Can you expect a bleſſing on your food, when you will not ſo much as ſeek it from God, by praying for him that is to break the bread of life to you?

3*dly*, Pray for the whole congregation, that the Sabbath may be a *day of the Son of man*, and a *day of God's power* unto them: Pray that Chriſt may mount the *white horſe of the goſpel, gird his ſword on his thigh*, and *ride in triumph* among them; that the *arrows* of his word may be *ſharp, and pierce hearts.* Beg that ſome may be convinced, others ſtrengthened, and others comforted: Pray that God's word preached, may not only be as a *loving ſong* to the hearers, as Ezek. xxxiii. but as a *lively ſong* to them, that many may have it to ſay as David, Pſal. cxix. 50. *Thy word hath quickned me.* Pray that God may this day make his word as a *ſharp two edged ſword*, to divide betwixt ſinners and their ſins; that he may cauſe its point prick their hearts and ſavingly wound their conſciences, and make its edge fetch blood from their luſts, yea hew them in pieces like Agag, before the Lord.——Pray that God may make his word both as a fire and a hammer to the congregation; a fire to burn up the ſtubble of their corruptions, and a hammer to break the rock of their hearts into pieces.——Pray that it may be as the *key of David*, both to *open* and *ſhut* many hearts on this day; a key to open hearts, ſo as they may never more be ſhut upon Chriſt when he ſtands and knocks at them; and a key to ſhut hearts, ſo that they may never open to ſin and ſatan when they knock for entrance.——Pray that the whole congregation may get grace to hear ſermons, and put up prayers this day, as if they were the laſt that ever they were to hear or put up in this world:——And that Zion's King may *take to himſelf his* glorious conquering *power*, and *in his majeſty ride proſperouſly;* and that he may *make the arrows* of his word *ſharp in the hearts of his enemies, ſo that the people may fall under him.*

IX. You muſt take care, that your ſecret prayers on Sabbath morning be early and ſeaſonable, that they interfere not with family worſhip, which ought this morning to be timeouſly performed before the public worſhip begin; for one duty muſt not juſtle with another, every duty is beautiful in its ſeaſon. And in family-prayer you muſt be more ſolemn and particular than at other occaſions; our ſacrifices this day ought to be doubled. O it were happy, if ſecret and family duties were our ſouls delight on this day; and if we had ſuch ſpiritual ſkill to perform them, that they might be helps, not hindrances to public ordinances.

Laſtly, Having this morning put up your fervent prayers to God, you ought to look and wait for a return of them through the day. A wiſe merchant, that ſends a ſhip to the ſea, will enquire after her. Prayer brings your food from afar, look what becomes of it. If you preſent a petition to a prince, you wait what anſwer will be returned; and are ye not much more concerned in this caſe to do it? If you look not after your prayers, it a ſign you have little ſenſe of your needs; little ſenſe of the burden and yoke of ſin; little ſenſe of the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, or the excellency of theſe mercies you have been ſeeking. You ought this day to be able to ſay, as Pſal. xxv. 5. *On thee do I wait all the day.* Your ſouls ſhould be ſtill panting after God and the light of his countenance, ſaying, "O that I may this day behold the beauty of "the Lord! O that I may ſee his power and glory! "O that I may taſte that he is good! O that I may "hear his voice, may bear his image, may be brought "into the chamber of preſence, and ſee him through "the latteſs of ordinances!"

If ye would have a gracious return this day, you muſt be looking above ordinances and duties to him who is *the dew of Iſrael*, and expect the heavenly rain from himſelf; otherwiſe your fleece will remain dry, for all that men or angels can do. Therefore plead with God that he will bleſs and concur with the means, and *breathe upon your dry bones*, without which the breath of men can never make them alive.

III. *Of ſelf-ſearching.*

As to the duty of *ſelf-ſearching*, it is very neceſſary on the Sabbath morning, in order to prepare your ſouls for the work of the day.

I. Enquire into your own ſtate; try whether you be in nature or grace, that, when you hear the word, you may know what belongs to you: For if you be ignorant of your condition you may apply promiſes for threatenings; conclude for heaven, when you are heirs of wrath; perſuade yourſelves of the love of God, when you are in a ſtate of enmity.

II. Enquire into your particular neceſſities, what are theſe wants you would have ſupplied by the word, theſe ſins and luſts you would have ſlain by it, what are theſe weak graces you would have ſtrengthened by it, what are theſe doubts you would have reſolved by it, and theſe heart plagues you would have cured.

III. Enquire into the frames of your hearts, and ſee if they be duly qualified and diſpoſed for attending the public ordinances.

Queſt. *What ſort of hearts ought we to bring with us?*

Anſ. 1ſt, Bring humble hearts. Conſider that you are pieces of mean and vile duſt venturing into the preſence of an infinitely glorious God, to hear the *voice of the Lord*, that *is full of majeſty*, and ſolemnly to converſe with him, before whom the *angels vail their faces*.

2dly, Bring ſoft hearts, that the word may make ſome impreſſion on them; for an arrow ſhot againſt a ſtone ſticks not but falls to the ground. Labour to get the *fallow ground of your hearts plowed up, and broken*, before you come to receive the *ſeed of the word*, according to Hoſea x. 11. If you would have the fallow ground plowed up, you muſt ſeek the Lord by fervent and heart-breaking prayer.

3dly, Bring hunger and thirſt with you to God's banqueting houſe; bring a deep ſenſe of ſoul wants and neceſſities, and longing deſires to meet with Chriſt in the ordinances: For he *fills the hungry with good things, when the rich are ſent away empty*. O for the hungry appetites of God's children, when we come to God's houſe! Say, "O that, like a new-born child, I may "this day deſire the ſincere milk of the word for my "nouriſhment! and, O that, like a true child of my "heavenly Father, I may love that milk beſt which "comes warm from the breaſts of public ordinances!"

IV. Search into theſe luſts and evils that hinder the ſucceſs of ordinances; caſt them out, and guard carefully againſt them. If you would have God this day to hear your prayers, and accept of your ſacrifices, you muſt *regard no iniquity in your hearts* you muſt throw out all boſom luſts and idols. Chriſt ſaith to you this day, as once he did to Judas in another caſe, John xviii. 8. *If therefore you ſeek me, let theſe go their way*: Let your pride, worldlineſs, prejudice, *&c.* go away; for they bar Chriſt out of the heart.

1. Throw out worldlineſs, and all thoughts about the world, that you may with your whole ſouls this day attend upon God: Say to the cares of the world, as Abraham to his ſervants, Gen. xxii. *Stay ye here till I go yonder to worſhip God.* Suffer not a vain thought this day to take up its lodging in your heart, according to Jer. iv. 14. It is ſaid of Bernard, that, when he came to the church door, he would ſay, *Stay here, all my earthly thoughts.* Nay, ſay this alſo before you come from home. Worldly hearts will hinder you from getting good of the ordinances; they will make the church like the market-place to you, full of tumult and diſtraction; they will make ſuch a noiſe and buzzing in your ears, that you cannot hear; or they will make you wander in time of hearing, as theſe, Ezek. xxxiii 31. Nay, they will make you weary of all Sabbath work, as theſe; Amos viii. 5.

2. Lay aſide ſelf-conceit, or a good opinion of yourſelves, your duties and performances; count all theſe but *dung and loſs for the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt*. For, if you lean upon your prayers and preparations this day as any piece of righteouſneſs before God, this will mar your acceſs to God this day, and make the ordinances prove dry breaſts to you.

3. Throw out all prejudices againſt miniſters and againſt the laws of Chriſt; and with meekneſs lay your ear and heart open to receive inſtruction, ſaying with Paul, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* and with Samuel, *Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.*

4. Guard againſt doubtings concerning the truths of God, and myſteries of religion: Let us captivate and ſubject reaſon to faith, and deal with it, as Joſhua did with the Gibeonites; he made them *hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the ſervice of the temple*: So let us make reaſon ſubject to faith, and ſervicable to religion; but nowiſe ſet it up as a ſtandard for examining its myſteries by, ſince they are above its reach.

5. Beware of erroneous principles; for theſe will mar the good of ordinances to you; while there is an error in the foundation, you cannot be *built up in the moſt holy faith*. Chriſt bids us *be wiſe as ſerpents*; and ſerpents (they ſay) whatever injury is offered to them, their great care is to preſerve their head. Let it be our great care then, not only to preſerve our hearts and hands from ſin, but our heads from error; eſpecially when there are ſo many falſe teachers going abroad, ſeeking to *pervert the ſimple, by fair words and falſe ſpeeches.*

6. Beware likewiſe of ſchiſm and diviſion, and guard againſt theſe who are inſtruments to divide and ſcatter Chriſt's ſheep. Do not ſtraggle from Chriſt's flock, but abide cloſe by the place where the good Shepherd feeds his flock, *and makes them to reſt at noon*, and do not *turn aſide after the flocks of the companions*, Cant. i. 7.

I refer the handling of the duties of maſters of families, as ſuch, till afterwards: Only, it ought to be their care early to call their families together to pray with them, and praiſe God; and to cauſe them riſe as early this day as others. Let not your ſervants and children waſte away this morning in ſleep and idleneſs, but call them up as early to God's work this day, as you do to your own upon other days.

How blame worthy are theſe families, and eſpecially the maſters thereof, who on week-days can riſe betimes to follow their worldly buſineſs, but on the Lord's day do ly longer in bed than ordinary, giving themſelves to carnal eaſe and reſt? Is this to keep holy the Sabbath-day, thus to ſleep and loiter, away the firſt and chiefeſt part thereof? Is this the way to accompliſh the work of the Sabbath, to promote the glory of God and carry on the work of your ſalvation? All of you have great work to do this day; therefore riſe early to it, as the Iſraelites did to the beſieging of Jericho: They had been encompaſſing the city ſix days before; but we are told, *Joſh.* vi. 15. That *on the ſeventh day, they roſe early about the dawning of the day, and compaſſed the city ſeven times*: And ſo that day they became maſters of the city. And, according to the beſt expoſitors, this ſeventh day, on which the walls of Jericho, fell down, was the Sabbath. Now, O Chriſtian, as the Iſraelites had the ſtrong walls of Jericho ſo haſt thou the ſtrong holds of ſin to batter down this day; thou haſt theſe Canaanites to conquer, which would keep thee out of the promiſed land: Therefore imitate the Iſraelites, and riſe early this morning to your work: The walls are thick, your enemies ſtrong; if you would expect then to conquer on the Sabbath day, and triumph againſt night, ſee that you begin the ſiege early.

And, if you would manage the work ſucceſsfully, you muſt ſet about and carry it on conjunctly, as well as ſeparately; by family prayer, as well as ſecret prayer: And ſee that all in the family attend family worſhip this morning. Likewiſe, as occaſion offers, exhort your children and ſervants to prepare themſelves for the public worſhip by the performance of ſecret duties, particularly reading and prayer. When you are at meat this morning, ſhew by your holy ſpeeches, that your minds are not forgetful of the work of the day. Check playing and idle talking, both in children and ſervants, and labour to engage them by your example, to ſhew a more grave and ſerious air in their countenances this morning, than upon other occaſions.

Let as many of them as can be conveniently ſpared, accompany you to the public ordinances; and ſuffer none of them to be abſent therefrom, except in caſes of neceſſity. Remember the fourth command, *Thou, thy ſon, thy daughter, thy man ſervant and thy maid ſervant, and all within thy gates.* Let not the dreſſing of meat for you keep ſervants from the houſe God this day; but ſee that you be able to ſay with Cornelius, (who *feared the Lord with all his houſe*) *We are all here preſent before God.*——Tho' children be young, yet bring them with you; for they are capable of getting good by the word ſooner than we are aware. The ſcripture takes ſeveral times notice of little ones in the ſolemn aſſemblies, Deut. xxix. 11. Ezra x. 1. Acts xxi. 5. If we lay our children by the pool-ſide, who knows how early the Spirit of God may help them in, and heal them? Take your families alongſt with you to the church; leave them not behind you, to come ſtraggling to the church after worſhip is begun; nor allow them to drop away before it be ended. This is very undecent and diſorderly; you would not allow them to do ſo with reſpect to your work. If you were going to the harveſt field, you would not ſuffer them to come or go when they pleaſed. No, you would oblige them all to be ready timeouſly to come forth together, and fall to their work at once, and tarry till they looſed from work together: And ſhould you not be as much concerned for God's work, as for your own; for the buſineſs of eternity, as for the affairs of time?

Concerning our going to the church.

In the next place, let me give ſome advices relating to your behaviour in going to the church, proper eſpecially for you whoſe houſes ly ſomewhat remote from it.

Having dreſſed your ſouls, as well as may be, this morning according to the foreſaid directions, go forth, watching over your hearts and ſenſes, having the lively impreſſion of God's eyes upon you, and believing that he takes ſpecial notice of all your thoughts, words and actions this day.

If you walk in company with others, take heed to your words, that they be ſavoury and ſuitable. O that people would guard againſt worldly diſcourſe in their going to the church (which very much diſcompoſeth the heart for the public worſhip) and would talk of ſpiritual ſubjects, of the deſign and work of the day, and encourage one another to it! How pleaſant would this be! This was the ancient practice of God's people, Zech. viii. 21. and we ſee how much David is taken with it, Pſal. cxxii. 1. *I was glad, when they ſaid unto me, Let us go into the houſe of the Lord; q. d.* It was the moſt pleaſant ſound I heard all the week thro', to hear people encouraging one another to aſſemble to God's public worſhip, in God's houſe upon God's day. This to him was the moſt pleaſant journey ever he went; he was not backward to it, he did not weary of it: nay, it was *the joy and life of his ſoul;* he was glad of it. How few among us are in this frame! Alas! inſtead of it, there are many in our day glad of any trifling excuſe to ſtay them at home, or take them away from the afternoon's ſermon.

If you live at ſome diſtance from the church, and be tryſted with carnal company by the way, who ſavour nothing but the world; it is beſt for thee to retire from them to thine own meditations, leſt thou be infected with their carnal and corrupt communications: For even a Peter, when he is converſing and warming his hands with the enemies of Chriſt, his heart turns ice cold and frozen to Chriſt his Maſter, till a love blink from the Sun of righteouſneſs thawed it again.

If better meditations offer not to thee by the way, I ſhall furniſh thee with ſome very ſuitable from natural things, which are objects of your ſenſes.

If it be in a winter morning thou goeſt out, when the ſun is but riſing, think, if one ſun make ſo bright a morning, what a ſhining morning will that be, when Chriſt, with all his bright angels and ſaints, ſhall break through the clouds, when there ſhall be as many ſuns as we ſee ſtars in a winter's night? O! ſhall I be one of theſe that *ſhall ſhine as the ſun in the kingdom of my Father?*

If it be in the ſpring time, and when a pleaſant rain is falling upon the graſs and corns, think, the Sabbath ſhould be a grow day for believers. This day God is as the *dew to Iſrael.* O that my ſoul may *grow as the lily, and revive as the corn!* O that I may grow inward in ſincerity, and outward in good works: downward in humility, and upward in heavenly mindedneſs! Let the doctrine of God's word this day drop on my ſoul, as *the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and as the ſhowers upon the graſs,* that I may wax taller in grace, and ſtronger in faith and love. This day I ſhould be *going from ſtrength to ſtrength,* according to Pſal. lxxxiv. 7. As the bee is buſy in going from flower to flower, ſtill gathereth honey as ſhe paſſeth; ſo ſhould I this day go from duty to duty, from one ordinance to another, from praying to reading, from reading to hearing, from hearing to meditating, ſtill gathering grace and ſtrength as I go.

Doſt thou look to the heavens? Think I have my Saviour and my all there; there is the place of my everlaſting abode. Senſe tells me what the outſide of it is; yet that ſpangled roof over my head is but the pavement of that glorious palace, where I ſhall enjoy my eternal Sabbath, and my everlaſting reſt in Chriſt's boſom. O my ſoul yonder is Goſhen, the region of light; yon twinkling ſtars, ſhining moon, and flaming ſun, are but as lanterns hanging out at thy Father's houſe to light thee, while thou walkeſt in the dark-ſtreets of the earth. Little doſt thou know the glory, mirth and joy that are within: O what are worldlings joy to them! O let my affections and deſires this day mount thither, that this may be one of the days of heaven to my ſoul!

Again, think, the Lord hath ſpread out the *heaven as a curtain*, Pſal. civ. 2. and, notwithſtanding of its rapid motion, this curtain hath continued ſpread near theſe ſix thouſand years, and not one hole is to be ſeen in it to this day. Is not heaven then a ſafe a place for me to lay up my treaſure in, where none can break thro' and ſteal it from me? O that my portion and treaſure may be there; 'that, where my treaſure is, there my heart may be alſo!'

Doſt thou ſee the clouds? Think on the day when Chriſt will rend and break thro' them; as he went up triumphing in a cloud to heaven, in like manner he ſhall come again. Are the heavens of ſuch bright and pure matter? Think on the purity of the inhabitants thereof. There is no room, no, not a foot breadth for impure perſons in the heavenly Jeruſalem, where the gates are of pearl; no profane ſinner, no unclean thing ſhall enter there.

When thou walkeſt on the ground, think, this whole earth is but my Father's footſtool, that he hath given me to tread on: O how glorious then muſt his palace be! yet it is mine in Chriſt.—Again, this earth *hangs upon nothing*, Job xxvi. 27. O ſhall I be ſo fooliſh as to hang my hopes upon that which hangs on nothing?—Again, wonder at God's power and faithfulneſs, that, notwithſtanding it hangs as a ball in the air, and hath had many dreadful tempeſts upon it, and terrible earthquakes within it, yet God hath kept it from moving out of its place near theſe ſix thouſand years paſt.

Doſt thou tread upon the graſs? Think how God calls thee thereby to remember thy fading life and withering condition, every ſtep thou makeſt, Iſa. xl. 6. *All fleſh is graſs*, and death is coming with his ſcythe to mow down this graſs: And, tho' ſome graſs eſcape the ſcythe in ſummer, when it is freſh and green, yet the winter froſt will wither it away; ſo tho' you eſcape the ſcythe of death in the ſummer of your youth, yet the winter of old age will come and wither you.

Doſt thou paſs over a little brook or rivulet in the way? Think, O if I could ſay this day with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xlii. 1. 2. *As the heart pants after the water brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God; my ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God; when ſhall I come and appear before God?*

Doſt thou go up an aſcent? Think, the way to heaven is all up the hill, Pſal. xxiv. Lord, ſtrengthen me to climb it, without fainting or ſliding back. O that my ſoul this day may be aſcending to God, and God may be deſcending to me!

Doſt thou behold the ſea? Wonder at the ebbing and flowing of it, and at God's power and goodneſs, that ſets reſtraining bounds to it. How eaſily might that power, that makes it to flow 20 foot, make it flow 200 foot? and ſo it would overflow our ſea towns and adjacent coaſts; but the Lord's goodneſs commands it back again by its ebb.

Doſt thou ſee a ſhip in the ſea? Think, Chriſt's church is compared to a ſhip; this world is the ſea, through which ſhe ſails; believers are the paſſengers; God is her pilot; the angels are her rowers; faith is the helm; hope is the anchor: For a maſt, ſhe hath, in midſt of her erected the ſaving tree of the croſs; the graces are the ſails hanging thereon; the Spirit is the wind that fills them; but Chriſt alone is the bottom that carries all ſafe and ſure to the haven of eternal reſt and felicity. O let my ſoul lean upon no other bottom. Again, think how mercifully Chriſt delivered his diſciples when toſſed in a ſhip, on the ſea in a dark night.——My ſoul is a little ſhip, often ready to be overwhelmed with the waves of temptations: O then, when it is in this danger, let me awake Chriſt by my prayers.——Again, as it is ſaid of the mariner, with reſpect to his ſhip, that he ſails always within four inches of death; ſo it may be ſaid of the ſoul in relation to the body, that it lives ſtill within four inches of eternity. If theſe earthen veſſels break, then our ſouls are immediately ſet a drift into the bankleſs and bottomleſs ocean of eternity. Lord, let not my ſoul lanch out into the deep, while I am uncertain whether it ſink or ſwim.

Doth it rain upon thee while the ſun is ſhining? Think, if the ſun of God's countenance ſhine on me, I may be well content to be wet with ſome rain of affliction: This eaſily doth counterbalance any trouble whatſoever.

Art thou drawing near to the church? Then put up ſome fervent ejaculations and prayers for God's bleſſing and preſence. Say as Abraham's ſervant did, when he came to the well of water near the city, Gen. xxiv. 12. '*O Lord God, I pray thee ſend me good ſpeed this day*. Let me not miſs my errand; let it be the day when ſalvation ſhall come to my heart and houſe; let it be the day of my new birth, the day when my hard heart will be broken; let it be a day to be had in everlaſting remembrance——As I am drawing nigh to thy houſe, Lord, draw nigh to my ſoul, and let me have a meeting with thee this day. As thou art to knock at the doors of my ſoul by the hammer of thy word this day, Lord, come and make patent doors for thyſelf, and command thy loving-kindneſs to break in. Lord open my eyes, that I may ſee the wonders of thy law; open my ears, that I may hear the charming voice of the Son of God; open my heart, that the King of glory may enter in; and open my lips, that my mouth may ſhew forth thy praiſe.'

Doſt thou come within ſight of the church? Let thy heart rejoice to ſee Jeruſalem a quiet habitation, and pray that God may ſtill *create a cloud of defence upon every dwelling place in mount Zion, and upon all her aſſemblies*; and that *the mountain of the Lord's houſe may be exalted above all mountains*. We ought to be much concerned for the church, and *prefer Jeruſalem above our chief joy*. Let us do, in a ſpiritual way, what Simon Maccabæus did in a natural, who, with three years labour, took down the top of the mount Acra in Jeruſalem, that no hill there might compete in height with the temple of God: So let us cauſe the greateſt mountain of ſecular intereſt vail to the *mountain of the houſe of the Lord*.

Do you ſee a poor man begging by the way? Let it awaken your gratitude and thankfulneſs, that you are not in his caſe, and he in yours; and that you are not begging from him, inſtead of his begging from you. Hearken, how importunate ſome beggars are; with what warm and feeling expreſſions do they plead? they uncover their ſores, and ſhew their maladies, and uſe all methods to move our compaſſions; when we think to put them off with excuſes or refuſals, yet they follow us, and by their importunity draw an alms from us: Then think with yourſelves, O why do not I thus with God? why am I ſo careleſs in ſeeking an alms of mercy from him? is not my need greater than any beggar's? is not the alms I am ſeeking far better? is not the fulneſs and pity of the Giver infinitely more? and ſhall I be ſo formal and lifeleſs in prayer? It was a good counſel of one, that bade people *learn to pray of beggars*.

As it is one of the duties of this day to make collections, and beſtow alms for the relief of the poor; ſo you ſhould take heed that you perform this duty in the right manner, that you do it not for the praiſe of men, but for the glory of God. Pray that your alms may be perfumed by the incenſe of Chriſt's merits, that they may be a *ſweet ſmelling ſacrifice unto God*. Would you have a bountiful alms from God this day? then give liberally to his poor. Remember Chriſt's eye is upon you, and noticeth from heaven what every one caſts into his poor this day, as well as he noticed the poor widow's caſting in her two mites into the treaſury, when he was here upon earth. Tho' you have not much to yourſelf, yet you are bound to give ſomewhat; and, if it be given in ſincerity, God will graciouſly accept of it, tho' it be but two mites. Be ſure this will never break you, nor waſte your ſubſtance, but rather increaſe it, and obtain a bleſſing thereon. I pity thoſe miſerable perſons who want not money to tipple and drink with, but yet have none to beſtow upon God's poor.

Directions concerning the public worſhip.

I Proceed to the ſecond thing propoſed, *What is neceſſary to be done in time of public worſhip, and when we enter into the church.*

I. *Keep thy foot when thou goeſt into the houſe of God*, Eccl. v. *i. e.* Look to you affections, which are the feet of the ſoul, by which men go to God, and walk or converſe with him. Firmly believe, and conſtantly remember, that God's eye is very much on your behaviour while you are in his houſe. Therefore in the tabernacle, which was the place of public worſhip, it was commanded, Exod. xxv. 37. *Thou ſhalt make ſeven lamps, and they ſhall light the lamps that they may give light*; to teach us, that nothing there could eſcape God's ſight; for in his houſe there was always light. You cannot ſin in ſecret there, for there are ſeven lamps to diſcover your miſcarriages in the Lord's houſe. And, when the temple ſucceeded the tabernacle, God ſays of it, 1 Kings ix. 3. *Mine eye ſhall be there perpetually*. God hath an eye, 1*ſt*, Of *obſervation*, Jer. xvi. 17. to notice with what ſincerity and livelineſs you offer your ſervices and performances. 2*dly*, An eye of *good will*, Amos ix. 4. to approve and bleſs you, if you worſhip him ſincerely and faithfully. 3*dly*, An eye of *indignation*, Jer. xxi. 10. to bring wrath on you, if you approach God irreverently, worſhip him careleſly, and profane his day. Now, you may be aſſured of it, that God is as jealous of his courts under the goſpel as he was under the law, and doth take ſpecial notice of his people's behaviour there; for he tells us, *Where two or three are gathered in his name he is in the midſt of them*, Matth. xviii. 20.

As you ought to have a lively ſenſe of God's omniſcience when you enter God's houſe, ſo you ought to have awful impreſſions of God's greatneſs, into whoſe preſence you come, and a deep ſenſe of your vileneſs and unworthineſs to appear before him: And therefore be putting up ejaculations to God for acceptance in Chriſt Jeſus. I do not mean that you ſhould ſtand up (as ſome do) to private prayer in a public way, as the Phariſees did of old in the ſynagogues, to be ſeen of men, for which our Saviour reproves them, Mat. vi. 5. 6. telling us, that ſecret prayer ſhould be performed in a ſecret manner: And far leſs ſhould this be practiſed (as ſome do) when the congregation is employed in other worſhip: for this were a confounding of worſhip, and unacceptable to him who is the *God of order*, and is plainly reproved by the apoſtle; 1 Cor. xiv. Alas! it is to be ſuſpected of many that do ſo, that theſe are all the prayers they uſe on Sabbath morning for preparing themſelves or their families for the public worſhip. But, if you come in before worſhip be begun, it is very proper you have your private ejaculations, and be lifting up your thoughts to heaven in a private manner; and, when you are ſet down in your ſeats, ſee if you be able to give a ſatisfying anſwer to that queſtion the Lord put to the prophet, 1 Kings xix. 13. *What doſt thou here, Elijah?* Can you ſay, "Lord, I have come, at thy command, " to the place where thy honour dwelleth, to the " place where thou uſeſt to tryſt with thy people, that " I might meet with thee, and get a glimpſe of thy " countenance?" Alas! it is much to be regrated, that many come to church, they cannot tell for what end, like theſe Epheſians, mentioned Acts xix. 32. *The more part knew not wherefore they were come together*. They come for nothing, and they ordinarly go away with nothing.

But as for you, whoſe errand is to meet with God, and get quickening to your ſouls, look to the frame of your hearts, ſet yourſelves to hear God's word, and join in his worſhip with great reverence and fear; conſider, not only miniſters (God's ambaſſadors) are preſent, but the glorious angels are preſent, nay, the God of angels himſelf is preſent; therefore ſay as Jacob did of Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 16, 17. *Surely the Lord is in this place.—How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the houſe of God, and the gate of heaven.* In every part of God's worſhip this day, whether ſinging, praying, hearing, partaking, ſtudy to behave as one that believes he is ſiſted in the preſence of the all-ſeeing God, as one that is working for his immortal ſoul, as one that within a few days ſhall enter the gates of death, and render an account at the bar of the great Judge of the world.

II. Study to be at the beginning of worſhip, that you may be able to ſay with Cornelius, Acts x. 33. *Now we are all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*. Think not that you are in time if you win to the lecture or ſermon, though you miſs the prayers that went before; for, if you ſinfully miſs theſe, you have no ground to expect good by the whole day's preaching. ſince it is by the means of the public prayers that the word is ſanctified to you, and you are prepared for it; and what good can the word do you, if God bleſs it not to you? and how can you look for the bleſſing, if you come not to ſeek it? It is not the way to profit by one ordinance, to neglect another. To be late of coming is offenſive to God, ſtumbling to ſerious Chriſtians, and injurious to our own ſouls. Alas! upon what ſmall and frivolous excuſes do many ſtay back from the public worſhip, or linger in coming to it? A little buſineſs, a little rain, ſnow or cold will detain them from the means of ſalvation. You that cannot hear the word, or come in time to God's worſhip for a little cold now, conſider what an alteration there will be in hell; there it will be hot enough, and you ſhall not have liberty of hearing. Did the cold hinder you? there the heat ſhall puniſh you for it. Doth a little rain or ſnow keep you at home, when Chriſt is calling you to receive him? How then will you endure that *horrible tempeſt*, which he will rain on goſpel ſlighters, even a flood of kindled brimſtone that will never ceaſe nor quench.

III. When you firſt ſee the miniſter this day in the pulpit, think, "O how welcome ſhould I make him "that bringeth glad tidings, even the news of reconciliation to a periſhing world? Lord, how great is "thy clemency to us this day, in ſending thy ambaſſadors with an olive-branch of peace, and not a trumpet of war in their mouths?" Conſider our reiterated rebellions and provocations, it might have been expected we ſhould have had a fearful meſſage ſent us, like that of the flying angel, Rev. viii. *ult. Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth*, &c. But, inſtead of this, we have the ſweet meſſage in Iſa. iv. 1. renewed, "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money, come, buy," *&c.* and that in ver. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him," &c. That is a joyful ſound. "How then ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?"

IV. Study to be devout and reverend in the public worſhip both as to the frame of your mind, and geſture of your body. It was a good advice of one, for this end. *Fix your eye on the miniſter, your ear on the word, and your heart on God.* Awe your hearts into a holy reverence, by viewing the holineſs and power of that God whom ye worſhip, and revolving his titles of majeſty; ſo did the pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxxix. 6, 7, 8. *Who in heaven can be compared to the Lord?* &c.——*God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of his ſaints*, &c—*O Lord God of hoſts, who is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee?* &c. *Make a covenant with your eyes*, that they gaze not about in ſpying your neighbours cloaths and geſtures. A gadding eye is the ready way to make a wandering heart. The devil hath many objects to tempt and divert us; firſt men let looſe their eyes, and then away goes the heart. Make a covenant with your eyes this day, that they neither ſhut with ſleep, nor wander after vanity.—Tho' bodily ſervice without the heart profiteth little, yet the worſhip of our bodies is not to be wholly ſlighted; God hath a right to the adoration of our bodies as well as our ſouls, for Chriſt ſuffered for both, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And we find Chriſt and the ſaints in the ſcripture uſing reverent geſtures in prayer. I dare not preciſely reſtrict people to any one particular geſture in public prayer, neither deſire I to lay more ſtreſs upon geſtures than they will hear, ſince I know communion with God may be obtained in any geſture; yet I muſt own, that it is the unhappy effect of our contention about geſtures that ſome ſerious perſons, who have a devout reſpect to God and holy things, do yet ſeem more irreverent in their outward carriage, than ſome who are ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs and immoral in their converſations. I know theſe place all their religion in outward geſtures and forms, and go no further; yet this warrants none to run to the other extreme, to deſpiſe a decent or devout geſture. If weakneſs of nature require a perſon to ſit in time of public prayer, I do not quarrel it, but, when no juſt cauſe can be pleaded for it, I cannot ſay that it is a ſuitable praying poſture at public worſhip. A lazy ſluggiſh poſture in prayer tends to bring on ſleep and drowſineſs, and make us forget what we are about; whereas, when we ſtand up, and univerſally change our poſture when public prayer begins, it helps to awaken people to think upon the ſolemn addreſſes they are making to the great God. Only let us take care, that there be no vanity, ſelf-conceit, or affectation in the poſtures of our bodies at worſhip.

V. Come to hear the word with a ſincere purpoſe to obey it, and comply with the whole will of God without reſerve, be it pleaſant or harſh to nature; be ready to perform every known duty, and part with every known ſin, be it as dear as your right-hand, or right eye. It is not enough to ſay, We are all preſent to hear the ſermon; but you muſt ſay with Cornelius and his company, Acts x. *We are preſent to hear all things commanded us of God.* And in a ſpecial manner you muſt be ready to hear and obey his *great command*, of *beliving on the name of his Son*, which is the great end of preaching and hearing. Wherefore, when Chriſt knocks by his word at the door of your heart, be ready to open, and welcome him in with joy; ſay to him, as Laban to Abraham's ſervant, Gen. xxiv. 31. *Come in thou bleſſed of the Lord; wherefore ſtandeſt thou without?* Tho' alas I cannot ſay what follows, *I have prepared the houſe*, yet, Lord come in and prepare it for thyſelf: And tho' *I be unworthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof*, yet a word from thee can cleanſe and repair the houſe, yea, and *prepare an upper room* for thyſelf; *Lord, ſpeak the word, and it ſhall be done.*

VI. Give cloſe attention to the word. God looſes you this day from the world, that you may *attend on the Lord without diſtraction*, 1 Cor. vii. 35. Attend this day to what your Lord ſaith to you, as men who believe that every Sabbath and every ſermon, that every prayer and exhortation, every call and offer of grace, bring you a ſtep nearer heaven, or nearer hell; nearer to the manſions with Chriſt, or to a dwelling with devils; and that endleſs eternity depends upon your attention to God's word. How attentively would a condemned rebel hearken to his prince, every word being either life or death to him! Conſider, it is matter of life and death to you, yea, your life through all the ages of never ending eternity; your life depends on right hearing, Deut. xxxii. 47. And will you not take head? You would have God attentive to your words in the time of your diſtreſs, and will you not be attentive to his words in the time of your health? Could a miniſter tell you how you might acquire a good eſtate, or where you might find a rich treaſure, you would hearken to that; but, for an inheritance or treaſure in heaven, many think it not worth their while to notice: Is not this an argument of ſtrong carnality and atheiſm? O if we could imitate Chriſt's hearers, Luke xix. 48. it is ſaid, *They were all very attentive to hear him;* the word *attentive* according to the original, may be rendered, *They hanged on him*, or *They hanged their ears at Chriſt's lips!* Let us, in like manner, hang upon Chriſt in hearing of the word, even as the child doth upon the breaſt, or as the bee upon a flower.

There is nothing that ſatan aims at more, than to divert your attention in time of hearing the word. This enemy of your ſouls is buſy every day laying ſnares for you, ſeeking your ruin: But, O how active is he every Lord's day! The devil is ſtill firſt at church; the children of God never gather together, but ſatan is among them: And his great deſign is, to render this engine of the word fruitleſs, becauſe by it the ſtrong holds of his kingdom have been battered and broken down. Now, the way he finds moſt ſucceſs is, by tempting our eyes and thoughts to wander, in order to keep us from being attentive in time of hearing. O then if we would have the word to profit us, let us watch againſt ſatan's temptations and ſuggeſtions; let us guard againſt wandering, wearying, drowſineſs, or any thing that may hinder our attention. And for thoſe that can write quickly, to write down the heads of the ſermon in time of hearing, is by ſome reckoned a good mean to engage the attention, prevent drowſineſs, and help the memory afterwards; and ſome have found it very refreſhing and edifying a long time after, to be looking over what they had written. But eſpecially it is proper for young people to learn and uſe this way of writing.

VII. In a ſpecial manner, take heed to the word that ſuits your caſe, and moſt concerns your ſoul; particularly, to that word that diſcovers the ſinfulneſs and vileneſs of a poor ſoul by nature; and to that word that points out the miſery of the unbeliever, and that ſhews the weight of thoſe curſes, the terror of the wrath, and ſeverity of divine juſtice, to which he is hourly expoſed; and to that word that ſets out ſin in its black and bloody colours; to that word that ſhews your inability to help yourſelf out of your miſerable ſtate;——to that word that diſcovers your need of Chriſt, and his excellency, fitneſs and ſuitableneſs for you; and to that word that comes cloſe home to your conſcience, and tells you as Nathan did David, *Thou art the man*, thou art the poor loſt ſinner that is condemned, and for ever undone, without Chriſt. Take heed to that word that points out your particular ſins, your predominate luſts and idols; take with the charge, and cry out, *Unclean, unclean.* While hearing the word, you ought to place your ſins, and eſpecially your darling luſts, in the front of the battle (as Uriah) purpoſely to be ſlain, and ſay, "Lord, "let theſe ſmooth ſtones taken out of the brook of the "ſanctuary be thrown by ſo ſkilful and powerful a "hand, that they may ſink deep into the foreheads of "theſe uncircumciſed ones, to their utter ruin and "deſtruction." And O it were happy, if, while the word doth touch our ſins, our hearts were melted like Peter's, and moved to to *go home and weep bitterly.* O what reaſon have we to weep, when we hear of the boundleſs mercy which we have deſpiſed, the matchleſs miſery which we have deſerved, the infinite love which we have abuſed, and the righteous law which we have tranſgreſſed!

VIII. Mix your hearing with *faith, i. e.* believe, 1. That it is God who ſpeaks; the word is his, and not man's. 2. That he ſpeaks to you in particular, as if he mentioned you by name and ſirname. Put not *reproofs* and *threatenings* by yourſelves, and ſay, *They belong to your neighbour, and not to you;* for this is a dangerous ſtratagem of the devil againſt your ſouls. But let every man open his ear, and hear what the Spirit ſaith to him, and apply the word particularly to himſelf; for the beſt plaiſter that ever was made up can do no good unleſs it be applied. 3. Believe that what the Lord ſpeaks to you by his word, is true and certain; that his *doctrine* is holy, and his *laws* juſt: that his *threatenings* will be ſtrictly execute, and his *promiſes* faithfully accompliſhed. It is for want of faith that the word doth not profit. If but as much credit were given to the *divine teſtimony and word of God*, as we have to *human teſtimony and the writings of men*, the word would have more ſucceſs and efficacy than, alas! it hath on the moſt part.

IX. Lay up what you hear in your hearts and memories, and be at all pains to retain it; for the devil, like the fowls of the air is at hand to ſnatch away the ſeed of the word as ſoon as it lights, if we be not careful to hide it in our hearts. Therefore it is a good help in time of hearing to be often recalling and repeating the heads of what has been ſpoke in our minds; for when we hear a head but once, and think no more upon it till the ſermon be done, we are fair to loſe it.

X. Join cordially with the congregation in ſinging the praiſes of God. This is a heavenly duty, pleaſant to God, and profitable to yourſelves: therefore be conſcientious in the performing of it: *Sing with underſtanding*, and meditate upon what you ſing; *ſing with grace in your hearts*, Col. iii. 16. It is grace that ſweetens the voice in God's ear, an old heart cannot ſing a new ſong; nay, grace muſt be in a lively exerciſe when you ſing, according to Pſal. lvii. 8. you ſhould cry to your hearts and to your graces, and particularly to faith, love and delight, as in Judges v. 12. *Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a ſong*, &c. There ſhould be a great warmneſs of love and affection to God when we ſing to him, according to Iſa. v. 1. Look well then to your hearts in ſinging, mind the matter more than the muſic, the cleanneſs of the heart more than the clearneſs of the voice.

Non vox ſed votum; non muſica chordula, ſed cor;
Non clamans, ſed amans pſallit in aure Dei.

I cannot paſs ſome here, without a reproof, ſuch as theſe, 1. Who ſit dumb in the congregation, while their neighbours are praiſing God, as if the devil had tackt their tongues to the roof of their mouths: Think not this work below the greateſt of you, for it is your honour. Excuſe not yourſelves by ſaying you cannot ſing muſically; for, if you had any delight in the duty you would ſing as you can. 2. Theſe who in ſinging, notice the tune more than the matter, and mind the voice more than the *making melody in their hearts to the Lord*. 3. Thoſe that abſent themſelves from the ſinging of the pſalms, who either come not at the beginning of worſhip till the pſalms be over, or riſe and go out at the cloſe before the pſalms be ſung. Would you know whoſe diſciples they are who do ſo, they are not Chriſt's but Judas's; for when Chriſt ſang the hymn on the back of the communion, Mat. xxvi. 30. all the diſciples were preſent but Judas, that ſlipt out before the pſalms; and ſince he turned his back upon ſo ſweet a duty, it could not be a good errand he was going about; it was firſt to *betray his Maſter*, and then to *hang himſelf*. O then, take warning, and follow Judas's example no more.

XI. Let none go forth before pronouncing of the bleſſing. God allows none, great or ſmall, to go out before his worſhip be ended; both prince and people muſt meet and part at the ſame time, Ezek. xlvi. 10. Theſe that wilfully depart without hearing the bleſſing pronounced, and make a cuſtom of it, if they repent not, it is to be feared they muſt one day ſtay to hear that ſentence, *Depart from me ye curſed*. You run away from the bleſſing, but you cannot run from this curſe. Wherefore let us ſtay the bleſſing, and reverently ſtand up (as the congregation of Iſrael did, 1 Kings viii. 14.) to receive our ſhare in it, hoping and praying that it may come down upon us, as it ſurely will, if we believingly look up to him, that *commands the bleſſing upon mount Zion, even life for evermore.*

Concerning our behaviour betwixt ſermons.

HAVING finiſhed the work of the forenoon, you muſt take care how you diſpoſe of yourſelves betwixt ſermons.

1ſt, If the intermiſſion be ſomewhat long, and your houſes near hand, then retire to them, meditating upon what you have heard, and fixing the convictions and directions into your minds; beware of worldly thoughts or words by the way.

2dly, Aſſoon as you come home, go to ſecret prayer, and beg God's help to improve what you have heard, that it may kill ſin and quicken grace in you; and that God may ſtrengthen your weak memories to retain it, and pardon your failings in his ſervice.

3dly, Eat ſparingly betwixt ſermons, leſt it dull your ſpirits, and indiſpoſe you for the afternoon's word; and ſee that your diſcourſe in time thereof be ſuitable to the day.

4thly, If time allow, neglect not to call your families together for the worſhip of God.

5thly, If you have any time to be alone ſpend it frugally in reading, praying or meditating; let not a moment of it be loſt: Either think on what you have been hearing, or draw ſpiritual inſtructions from what you ſee. Do you ſit by the fire, and ſee the ſparks fly up? think, '*Man is born to trouble as the ſparks fly upward,* 'Job v. 7. Sin hath filled my ſhort life with troubles; 'but bleſſed be God, that I am this day invited to 'come to Jeſus Chriſt, who is a remedy both for ſin 'and ſorrow.'

Doſt thou ſee a ſpider in the window weaving cunning webs to catch the ſilly fly? Think, 'Satan that 'cunning enemy is doing the like for my poor ſoul.' Seeſt thou how the ſpider hides itſelf in its hole till once the fly be intangled, and then runs to ſeize it, and drag it into its hole? 'So doth the devil ly in 'wait till once ſinners be caught into his ſnares, and 'then he lays on them, and hales them away to hell 'with him.' Again, think how painfully and curiouſly the ſpiders weave their cobwebs to catch flies, never conſidering that, before their prey be caught, both they and their webs may be ſwept down by the beſom and trode in the duſt. What is this but a lively emblem of the curious projects which ſome frame for gaining the world? What are they elſe but a taking great pains to catch a fly? And oft, before it be caught, death comes with its beſom, and ſweeps them and their fine projects down in the grave altogether; *For in that day all their thoughts periſh*, Pſal. cxlvi. 4.—But O how wiſe are theſe ſouls, who are laying out all their thoughts and uſing all means this day to win Chriſt! This is a project that will ſurvive death; here is gain that death cannot rob them of. Thus we ſee how every thing might learn us a ſpiritual leſſon, if we were ſpiritually minded.

6thly, If you be far from home, and have not a houſe to which you can conveniently go betwixt ſermons, then improve your time as well as you can, either in the church or church yard, by reading, meditating, private ejaculations, or ſpiritual conferences. It is very ſad to hear people in the church yard this day talking about their markets, corns, cattle, and other worldly ſubjects: Alas! the devil is as buſy ſowing his tares in the church yard as Chriſt's miniſters are in ſowing the good ſeed in the church, and hath far more increaſe than they. Is it not ſtrange that people ſhould go forth from hearing a warm ſermon, yea, a ſermon exactly adapted to their ſouls caſe, and yet have never a word of it among them more than they had been deaf or ſleeping all the time; but no ſooner is the word out of the miniſter's mouth, but preſently the world is in theirs!

Queſt. *May not we aſk or hear news this day?*

Anſ. Aſking, hearing or telling news this day is ſinful, if it be done to ſatisfy curioſity, to divert or put off the time; this would be a *finding our own pleaſure*, which is forbidden on the Lord's day. But if it be done that we may know how it fares with the church at home or abroad, and that we may get our hearts ſuitably affected with the caſe of Zion, as it was with Nehemiah, Neh. i. 2. *I aſked them concerning the Jews, and concerning Jeruſalem;* I ſay, in that caſe it is lawful; for thus we ſhew our concern for the kingdom of Chriſt in the world, and hereby we may be furniſhed with matter both of prayer and praiſe. Outward events and occurrences, if rightly improven, will be ſo far from unframing the ſpirit for the duties of the Sabbath, that we may reap much ſpiritual advantage from them. Let us therefore take care to make a ſpiritual improvement of the news we hear this day; for God's power, mercy and juſtice may be ſeen and admired in the occurrences of providence, as well as in the works of creation. Doſt thou hear any news that makes thee glad? let it excite thee to bleſs God for the ſweet goſpel news of *Chriſt's coming to ſave loſt ſinners*, which thou haſt been hearing this day. Let it put thee in mind what glad tidings it will be to a believer to hear the ſound of the laſt trumpet, and the abſolving ſentence of Chriſt his Judge.——Doſt thou hear of the raging contentions, diviſions and confuſions that ar in the world? Let it mind thee of the bleſt agreement and harmony that is among the ſaints and angels above. ——Doſt thou hear of bloody wars and rumours of wars? Remember the day is at hand, O believer, when thou ſhalt be houſed with Chriſt the *Prince of peace*, where there is nothing but perfect peace, union and tranquillity.

But, in caſe you ſit or walk alone betwixt ſermons in the church or church-yard, you may either think upon what you have been hearing, or meditate upon your latter end, which the graves you ſee and tread on, loudly call you to. Think how *one generation comes, and another goes*. Our fathers had their day upon the ſtage, and they are gone off to make room for us; now we have our day upon the ſtage, but in a little we muſt go off alſo, and give place to the ſucceeding generation. As we draw ſome upon the ſtage, theſe do thurſt us off it again, and we muſt ſhortly be laid with our fathers.——Again, think what a mortifying ſight is before our eyes; there lyes the rubbiſh of a thouſand generations. What is the whole world almoſt, but a heap of graves and dead mens bones? Much of the ground we now tread on, as well as theſe graves, was once living; ſo that we plough up and dig through our forefathers, and muſt ſhortly turn earth ourſelves to bury our poſterity. What cauſe have we then to be humble? We are made of the ſame metal with the ground we walk on; God's hands have kneaded our bodies of the ſame clay with others, and his fingers will crumble us again into the ſame duſt. Let us abhor pride, for this piece of ground will lay us all low enough in a ſhort time: As ſix foot of air doth contain us while we live, ſo ſix foot of earth here will ſuffice us when we are dead; and why ſhould we boaſt of any earthly enjoyments? What is it we value ourſelves upon? Is it our high extract? Ah! the worms have as noble an extract as we; nay, they are of an older family and riſe, for *every creeping thing* was made before man, Gen. i. Do you value yourſelves for your riches? remember both the poor and you ſhall ly down in the duſt together, and the worms ſhall cover you alike, Job xxi. 26. Nay the body of a beggar makes as good duſt as the body of a king; the grave duſt of the one ſmells as ſweet as the other, there it makes no obeiſance to it, nor keeps any diſtance from it.

Concerning the afternoon's worſhip.

WHEN the time for the afternoon's worſhip is come, ſee that ye return again to it in due time; think not the half of the day enough for the ſervice of God; remember the whole day is his: Your ſouls neceſſities alſo require your attending on all diets of worſhip; therefore miſs no opportunity, for you know not when you may meet with Chriſt. Thomas, by being abſent from one meeting of the diſciples, loſt a joyful ſight of Chriſt which the reſt got, and for ſome time afterwards laboured under ſad doubting and unbelief: So you that withdraw from any of the meetings of God's people in the ſanctuary, have reaſon to fear plagues upon your ſouls. You that go away unneceſſarily from the afternoon's worſhip, (as many in the country do) conſider what a ſhrewd ſign it is, that ye have got little good the forenoon, and that ye are very indifferent what become of your precious ſouls. Know you not that the loſs of one opportunity may be the loſs of your ſouls? It may be, in your abſence, the Spirit, who blows when he liſteth, did vouchafe a gale, which might have melted your frozen heart; it may be, then the word was ſpoke, that, thro' God's bleſſing, might have begun a good work on your ſoul: And when you provoke him, by neglecting ſuch an opportunity what do you know if ever he vouchſafe ſuch another gale to you all your life again?

As for your carriage during the afternoon's worſhip, I refer you to the foregoing directions; for they ſuit the afternoon, as well as the forenoon.

Only there are ſome few things more I would mind you of:

I. If there be ſick perſons who deſire the aid of your prayers; as you ought to ſympathize with them, ſo you ought alſo to remember God's goodneſs to you, that preſerves you in health, when others are toſſed on ſick beds: that allows you to ſing his praiſes, while others are groaning with pains; that gives you liberty to attend his ordinances, when others, better than you, are detained therefrom.

II. If baptiſm be adminiſtred after ſermon, then take theſe directions concerning your carriage on that occaſion. 1*ſt*, Beware of removing before it is over, as many do, for this argues both a contempt of Chriſt's ordinance, which he hath ſolemnly inſtitute for his church's good, and want of charity to the perſons to be baptized, in that you will not ſtay to pray for them, or receive them into the communion of the viſible church: As alſo, it ſheweth that you have little regard to your own ſouls in that you turn your back upon ſuch an excellent mean of edification as this is. You that are guilty this way, beware of it for the future. Conſider what an irreverent and unbecoming thing it would be, if all would do as you do: And, do you not tempt others, by your example, to go off with you?

2*dly*, Stay ſtill and pray for the members to be ingrafted as others did for you: Pray that God may give the inward grace with the outward ſeal, and apply Chriſt's blood to the ſoul, as water is applied to the body.

3*dly*, Remember your own baptiſm and ſolemn engagements, to Chriſt in infancy. Remember whoſe name you bear, whoſe livery you wear, and whoſe colours ye are ſworn to: And be humbled for your manifold pollutions, your falling ſhort of the grace of baptiſm, and walking contrary to your ſolemn vows. Examine what fruits you reap from your baptiſm, and if you have got your intereſt in pardon of ſin, ſanctifying grace, and other bleſſings, ſealed to you in that ſacrament, cleared up and ſecured: And try if ye feel the efficacy of Chriſt's blood, repreſented and applied in that ordinance, melting your hearts, cleanſing you from ſin, and quickning you to holineſs. I ſhall ſay no more in this place concerning our improving of our baptiſm, nor of the duties of parents who preſent their children to it, nor of theſe who are witneſſes; ſeeing I have handled theſe points pretty fully in my Sacramental Catechiſm, to which the reader is referred.

III. If you be called after the diſmiſſing of the congregation, and before you return home, to attend the funerals of any of your deceaſt neighbours, let your words and carriage be grave, and ſuitable to the occaſion; abhor that levity and frothineſs which many ſhew at ſuch occaſions. When you draw nigh, and ſee the open grave, think, God is cauſing the grave to open its mouth, to warn me of my latter end, and to tell me, *that I muſt ly there ere long*.—When you ſee the bones ſcattered about the grave's mouth, in fearful confuſion, think, My ſkull and bones will be thus lying and trampled on in a ſhort time, and will not be diſtinguiſhed from the bones of others; and what folly is it for men to be lifting up themſelves, and deſpiſing others now?—When you hear the doleful murmur that is made by the ſkulls and clods of earth ſtriking upon the coffin, think with thyſelf, that it ſounds forth theſe words, *Remember thou muſt die, conſider thy latter end.*—When you ſee the grave filled up, and covered with earth, and people departing from it, think, Thus will I be carried out, and left alone by all my friends; and there will be none to bear me company in this dark cell, but the worms, who will feaſt themſelves on me, without any to hinder them. O to be always humble and mindful of death!

Laſtly, Let not the impreſſions of your neighbour's funerals wear ſoon off. Some are under a little concern at the time; but no ſooner is the dead interred, and the grave filled up again, but all their ſerious thoughts evaniſh, and they return to their ſins and pleaſures as before. But ſee that your concern be laſting; go away thinking, I may be the next for whom the grave may be opened: Therefore *I will wait all the days of my appointed time, till my change come.*

IV. If there be any public worſhip, lecture, catechiſing, or repetition of the ſermons this evening; let all, who can, attend the ſame: For as much of the Lord's day as can be, ſhould be ſpent in the public exerciſes and meetings of God's people. I acknowledge, family duties and ſecret duties are likeways to be performed, and time muſt be alowed for them; and it is well when matters are ſo ordered, that public and private duties do not interfere on the Lord's day. But, whenever they ſeem to do it, let it be obſerved as a rule in this caſe, *The private ought to give place to the public*; for it is one chief end of ſetting apart this day, ſolemnly to acknowledge God, and celebrate his worſhip in the aſſemblies and meetings of Chriſtians.

Concerning our behaviour after public worſhip.

I Come to the third thing, to ſhew what is neceſſary to be done after the *public worſhip* is over.

I. If you be going home in company with others, then confer together upon the ſermons you have heard by the way: For, Deut. xi. 18, 19. your are commanded not only to *lay up God's words in your heart*, but to *ſpeak of them when you walk by the way*. We ſee Chriſt's hearers talk'd of the word by the way, Luke xxiv. 32. *Did not our hearts burn within us while he opened to us the ſcriptures?* I know this is the practice of the Chriſtians in ſome places, tho' I fear there is little of this ſort of conference among us. Inſtead of it, I fear it is the talk of many, when going home, of this and the other perſon they ſaw in the church, or ſpake with about worldly affairs.

II. If you have not occaſion for converſe, then meditate upon what you have heard through the day, Pſal. lxii. 10. *God hath ſpoken once, yea twice have I heard it*, ſaith the pſalmiſt. That which God ſpeaks, you ſhould go over it again in your thoughts, and chew the cud upon it. Let it continue like the ringing of bells ſounding in your ears after the bells are ceaſed. It was a good anſwer that one, coming from church, gave to another that aſked him, If the ſermon was done? "Nay, (ſays he) the congregation is diſmiſſed, "but I hope the ſermon is not done."

III. You may alſo be furniſhed with other occaſional meditations very ſuitable to the day, from the things you may ſee by the way.——Doſt thou ſee the clouds turning black, and threatening rain, which cauſe thee to mend thy pace and haſte home? Think, ſurely afflictions are mercies to God's people; they, like a black cloud, cauſe them to mend their pace, and long to be home at their Father's houſe. If our ſun ſhould always ſhine with unclouded beams, we ſhould not make ſuch haſte: Should we find too much friendſhip in our inn, and kindneſs in our pilgrimage, we would be fair to forget our Father's houſe, and our heritage above.

Doſt thou ſee the ſun declining, and haſting down to night? think, The ſun's motion is very ſwift, tho' inſenſible in the mean time: He runs many thouſand miles in an hour, and flies with incredible ſwiftneſs about the earth, carrying our time about with him; ſo we (tho' the moſt part be inſenſible of it) are flying as faſt to the grave. O then, ſhould not our ſouls be poſting as hard from ſin and wrath to Chriſt our *City of refuge?* Doſt thou ſee the ſun ſetting, and the darkneſs coming on? It hath a voice to thee, the day of thy life poſteth to an end, the dark night of death comes, when thou muſt ſet in the grave: O! ſee thou have not thy work to begin, when thy ſun is ſetting and thy day ended; for, when *the night comes, no man can work*: there is *no repentance in the grave.*

Is the ſky clear at the ſun-ſetting, ſo that it prognoſticates a fair morning next day? Think upon the death of an upright man, *the latter end of that man is peace.* O believer, the evening of thy day ſhall be ſerene, and thy ſun ſhall ſet without clouds: The morning of thy reſurrection ſhall be bright, and thy eternity for ever glorious. No wonder then, tho' Balaam wiſhed to *die the death of the righteous, and to have* his *laſt end like his.*

Is it in the winter time that you are going home, when the ſky may be full of ſtars? conſider how glorious the manſion of the ſaints muſt be, ſince that beſpangled roof is but the floor or pavement of their palace; yet that is my home, where I hope to lodge when night comes, and from which I ſhall never flit. O how many millions of bleſſed ſouls dwell therein! How lightſome is their life! And how pleaſant is their employment! Shall I ever be ſatisfied till I be there?

Is it in the ſummer or harveſt time, when you are obliged to go into the field to attend and gather your cattle? Beware of carrying an earthly mind alongſt with you, but labour to learn ſome heavenly leſſons from every thing you ſee.

Do your cattle ſtray from you? think, How ready am I to wander from Chriſt my Shepherd! *Lord I have gone aſtray like a loſt ſheep: O! ſeek me, and find me* again; ſuffer me not to wander as far as hell, as I will certainly do, if thou let me alone; for of myſelf I will never find the way back to thee.

Do you ſee the ſun retiring from us, and the ſummer going away? Mind how the ſummer days of grace will at length go away, and the winter of ſickneſs and old age will come on: Let me be buſy now, and imitate the bee, who gathers her meat in the ſummer, and provides for the winter before it come: Oh let me not ſin nor ſleep away my days of grace, leſt I have it to regrete, as Jer. viii. 20. *My harveſt is paſt, my ſummer is ended, yet I am not ſaved.*

Is it in harveſt when you ſee the corns cut down through the fields? Think how death with his ſickle will cut you down in like manner, Rom. xiv. 15.

See you a tree growing? Think how the ax of death and ſpiritual judgments is laid to the root of the barren tree, or fruitleſs profeſſor.——Again, think how night and day are like two axes hewing at the root of the tree of man's life, without reſt, when the one is up, the other is down: Every day a ſpell flies off, and every night a chip goes; and ſo, ere long, *our bones will ly ſcattered about the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth wood*, Pſal. cxli. 7. I ſee my neighbours as cut trees daily falling about me: I find myſelf beginning to totter and ſhake with the frequent blows I am getting: O that in the mean time I may be inclining Chriſt-wards and heaven wards! for, *as the tree falls ſo will it ly*. See you a worm crawling on the ground? Think upon the worm of conſcience that never dies, but gnaws the wicked to all eternity. It is my higheſt wiſdom to make conſcience my friend, for it is a *friend that ſticks cloſer than a brother*; it will faithfully attend us on a death bed, and at a tribunal, and adminiſter cordials to us then. But, if conſcience be thine enemy, next to God himſelf, thou wilt find it the moſt terrible enemy that ever a poor ſoul had; thou canſt neither reſiſt it, nor flee from it: It is a *meſſenger* thou canſt not devorce, a *witneſs* thou canſt not caſt, a *judge* thou canſt not decline, and an *executioner* thou canſt not withſtand: Poor Chriſtleſs ſinner it will ſerve inſtead of all theſe againſt thee. O labour to get it ſprinkled in time with Chriſt's blood, and this will pacify it.

Again, think, What is man but a worm? He is twice ſo called in one verſe, Job xxv. 26. What a poor weak helpleſs creature is a worm? it is eaſily cruſhed by the foot, and can make no reſiſtence. So weak and helpleſs is man, with reſpect to God; he is more eaſily cruſhed by the feet of his juſtice, than a worm is by ours. What madneſs then is it for a worm to rebel againſt the Creator of the world? what are the kings and princes of the earth but as ſo many worms crawling upon his footſtool? Each of us muſt ere long take up our dwelling with the worms, and ſay to them, *Ye are my brethren and ſiſters.*

Again, behold, as worms, when they creep into the earth, leave their ſlime behind them about the hole's mouth;——ſo believers, when they creep into the grave, leave all their ſin and corruption at the grave's mouth, and their ſouls aſcend to God, *without ſpot or wrinkle.*

Concerning our behaviour at home in the Sabbath evening.

ASSOON as poſſibly you can win home after ſermons, ſet about your ſecret work, and family-duties: Conſider, that tho' the ſermons be over, the Sabbath is not over. Therefore ſtudy to ſpend the reſt of the day in God's ſervice, and keep ſtill the impreſſions of what you have been hearing upon your ſpirits. And if you would do this, take theſe directions.

I. Retire preſently for ſecret prayer and ſelf examination: Pray over that you have been hearing, and beg that *the Lord may keep it in the imagination of the thoughts of your hearts.* This is a good way both to help your memories, and procure a bleſſing on what you have heard. Conſider whether you had any thing of God's ſpirit and preſence through the day. If God withdrew, then lament after him, and ſearch into the cauſe. If he *ſhewed himſelf through the latteſs*, then bleſs him for it, and go on to *walk in the light of his countenance.* Hath any good motion been raiſed in your hearts by the word? Pray for the preſervation of it. Hath the word been refreſhing and edifying to you? Lay it up in your hearts, and commit that to God to keep for you, which your frail memories cannot retain, pleading, that God may make it forthcoming to you againſt the time of your need. Hath the word diſcovered any particular ſin or luſt to you? then bewail and mourn for it, and beg mortifying grace to ſubdue and conquer it.—Have you been negligent in hearing? Lament it, put on new reſolutions, and cry to God for ſtrength; and forget not to employ your great Advocate Jeſus Chriſt, to apologize for your weakneſs and ſhortcomings, and to ſeparate all the defects from your performances, and offer them up in his cenſer perfumed with the incenſe of his merits. Was thy conſcience ſtupid, thy heart hard and thy mind carnal, while hearing a ſoul rouzing ſermon? Be aſhamed of it before God, and chide with thy heart, and ſay to it, "Art thou worſe than Felix a heathen? "For his heart *trembled when he heard of judgment to "come*, Acts xxiv. Art thou worſe than devils? "For *they believe and tremble*, James ii." Oh! ſhall heathens and devils be ſooner moved then my hard heart? Haſt thou reaped no benefit through the day? Let it be matter of exerciſe and lamentation to thee before the Lord. Let never bare ordinances ſatisfy thee, without communion with God therein. As Zaccheus climbed up into the ſycamore tree to ſee Jeſus and when once he had got a ſight of him there, *he came down joyfully*; ſo oughteſt thou to go up to the ſycamore tree of ordinances for this purpoſe, to ſee God in Chriſt; and, unleſs this ſight be granted thee, *come down ſorrowfully.* When men go to meet their beloved friend at a certain place, and they miſs him, how diſcontentedly do they go away? Alas! what are ordinances without God, but as a table without meat, a well without water, from which a needy ſoul muſt needs depart hungry and thirſty?

It concerns thee to call thyſelf to account for thy frame and carriage in hearing, reading, prayer, praiſe, giving alms, and every duty you have been employed in through the day. As God himſelf reviewed every day's work of his, and *ſaw it was good*, Gen. i. So ſhould we review every day, and, in a ſpecial manner, every Sabbath day's work and ſee if it be good or no. Let us *judge ourſelves, that we may not be judged.*

II. Read over theſe portions of ſcripture which you have heard opened, with the ſcriptures cited by the miniſter; think on them, and beg the illumination of

God's Spirit to make you underſtand them. We ſee the eunuch was reading the ſcripture upon his return from the public worſhip, and God bleſſed it and ſent him an interpreter; and if you do ſo, you may expect the ſame. He that ſent Philip to him, will ſend his own Spirit to help you; who, when he comes, brings ſuch a divine light alongſt with him, as will make yon ſee the truths of the goſpel with another eye, and diſcover more in the word than ever you beheld in it before: So that, tho' you have read the ſame chapters and verſes about Chriſt many times over, yet then you ſhall be made to ſay, O where were my eyes till now, that I never ſaw what was contained here?

III. Labour by all means to keep up the remembrance and impreſſions of the word thou haſt been hearing on thy mind: Let it not be as a wayfaring man to tarry with thee only for a night; but let it be an inhabitant to dwell with thee all the week over. Hath the Spirit made any warm impreſſions by the word upon thy ſoul this day? O watch over them and ſtrive to preſerve and entertain them throgh the evening, and look to God for help. "Oh Lord, let me not loſe the heat of this day, in the cool of the evening. Thy word hath wrought wonderful changes upon others, O that I may likewiſe experience the ſame, and have it to ſay, I went forth proud, but am come home humble: I went out careleſs and hard-harted, but am come back thoughtful and contrite in ſpirit: I went to church a bond ſlave of ſatan, but am returned a free man of Chriſt!"

Poor ſoul, much depends upon your care end watchfulneſs over yourſelf in the evening of the Lord's day, that *you loſe not theſe things wrought in you by the word* through the day. There are many like theſe ſoldiers who are victorious in the day, but looſe all at night thro' their ſecurity and ſloth; they do not watch and ſtand to their arms but ſuffer the enemy to ſurprize them, to beat up their quarters, and ſpoil their tents, when they are ſecure, dreaming of no hazard. Many are like Hannibal, that knew better how to obtain a victory, than how to improve it when got. Watch then againſt the devil, the world, and your own hearts, and beware of loſing at night what you gained through the day.

I ſhall here give ſome advices, in order to the cheriſhing and improving of theſe good motions, convictions, or reſolutions, that may be begot in you by hearing of the word on the Lord's day. Theſe are ſparks kindled by the breath of God, therefore do not ſmother them, but ſtrive to blow them up into a flame by prayer and meditation.

1ſt, Beg earneſtly that God, who hath *begun a good work* in thee, may carry it on; that theſe convictions may terminate in thy converſion here, and thy ſalvation hereafter.—Cry, Lord, ſuffer not theſe tender fruits to be nipped in the bud, or blaſted in the bloſſom by ſatan's froſt winds, or the world's cold blaſts; but mercifully cheriſh and preſerve them to maturity, *to the praiſe of the glory of his grace*.

2dly, Conſider what a crying ſin it is againſt God, to neglect or ſtifle thy convictions: He will treat thee as a murderer if thou do it: It is murder to deſtroy the *conception in the womb*. Chriſt alſo will take it as a ſolemn affront offered to him; for convictions are the meſſengers which he ſends to prepare the way of his entry into the ſoul: And will he not heinouſly reſent it, to ſee his meſſengers killed or maltreated? O what horrid ingratitude is it to Chriſt, after he hath opened the door of our hearts half way by convictions, to have it ſhut againſt him, when he is juſt ready to enter; or, when he is half way in, to be thruſt back again, and have the door thrown in his face!

3dly, Conſider how prejudicial it is to thy own ſoul. The dying away of thy convictions threatens the life of thy ſoul. If you quench them, God may be provoked to paſs that dreadful ſentence, *My ſpirit ſhall no longer ſtrive with thee:* And ſo there follows a midnight ſilence, and thou art loſt for ever. O tremble for fear of God's judgments, for thy caſe is more dangerous than others: No water freezeth ſo faſt, as that which hath been once warmed; and no iron is ſo hard, as that which hath been oft heated and oft quenched. Therefore,

4thly, Preſently ſtrike in with thy convictions. Bleſs God for awaking thee, when others about thee are lying in a deep ſleep; for viſiting thee, when others are paſſed by: Be content to have thy ſore lanced, and thy wound ſearched: Suffer no other plaiſter to be applied to it but Chriſt's blood: Go not to heal the wound of thy conſcience by the works of the law, and thy own duties; for theſe will at beſt but ſkin it over for a while. Neither go to ſhift off convictions by delays, as did Felix; for this is the devil's great ſtratagem to ruin thy ſoul. It is with the heart as with melted wax; if you clap the ſeal to it when it is ſoft, it receives an impreſſion which abides; but if you delay, it ſoon cools and hardens, ſo that preſs on it as ye will, it is to no purpoſe. Let us then imitate David, who, when he was convinced of the evil of his ways, *without any delay turned his feet to God's teſtimonies*, Pſal. cxix. 59. Put forth thy utmoſt ſtrength, and ſtir up thyſelf to turn from ſin, and flee to Chriſt, while conſcience is ſtirring, the Spirit ſtriving, Chriſt waiting, his bowels ſounding, and his blood pleading; for the loſs of this ſeaſon may be the loſs of thy ſoul. God ſaith thrice in one chapter, Heb. iv. *To day, to-day, to day*, but the devil cries, *To morrow, to morrow, to-morrow*. Surely God is wiſeſt, and his time fitteſt. *To-day* is thy living day, *to morrow* may be thy dying day; *To-day* thou art on earth, *to morrow* thou mayſt be in hell; *To-day* mercy is inviting, *to-morrow* juſtice may be ſmiting; therefore, while thou art called *to-day, hear the voice of God and conſcience, and harden not your heart*.

IV. Labour to perſevere in prayer this evening; do not faint in it, but endeavour with Moſes, to *hold up your hands this day till the going down of the ſun*. Our frequency and importunity in this duty is no trouble, but a delight to the hearer of prayer. Chriſt ſaith oft this day to the ſpouſe, *Thy voice is ſweet, cauſe me to hear it*. Continue inſtant in prayer this day, wreſtling as Jacob, and ſaying, *I will not let thee go till thou bleſs me*. And as orators, at the cloſe of their ſpeech, uſe all their art and ſkill to move the affections of their auditors; ſo do you, at the cloſe of the Lord's day, put forth all your grace and ſpiritual ſtrength in prayer, to prevail with God for a bleſſing. Pray this evening, as if it were to be thy laſt Sabbath, thy laſt night, or thy laſt prayer; knowing that, when death comes, thou canſt pray no more: For, as death binds up the hand that it can work no more, ſo it ſtrikes dumb the tongue that it can ſpeak no more; according to Eccl. ix 10. Iſa xxxviii. 18.

V. Study to be denied to all your Sabbath prayers and performances. Beware, my friends, of ſecret truſting to them, as any piece of righteouſneſs before God; for that will ſpoil all, like the dead fly in the apothecary's ointment Say therefore this day, after you have done all, *We are unprofitable ſervants.* Look above all, as if you had done nothing at all, to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to anſwer for all. See that you join nothing of your own with this perfect righteouſneſs, in the point of your juſtification and acceptance with God; for this is both diſhonourable to Chriſt, and dangerous to yourſelves: Therefore beware of it. There is a natural popery in the minds of all; we much incline to ſtand upon our own legs, and to have ſomething of our own to found upon. But is it any other thing than blaſphemy, to charge Chriſt's ſacrifice with lameneſs, or his work with deficiency? or to think with our penny to make up Chriſt's ſum, and with our polluted duties to add any perfection to the blood of Chriſt, which is infinite? Shall not we reſt content with that wherewith God hath declared himſelf well pleaſed! Let us then with Paul, *count all things but dung and loſs for Chriſt and his righteouſneſs*, and deſire only to be found in him.

Concerning family duties on the Sabbath night.

IN the next place, I proceed to ſpeak of family-duties requiſite this night, and how theſe are to be performed.

I. O heads of families, ſee that ye be more ſolemn, full and particular in family worſhip this evening, than at other times: It is pleaſant this night to hear univerſally the melody of God's praiſe *in the tabernacles of the righteous*. Lay out your family ſins, wants and mercies fully and plainly before God in family-prayer.

II. Confer about the ſermons, and repeat over what you have heard; for the Lord, Deut. xi. 18. 19. requires you not only to lay up God's words in your hearts, but alſo to *ſpeak of them when you ſit in your houſes, and to teach them your children*. You ought alſo to call your ſervants and children to an account, as to what they remember, and how they have profited by the ſermons. When you ſend your ſervants to the market, you examine what market they have made: Now, the public ordinances are heaven's free market for their ſouls, and will you never enquire what they have gained thereat? This way of rehearſing the ſermons is very refreſhing and advantageous, and hereby one of you would be uſeful to another; for, what one forgets, another may remember.

III. Let parents and heads of families take ſome time this evening in catechiſing and inſtructing their children and ſervants in the knowledge of the principles of religion, and of their duty towards God, their neighbours, and themſelves. We may obſerve from the iv. of Mark, and xiv. of Luke, that after our Lord had inſtructed the people as a public preacher on the Sabbath day, he afterwards did examine and teach his twelve diſciples as a private maſter of a family.

1*ſt*, Begin with children as ſoon as they are capable, and inform them, that there is ſuch a Being as God, whom they ought to honour, reverence and love above all things:——That they are his creatures, the work of his hands:——That he preſerves them, and gives them all the good things they enjoy;—and that every good thing is to be ſought from God by prayer, and thanks returned to him for the ſame.——Shew them the evil and danger of ſin, and how much God hates it:—That they have immortal ſouls:—That there is a life after death in another world, wherein men ſhall receive a great and eternal reward, or a fearful endleſs puniſhment, according as they have done or neglected their duty in this world:——And that God loves thoſe who keep his commandments and pray to him; but hates wicked men, and thoſe who do not pray If theſe principles were early inſtilled and rooted in children, they would in ſome meaſure ſtick with them all their days. Likewiſe, as they are capable, ſhew them the great degeneracy and corruption of human nature, derived to us by the fall of our firſt parents: And, ſhew them the way of our recovery from this miſerable ſtate by Jeſus Chriſt, who was ſent by God to redeem and ſave us from the bondage of ſin and ſatan, and from the damnation of hell.

2*dly*, Before they are capable to read, or get and repeat our Shorter Catechiſm, you ought to frame many ſhort queſtions and anſwers concerning the foreſaid principles, ſuch as they are able to mind, and frequently examine them upon them: And, for your help in this matter, you may conſult the little catechiſm I have publiſhed, called *The Mother's Catechiſm for the young child*.—But aſſoon as your children are able to repeat our Shorter Catechiſm, injoin them, and your ſervants alſo to commit it to their memories, preſcribing ſo much of it to them every week, and duly examine them upon it every Lord's day: for it contains an excellent ſcheme both of the principles of our religion which we ought to believe, and alſo of the duties thereof which we ſhould practiſe. And is it not far better to repeat this, than ballads and idle ſtories, wherewith many burden their memories?

3*dly*, As you ought to learn them to read, ſo you ſhould this day ſolemnly injoin them to read the bible and other pious books, and inquire at them what they have been reading through the day and the bygone week. And, becauſe of the natural backwardneſs that is both in young and old to holy duties, you ought to contrive the moſt wiſe and effectual methods you can think on, to engage them to delight and diligence in reading of the bible; ſuch as theſe, *viz.* Teach children the moſt profitable, pleaſant and affecting hiſtories and paſſages of the bible; ſuch as, *the creation of man, Adam's fall, the flood, the deſtruction of Sodom, the ſacrificing of Iſaac, the ſelling of Joſeph, Pharaoh's cutting off the infants, and Moſes's preſervation; Moſes his going up to the mount, and getting the tables of the law; the paſſages concerning Samſon's killing the Philiſtines, and David's killing Goliath; the forty-two children deſtroyed by bears; the three children in the fiery furnace; Daniel in the lion's den; Jonah in the whale's belly; Herod's deſtroying the young children*, and the like. Endeavour to tell them theſe paſſages as much as ye can in their own language, and this will engage them to the greater delight and attention, and cauſe them to remember them the better; alſo, you would put them to rehearſe them over again to you.

Again, cauſe them read a chapter of the bible every night, and tell you ſome of the principal things in it before they ly down; or, when you read a chapter in the family, appoint each of them ſome one verſe of it to repeat the next day.——Moreover, when they come to learn to write, it is a good way to give them paper-books, to write down what paſſages they think moſt conſiderable in the bible, or what remarkable ſayings and hiſtories they find in other books. They might well ſpend the Saturday's afternoon this way, when they have moſt leiſure.——

In the next place, it would be of good uſe, when you examine them, to teach them to prove every point of religion by ſome pregnant place of ſcripture. This would be the way to beget in them firm, ſtrong and fixed perſuaſions of the truths of Chriſtianity. Many, alas! profeſs Chriſtianity, merely becauſe it is the national religion, and they were ſo educate: They build their faith more upon the aſſertions and teachings of men, than upon the ſure foundation of God's word, and all becauſe they were not put to it when young, to acquaint themſelves with the ſcriptures, or to bring proofs from them for the truths they learned. Are not there many profeſſors of Chriſtianity, who, if they were put to it, could not give one text of ſcripture to prove ſo much as the great *fundamentals of their religion?* It cannot be expected that ſuch will be cloſs adherers to it in a day of trial and perſecution. A good way to mend this fault is, to get the Confeſſion of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechiſms, which are printed with the ſcripture proofs, ſet down at large, and make much uſe thereof.——*Laſtly*, As you ought to cauſe them attend punctually this day upon the ordinances, ſo you ought carefully this night to aſk an account of the text, and their notes of the lecture and ſermons; reprove them for careleſs hearing, encourage them when they give any tolerable good account, and promiſe them ſome reward to do better the next Sabbath.

4thly, You ought this day to learn and enjoin your children to pray, and to aſk a bleſſing, and give thanks for their meat: you may ſee ſome helps for them in the end of the Mother's Catechiſm before mentioned. Children cannot pray at firſt without help: Therefore it is fit to teach them ſome ſhort forms; and, in the firſt place, the Lord's Prayer, the great pattern of all prayer. Teach them to retire every morning and evening to pray, and to pray frequently on the Lord's day; and alſo cauſe them go and pray together by turns; this would be a good mean to engage their love to one another, and to cauſe them ſtudy to be more grave and exact in their prayers: and therefore it were fit alſo to cauſe them pray ſometimes in your own hearing.—enjoin them alſo to be fervent and ſincere in prayer, and to pray with a lively ſenſe of God's all ſeeing eye that beholds in ſecret, and with an awful regard to the judgment of the great day.—Likewiſe when they come to any capacity, tell them, That they muſt not reſtrict themſelves to their forms, but muſt make additions of their own framing; tell them, That God loves theſe words beſt that come from the heart; and, for their help therein, tell them often of their ſin and miſery by nature, and of their need of Chriſt, and his blood to waſh and ſave them; direct them frequently to ſay, *Lord teach me to pray, give me thy Spirit to help me to pray.* Alſo every Sabbath night enquire at them what new words and expreſſions they have got and added to their prayers, and encourage and reward them according to their diligence. O parents, neglect not to teach your poor children to pray and read: Will you teach them to work, and not teach them to pray? If you do it not, the devil will teach them to ban, lie, and play on the Lord's day. And will it not be a fearful reckoning that you will have to make ere long for their prayerleſs and periſhing ſouls? A great many children neglect prayer, not ſo much from their averſion to it, as from this, *that none takes care to teach them how to do it;* and hence it is, they often neglect it all their days, Whereas if they were early taught and put on the duty of prayer, the habit and cuſtom of the thing would make it turn eaſy and delightful; but, when this is neglected, they cannot afterwards be brought to it, without great reluctance and difficulty. So that you ſee, O parents, if ye improve not the ſeaſon of youth, the blood of your childrens ſouls will be laid to your door.

5thly, It is very proper on this day, aſſoon as your children are capable, to take them aſide, and ſolemnly to tell them the vows you took on at baptiſm in their name, and as ſponſers for them, and how you publicly engaged *that they would be the Lord's, and renounce the world, the devil, and the fleſh:* And therefore, for your own exoneration, you ſhould take them ſolemnly engaged to do and perform all theſe things which you promiſed in their name. Put them to it perſonally and explicitely to own and renew their baptiſmal covenant, to ſhew themſelves Chriſtians, not only by their parents dedication, but alſo by their own deed and voluntary conſent. Let each of them profeſs and ſay, "I chuſe "God the Father for my God and Father, I chuſe "God the Son for my Redeemer and Saviour, I chuſe "the holy Ghoſt for my Guide and Sanctifier, God's "word for my rule, God's people for my companions, "holineſs for my way, and heaven for my home."

6thly, Take care this evening to give both them and your ſervants many ſerious and affectionate admonitions concerning their ſouls, and their duties to God and man. Warn them ſolemnly againſt ſin and vice, and particularly theſe vices that are too common among us; ſtudy to check and diſcourage the beginings of vice in children; obſerve and watch the firſt appearances thereof, and pluck them up by the roots: For, if vice be connived at in the beginning, it will turn afterwards too ſtrong for you; but when it is never ſuffered to appear to paſs without reproof or correction, this helps by degrees to bread in children an abhorrence of it. Labour in a ſpecial manner to beget in them frightful impreſſions of the ſins of ſwearing, and profaning the name of God, the ſin of diſobedience to parents, the ſin of Sabbath breaking, of lying, obſcene words, ſtealing, pride, paſſion, revenge, neglect of prayer and reading, *&c.* Study to perſuade them to godlineſs with the moſt endearing language, and prevailing arguments, according to Prov. xxxi. 1. 2. 3. that ſo you may convince them that in all your admonitions and reproofs, you have an earneſt deſire for their welfare, and that you and they may dwell in heaven together through all eternity. It is ſometimes needful ſolemnly to obteſt and charge them to mind their duty; as Mr Bolton a godly man ſaid to his children on his death bed, ‘ I charge you, O my children, not to meet me at Chriſt's tribunal in a Chriſtleſs and graceleſs condition.’

7thly, Join fervent prayers this day with your endeavours; for prayerleſs inſtructions will not profit. Parents may plant, miniſters may water, *but God only can give the increaſe*. You ought to take ſome time this day to pity, mourn and pray for your children, ſervants and relations that are in the darkneſs of a natural ſtate, and under the ſlavery of ſatan. If any of them were taken by the Turks, and laid in dark dungeons, treated as ſlaves, ſcourged every day, and barbarouſly uſed; would not your bowels yearn, and your hearts bleed for them? Or, if any of your near relations were dead, would you not mourn for them? And are you not more concerned to mourn and pray for them that are ſatan's ſlaves, juſtice's priſoners, ſpiritually dead, and ſentenced to everlaſting death? Have you any love to your children, and will you not carry them this day in the arms of faith and prayer to the bleſſed Jeſus, beſeeching him *to put his hands of mercy on them, and bleſs them?* as in Mat. xix. 13. yea, not only pray for them but take them alongſt with you, and let them be the eye and ear witneſſes of your prayers, ſighs and tears for the converſion and ſalvation of their ſouls; and who knows but this might work upon their hearts? Let them hear you ſay to God, as Jacob, Gen. xxxiii. 5. ‘ Lord, thou haſt graciouſly given me theſe children, but, Oh! (you may add) Lord, I have given them ſin, that is their portion from me. Lord tho' I cannot give them Chriſt and grace, yet thou canſt do both; they are born to me once, O that they may be born to thee a ſecond time! Say as Abraham, Gen. xvii. *O that my Iſhmael may live before thee!* And Deut. xxxiii. *Let my Reuben live, and not die.* Let theſe who are pieces of my bowels, and are now dead in treſpaſſes and ſin, live in thy ſight; thou art the Lord of life, breathe on them, and they ſhall live.——Lord, let not theſe who are ſo dear to me fry in the flames for ever; one houſe holds us now, let one heaven hold us hereafter.—— Cry as thoſe in the goſpel, Mat. xvii. *Lord have mercy on my ſon; my daughter is grievouſly vexed:* Lord come and heal them, and let me ſee my children to be the work of thy hands in the midſt of thy houſe; then ſhall not my face wax pale, nor be aſhamed, but I'll ſanctify the holy One of Iſrael,’ Iſa. xxix. 22. 23.

But, in midſt of theſe ſecret and family duties neceſſary on the evening of the Lord's day, it is needful that our frail bodies be refreſhed with meat and drink; and, the work of the day being near over, you are at the more freedom to eat plentifully; yet ſtill with holy fear and caution, and a deſire ſpiritually to improve the time of eating, and to make God's glory your end, in eating and drinking, 1 Cor. x. 31.

If you be to have company or ſtrangers with you, then look to God for wiſdom to behave yourſelves in all your words and deportment, that you may neither do them harm, nor get harm from them. Say, ‘ O that my lips this night were like thoſe of the righteous which feed many!’

When you are called to ſit down to ſupper this night, think or ſay, ‘ How happy were I, if I were now called to ſit down and ſup with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, at that higher table that ſhall never be drawn, where they enjoy an everlaſting Sabbath, that hath no night nor darkneſs to follow upon it, as this hath!’

When you ſee the table covered for you, O bleſs the Author of it, and ſay, ‘ When God remembers me let me not forget him: Oh let not my table turn a ſnare to me; let me never make a god of my belly, nor employ my chief care for the meat that periſheth.’

When the meat is brought, let us, according to our Saviour's example, look up to heaven, and pray for a bleſſing on our food, and for the ſanctified uſe of God's creatures, that we may taſte covenant-love in common mercies, and enjoy the Creator while uſing the creature. Then think, ‘ O how ſweet would theſe mercies be, if they come dipt in the blood of Chriſt, and through the channel of the everlaſting covenant to me! If I could enjoy them, not as a creature, but as an heir, *and a joint heir with Chriſt*, who is the *Heir of all things*, and hath been pleaſed to adopt believers in his right! O how ſweet, if every morſel did come from my Father's hand, and ſent from his table, as an earneſt of greater and better things laid up for me above! Lord, I am not worthy of the leaſt crumb that falls from the table of thy providence, and yet thou covereſt a full table to worthleſs me; *what ſhall I render to the Lord?*’

Is thy proviſion but ſmall? Then ſtudy to be content therewith: Conſider how chearfully Chriſt the Heir of all things did thank God for coarſe and mean fare, John vi. when he had but a few barley loaves and ſmall fiſhes for himſelf and his whole family. How much better provided are we, than Chriſt and his numerous family was? And ſhall we not be eaſy and thankful?

Have you a full table? Then fear leſt theſe outward things inſnare your heart; and, for preventing of it, think, ‘ O what a poor portion would theſe things be, if I get no better! O how miſerable will I be, if, when God gives me bread to the full, he ſhould ſend leanneſs to my ſoul!’ Therefore remember Luther's ſolemn proteſt to God, when a bountiful preſent was ſent him, he proteſted, *That he would not be put off with common mercies.*

But, if you have any clearneſs concerning your intereſt in Chriſt, the ſight of God's goodneſs to you in a full table, ſhould cauſe you rejoice in him, and ſay, ‘ All this and heaven too! O what a good Maſter do we ſerve!’

When you have eaten, and are full, ſee that ye forget not God your Maker and Benefactor, but with heart and mouth, in a ſolemn manner, give thanks to him. O believers, you have four things particularly to give thanks for; *1ſt*, That God gives mercies to furniſh your table. *2dly*, Health to uſe them. *3dly*, Peace to meet together. *4thly*, That ye have a right to them; I mean not a common, but a covenant-right, a right by virtue of Chriſt's purchaſe.

It were very agreeable, to conclude all by ſinging a pſalm of praiſe.

I do not offer to ſtint any Chriſtian family to any preciſe particular method of performing duties on the Sabbath evening, but muſt leave that to be determined by the prudence of maſters of families, according to the circumſtances of their families. Some may find it convenient to catechiſe their children and ſervants, and repeat the ſermons before ſupper, ſome after; ſo ſome may perform family-worſhip before, ſome after; others both before and after. Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind; only labour that no duty incumbent be omitted.

I do not ſay, that all the forenamed duties, in all their ſolemnity are indiſpenſibly neceſſary every Lord's day; for time and circumſtances may ſo ſtraiten us, that we cannot get them performed ſo fully as before directed, eſpecially as to the inſtruction of children and ſervants, and the examination of ourſelves; but what cannot be overtaken in one Sabbath, let it be done in another. I have choſen to be pretty full in this directory, becauſe it may be uſeful alſo for other days of the week.

Concerning ſecret duties at the cloſe of the day.

WHEN family duties and ſupper are over, and the condition of our weak and weary bodies begins to call for ſleep and reſt, let us endeavour to cloſe this holy day in a due and ſuitable manner. Take theſe few directions;

1. When you find ſleep beginning to aſſault you, think, " O how ſoon are we tired of doing good! O " that we could ſay, Tho' we may be ſomewhat weary " with our work, yet we are not weary of our work! " And it is our regret, that we ſhould be laid under " a neceſſity of loſing ſo much of our time in ſleeping, and ſhould ly ſo long, incapable of ſerving " either God or man. Let this make us long to be " there, where there ſhall be no need of ſleep, but " we ſhall be like the angels of God, who never ſleep " nor reſt from ſerving and beholding God."

II. Think how terrible is it for a Chriſtleſs unconverted ſinner to ly down this night with ſo many millions of unpardoned ſins on his back, to ſleep ſecurely within the flood mark of God's vengeance, and within a ſtep of hell!——O unconverted man, conſider your continual hazard; you never lay down with aſſurance to riſe again; you never ſlept one Sabbath night, with aſſurance you would ſee another Sabbath, or hear another ſermon; and how can you live at peace in ſuch a condition? Death and hell, are ever before you: it is a wonder you do not think on them by day, and dream of them by night, lie down in fear, riſe in fear, and live in fear, leſt death come before you be converted; it is a wonder you can get any ſleep in this condition. If your body want but meat, drink or clothing, yea, if you have but an aching tooth, it hinders you to ſleep; and yet wilt thou ſleep, O ſinner, when both ſoul and body are on the brink of hell, and the devil gaping and roaring for you? O then reſolve you *will not give ſleep to your eyes, nor ſlumber to your eye lids*, till your ſoul be in a better condition; at leaſt, till you pour our your heart, confeſs your ſins, lay down your weapons of rebellion, and bemoan your caſe before the Lord, and look up to Chriſt for pity and pardon. We ſhould not willingly venture to ſleep in that caſe we would not venture to die in. How many have been hurried into eternity in a moment! O think with yourſelf, " Death may be within a day's march of me; " to day I am ſinning, but to-morrow I may be dying. " O what if death take me doing the devil's work? " will it not ſend me to him to receive my wages?"

III. Before you lie down this night, confeſs and mourn over the ſins of the bypaſt day; lament your manifold ſhortcomings in public, in private and ſecret duties; ſay, " Alas for the mean and low conceptions " I have had of God, the great Object of worſhip, " this day! What formality and hyporiſy in my approaches to him! O how vain and wandering were " my thoughts, when they ſhould have been moſt " fixed and intent upon God! How dark and blind " was my underſtanding, when God's truths were laid " before me! How little of the evil of ſin, or beauty " of holineſs did I ſee! Lord how hard and flinty was " my heart, little affected by all the ſtrokes of the " hammer of thy word upon it? How dead and carnal " were my affections, little moved by all the rich diſplays and offers of Chriſt's love and beauty! How " ſleepy was my conſcience, little ſtartled by all the " reproofs and threatenings of thy word! How falſe " and treacherous was my memory, in letting ſlip the " ſweet counſels and comforts I heard! Oh what by-ends have I had in duty this day? How little have " I been concerned for the intereſt of Chriſt's church " and kingdom in the world! How idle and unedifying have my words been, when in company! Oh " how little have I done for God's glory, or my " neighbour's good this day!" And, having thus humbly confeſſed your ſins and ſhortcomings this day, make application to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and to his interceſſion for acceptance with God, that ſo you may lie down this night in a reconciled ſtate with him.

IV. Commit yourſelves by fervent prayer to God's tuition and protection through the night, even to the protection of *him that keeps Iſrael, who never ſlumbers nor ſleeps*. You cannot ſleep in ſafety, unleſs God watch for you; for, while you are ſleeping, there are many enemies and evil ſpirits about you, ſeeking your hurt; and you have no friend then but God to look to you: You are then both inſenſible of your danger, and unable to help yourſelf. Pray then that God may *ſet a hedge about you*, that ſatan cannot break through; and that he may appoint his angels to pitch their tents round about you, and all you have. Pray that God himſelf may watch over you while you are ſleeping, and may keep you from being diſturbed or defiled by evil dreams or imaginations in the night. Would you have your reſt refreſhing, your ſleep ſweet, and your dreams inſtructing, and God himſelf to be your Keeper and Guard in the night? Then cloſe this day with fervent and believing prayer to God in Chriſt: He were a fooliſh governour of a city, that would betake himſelf to reſt before he ſet the watch for the city's ſafeguard.

V. Endeavour to lie down this night with thankful hearts to God; let us bleſs God for the Sabbath, and for all the mercies of it, eſpecially for the joyful ſound of the goſpel, and the news of Chriſt. But O let us not be content with hearing the joyful ſound, without knowing the ſame; with the news of Chriſt, without an intereſt in Chriſt; with Chriſt revealed to us, without Chriſt revealed in us. Let us not be like fooliſh children, that play by the light of that candle which is ſet up for their preparing for going to reſt, leſt the light be extinguiſhed, and we go at laſt to the bed of the grave in the darkneſs of ſin and ſorrow. Have you any comfortable view of your intereſt in Chriſt? or had you any thing of his Spirit or preſence this day in the ordinances? then rejoice in God, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits*: *Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

Again, bleſs God for health and peace to lie down with. “ Some are ſo diſtreſſed, they dare not lie down “ for lack of breath; others are chaſed from their “ beds and dwellings by the raging ſword or peſtilence; “ and behold, I may lie down without any to make “ me afriad.”

Further, let us bleſs the Lord that we have warm beds to lie on, and not the cold ground, with a ſtone for our pillow, as Jacob had. Many of God’s dear ſaints, *of whom the world was not worthy*, were put to lie in *dens and caves of the earth*, Heb. xi. Nay, *the Son of man had not where to lay his head*, while he lived in this ungrateful world. Wonder at his humiliation, and ſay, “ Had it not been for him, inſtead of a “ refreſhing bed, I might have been lying down this “ night in the flames of hell.”

VI. It is very proper this night, as well as every night to lie down with thoughts of death and eternity. Think, now I have one Sabbath leſs to live in the world; and, O that thereby I may be a Sabbath day’s journey nearer heaven, where I ſhall celebrate an eternal Sabbath, that will never draw near an end? O to be there where there is no ſleep, no night to interrupt the ſaints communion with God!—When you are putting off your cloaths, think, the time is near when you muſt put off this earthly tabernacle.—When you lay aſide your garments, think, ſo muſt I ſhortly lay aſide the garment of this body. O may I then expect immediately to be cloathed upon with glory and immortality! and, ſhall I not long for that time? This body, in its beſt ſtate, is but a priſon to a believing ſoul, and detains it from its happineſs. Plato, tho’ a heathen had ſuch clear apprehenſions of the immortality of the ſoul, that he ſaid to one that fed highly, *What mean you to make your priſon ſo ſtrong?* Am I a believer in Chriſt, and ſhall not I be looking long thro’ the grates of mortality, till the jaylor come and open my priſon-door, knock off the fetters of ſin, and ſet me at liberty, that I may with joy fly to my eternal reſt? Moreover, think how willing we are to put off our cloaths at night, that we may go to reſt, eſpecially when we are weary; and wiſh and ſay, O that I were in a condition to put off the body at death with as great willingneſs and ſatisfaction! and, with Paul long *to be diſſolved*, and to put off this clay tabernacle. Mr. Dod a holy man, ſaith, “ If parents ſhould tell chil“ dren who have played all day, that they muſt go to “ bed; they begin to cry, and ſhew reluctancy: But “ a labouring man is glad when night comes, that “ he may go to reſt. So (ſays he) to the wicked, who “ have miſ-ſpent the day of their life, death is an un“ welcome gueſt; but the godly are toſſed and wearied “ in this world, and therefore are content to go to the “ bed of the grave, *where the wicked ceaſe from trou“ bling and where the weary be at reſt*, Job iii. 17. “ Sin wearies them, ſatan wearies them, the wicked “ weary them, ſickneſs and croſſes weary them, and “ Chriſt’s abſence wearies them of the world, and “ no wonder they deſire to be at reſt from all theſe “ troubles.”

When you ſee yourſelf ſtript of your clothes, think, *Naked came I into the world, and naked ſhall I return*; I can carry nothing hence of all my earthly enjoyments. Lord, let me never chuſe my portion in theſe things I muſt leave eternally behind me. Let worldlings reflect on this: All thoſe things, for which you have toiled and laboured for many years, you muſt leave in one night, Luke xii. 20. Nothing of all your earthly treaſures can you carry alongſt with you to another world, unleſs it be the ruſt thereof, to witneſs againſt you, and eat up your ſouls as a canker to all eternity, according to James v. 1, 3. Whatever be your enjoyments here remember death ſtands as a porter at the gate of eternity, to ſee, that *as you brought nothing into the world, you carry nothing out of it*, 1 Tim. vi. 7. A coffin and a winding ſheet ſhall be the moſt of it. You may imagine what a broad look the poor ſoul will give then to theſe things you made your treaſure here. O (will it ſay) muſt I part for ever with all my riches? muſt I be ſet naked aſhore in eternity, having nothing to relieve me? muſt I ſuffer an everlaſting famine? Poor ſoul, the world’s treaſures do not paſs current in another world; they cannot there purchaſe you any relief, or buy ſo much as *one drop of water to cool* thy flaming *tongue*.

Let your lying down in bed, and covering you with clothes, put you in mind of your lying down in the cold grave and your being covered up with earth. Look on your bed as a tomb or ſepulchre; and every night, before you enter into it, ſeek reconciliation with God, and new diſcoveries of his love in Chriſt, as you would do if going to your grave. How ſad is it to be dying without Chriſt, and God reconciled thro’ him?—Again think or ſay, “ O that the grave “ may be a bed of reſt to me, upon the account of “ Chriſt’s lying therein!” The grave is become a bed of roſes to believers, by the Roſe of Sharon’s lying down in it. Chriſt hath hereby ſweetened and perfumed it for them. Am I a believer, and ſhall I fear to lie down in my Redeemer’s bed? O believer, thou mayſt every night ſay, with the Pſalmiſt, *I will both lay me down in peace, and ſleep: for thou, bleſſed Lord, only makeſt me to dwell in ſafety*, Pſal. iv. 8. When you are laid down, *commune with your own heart upon your bed*, and, with the pſalmiſt, *remember God upon your bed, and meditate on him in the night watches*: And, if you fall aſleep with ſome heavenly meditation in your thoughts, your ſleep will be more ſweet, your dreams more comfortable, and your awaking more refreſhful. And, in a ſpecial manner, let us endeavour, on the Sabbath night, that as we began this day with the delightful remembrance of Chriſt’s reſurrection, to to cloſe it with the chearful expectation of Chriſt’s ſecond coming, and our awaking and riſing from the grave to meet him. And when Chriſt is ſaying, *Surely I come quickly*; O that we may be in caſe this night to anſwer, *Amen, even ſo, come Lord Jeſus!*

Concerning our carriage after the Sabbath is over.

THUS have I finiſhed the ſecond general head in this *direction*, *viz.* What is requiſite in performing the *duties of the Sabbath*, when it is come?

It remains that I ſhould ſpeak a word to the third, *viz.* What is incumbent on us at the end of the Sabbath, or when it is paſt?

When the next day cometh, and we are again to fall to our weekly employments, we ought to retain lively impreſſions of the preceding day's work on our ſpirits, and not ſoon forget what we have ſeen and heard on the Sabbath. In the firſt place, let us repent for the ſins and ſhortcomings of the Sabbath, and beg forgiveneſs thereof from God, that we go not about our worldly employments with the guilt of the Sabbath-day's ſins upon us, leſt they bring a curſe upon the *works of our hands*.—Again let us pray, and endeavour to bring much of a Sabbath day's frame into the buſineſs of the week, and retain much of it through the week, that ſo we may be the fitter for the next Sabbath, yea, and in caſe to long for it: This would be a fair way to obtain a bleſſing on the labours of the week, and to proſper the *works of our hands*. Oh! ſhall we bring ſo much of the week with us into the Sabbath, and will we bring nothing of the Sabbath with us into the week? O let us ſtudy to be ſo *in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, as to *walk in the Spirit* all the week thereafter, mindful both of the Sabbath paſt, and of the Sabbath next enſuing; becauſe it is ſaid to us every day, *Remember the Sabbath-day that ye may keep it holy*. Had we more of Sabbath-days thoughts on week-days, then week-day thoughts would leſs trouble us on Sabbath-days.

DIRECTION IV.

Concerning the particular ſins, whereby the ſanctification of the Sabbath is hindered, or the Sabbath profaned.

IF we would duly ſanctify the Lord's day, we muſt conſcientiouſly guard againſt, and abſtain from, all theſe ſins which are oppoſite thereunto; whether they be ſins of *omiſſion* or *commiſſion*, ſins of the *heart*, of the *tongue*, or of the *liſe*.

Of ſins of omiſſion on the Lord's day.

1. I Shall begin with ſins of omiſſion, and neglect of the duties of the Sabbath. There are many, alas! that make this altogether an idle day; they conſume it away in doing nothing, and keep it no better than do the beaſts; they abſtain from the works of religion, as much as from the works of their calling, never conſidering that the Lord's day is profaned by ſloth and idleneſs, as well as by ſervile labour or immoral actions. There are many who place all their religion in negatives, like the Phariſees, Luke xviii. 11. and fooliſhly think to be juſtified by their negative holineſs. "I never wronged my neighbour, (ſay ſome) I did not mock at religion, ſwear, drink drunk, *&c.*" But remember, a man may abſtain from evil, and yet go to hell for not doing good, Mat. iii. 10. A tree is cut down for bringing forth no fruit, as ſoon as for bringing forth bad fruit. It is as dangerous not to do things commanded, as to do things forbidden, Matth. xxiii. 23. There is a wo pronounced againſt the one, as well as the other. The ſlothful ſervant is reckoned a wicked ſervant, Mat. xxv. 26. and adjudged to utter darkneſs, as well as the moſt vitious. Wherefore beware of profaning the Lord's day by idleneſs, or neglecting of the public, private or ſecret duties above mentioned, which are requiſite on this day: And, in a ſpecial manner, beware,

Firſt, Of neglecting the hearing of the word this day, or forſaking the aſſemblies of God's people upon it. What madneſs is it to ſlight the mean of ſaving your lives, and delivering your ſouls from hell? What contempt is it of Chriſt's bowels of mercy? If a great king ſhould ſend an ambaſſador to a condemned malefactor, with offers of remiſſion; would it not highly exaſperate him, if he refuſed ſo much as to hear him? O what may God ſay to ſuch fooliſh ſinners in the day of their diſtreſs, when they cry to him? May he not ſend you to the gods you have ſerved, and tell you, "Ye would not come and hear me when I ſent moſt gracious propoſals of peace to you, neither will I hear you now?" With what torture and anguiſh will you eternally reflect on your folly? If you could now but lay your ear to hell's door, and hear ſuch goſpel-ſlighters crying out againſt their ſin, it would make your hearts tremble. Suppoſe you heard them ſay, "O if time could be recalled, what would we give to hear one goſpel ſermon from the moſt deſpiſed miniſter! How many miles would we go! Yea, we would run from ſea to ſea, to hear one encouraging ſentence from Chriſt's mouth, or his meſſengers: Nay, we would be content to ſuffer a thouſand years darkneſs for one day's goſpel light, a thouſand years burning for one day of the Son of man, many whereof I have neglected: But, oh! there is no hope, the ſeaſon is loſt, the ſentence paſt, and we are irrecoverably undone!" O how will the devils wonder at your folly, and eternally upbraid you with it?

Secondly, Beware of neglecting family duties on the Sabbath: The fourth command binds maſters of families to be careful hereof; yet, alas! how ſadly are they neglected? In many places no family prayers or praiſes, no family inſtructions, no family reading of God's word is to be found. Inſtead of *delighting in the law of the Lord*, which is the character of the bleſſed man, Pſal. i. 2. it is laid by as a ſealed book. The duſt, which many ſuffer their bibles to gather beſide them, will be a fearful witneſs againſt them one day. But more particularly, I ſhall ſpeak,

Of the evil of neglecting family duties.

1ſt, To deter you from the neglect of family worſhip, conſider in what a miſerable ſtate prayerleſs families are; the Spirit of God ranks them into the ſame category with the *heathen that know not God*, Jer. x. 25. For how ſhould the families of Chriſtians be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of Turks and Pagans, but by the badge of family-worſhip? Without this badge, then, you are ranked in with heathens, or perſons excommunicate, that is, ſuch as are caſt out of the church into the devil's hands; for of ſuch Chriſt ſaith, *Let him be to thee as a heathen.*—Again, conſider what is there threatened againſt you; a black cloud continually hangs over your families, ready every moment to pour out wrath and fury upon you, not in ſmall drops, but in great ſhowers, to overwhelm you at once, from which your houſes cannot defend you, tho' their foundations were on a rock, their walls of braſs, and their doors of iron: For, while you are without family-prayer, you want a roof to keep off the ſhower of wrath, and lie night and day expoſed to this terrible threatening, *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name.* It is not ſimply anger that is threatened, but *fury, wrath in the greateſt height and rage.* O let prayerleſs families thro' the land tremble at this threatening! I fear, if it were preſently execute, it would make thin cities and pariſhes ſomewhere: But tho' God be patient and long ſuffering, yet, believe it, there are ſecret and inviſible curſes which light and lie upon prayerleſs families, and the works of their hands. Neglect of prayer doth uncover the roof to let God's curſes drop through upon your perſons, children, tables and all your enjoyments; for you denude yourſelves of all ſecurity and protection. Family prayer is an excellent roof to your houſes; it is like the roof that is made of Iriſh oak, which no venemous ſpider will touch, nor lodge in. Family worſhip, duly performed, diſlodges ſin and vice; nay, it diſlodges the devil alſo: And for theſe houſes that are haunted with evil ſpirits, whatever other reaſon may be given for it, no doubt this is one; God's worſhip hath not been duly performed therein. And tho' the devil doth not appear in a viſible or audible manner, yet he certainly haunts prayerleſs houſes; for he hopes for large draughts out of them. Why? ſin and wickedneſs are fair to reign there; malice, pride, deceit and intemperance will bear ſway; ſwearing, curſing, and lying will be the language of the houſe, and the children will learn it betimes. But, when prayer is introduced into a family, theſe vices are baniſhed, and ſatan removes: For either prayer will make you give over ſinning, or ſinning will make you give over praying; they cannot dwell well together. But the houſe which the unclean ſpirit finds empty of prayer, is a houſe *ſwept and garniſhed* for him and a black train of vices to enter and dwell in. If God's worſhip be not in the houſe, you may write, *Lord, have mercy upon us,* upon the door, as they uſe to do when a houſe is ſhut up with the plague. What can we expect in a prayerleſs houſe, but the plagues and curſes of God? Abraham expected no good in a prayerleſs place; therefore ſays he of Gerar, Gen. xx. 11. *Surely the fear of God is not in this place; they will ſlay me,* &c. What a miſerable place or houſe muſt that be, where God's fear is not? Surely it muſt be a ſink of ſin, a butt of wrath, a cage of unclean birds, and a habitation of devils.

O maſters of families, will you pity the ſouls of your families? tremble leſt their blood be found in your ſkirts. When a child or ſervant dies out of your family, it will be ſad if conſcience have it to tell you, "Here one has died out of your houſe, with whom you never prayed; you dwelt together, eat together, wrought together many years, but you never prayed together. And what if his ſoul be gone to hell thro' your neglect! What if his blood be charged on you? How will you anſwer for it? Who knows but if he had ſeen and heard you pray, your words and example might have moved him to go into a ſecret corner and pray for his own ſoul, and ſo he might have been ſinging with the ſaints in heaven, inſtead of howling with the damned in hell?"

But if the caſe be ſo melancholy when they die from you, ſurely it will be far worſe when you come to die yourſelves. You have all your days kept your families godleſs and prayerleſs; well, what accounts will you give of your ſtewardſhips, when you may be no longer ſtewards? And what anguiſh do you think will ſeize on you, when with Dives, you ſhall feel yourſelves in hell, and then begin (not before) to lift up your eyes to heaven, and ſee the godly praying ones, whom you deſpiſed, afar off, and a great gulf fixed betwixt you and them; and alſo, when you ſhall ſee theſe of your prayerleſs families, whom you ruined by your example and influence, brought down to the ſame place of torment, to increaſe your miſery, and add fewel to your flames? O maſters of prayerleſs families, think on theſe things in time.

Oh! will neither the fear of hell, nor hopes of heaven perſuade you to family prayer? I am ſure far leſs would do it, could I aſſure you that the daily performance of it would gain you an eſtate of ten thouſand merks a year: You would try it as you can, and be punctual in it too; you would no more pretend multitude of buſineſs, want of time, gifts or confidence. And are you ſo atheiſtical, as to prefer a little of the world to heaven? Or ſuppoſe there were ſtrict laws made, that, for every time you neglected prayer, you ſhould be thrown into a *den of lions* as Daniel was for praying; or that you ſhould loſe a finger of your hand, or but pay a hundred merks of fine; would you not pray as you can, and find time for it alſo, rather than loſe your life, finger or money? And are not the laws of God more awful and ſtrict than the laws of men? Is not hell's dungeon, or a den of devils, more terrible than a den of lions? Are not hell's torments more fearful than the loſs of a finger? Is not the wrath of the great God more dreadful than a fine? Oh, will not the fear of God prevail more with you than the fear of man? Remember Daniel's zeal of family prayer, who chuſed rather to be caſt to the lions, before he would forbear it for one day: Oh, what ſhall we ſay of theſe, who will rather venture to be an eternal prey to the roaring lion, than be at this pains for ſalvation to themſelves or their families; but you may hear in their houſes twenty oaths for one prayer!

2dly, Conſider the great ſin of neglecting family-inſtructions upon the Sabbath, which alas! is ſo common, by reaſon whereof many children and ſervants are ignorant, prayerleſs and graceleſs: Their parents and maſters do not teach them to read, nor inſtruct them concerning the principles of religion; they neither pray for them, nor direct them how to pray for themſelves. Is the knowledge of Chriſt a choice and excellent treaſure? And will you withold it from theſe whom you love, ſeeing it will not make you the poorer, but the richer, to communicate it to them? It is the commendation of Abraham, that he both made *his houſhold know God's ways and commanded them to obſerve the ſame,* Gen. xviii. 19. and do you ever think to land in Abraham's boſom, that will not tread in Abraham's footſteps? Have you no pity or compaſſion on them that are *bone of your bone, and fleſh of your fleſh?* Where is the yerning of your bowels towards their precious ſouls, that are in a ſtarving and periſhing condition for lack of knowledge? Will you be like cruel oſtriches, Job xxxix. that are *hardened againſt their young ones*, and leave them to be deſtroyed after they bring them forth? Will you in like manner bring forth your young ones, and then careleſly leave them to be a prey to the devil, and eternally to be torn to pieces by him? Are you indifferent about theſe that come forth of your loins, and whom you profeſs to love ſo dearly, whether they live with the bleſſed Jeſus in heaven, or with the curſed devils in hell? Remember, O parents, who neglect the education of your children God may puniſh you for it, even in this world, by their unnatural and undutiful carriage to you in old age, whereby they may bring down your gray hairs with ſorrow to the grave; and no wonder tho' they make no conſcience of their duty to you, who made no conſcience to teach them their duty to God. Remember alſo, how many children have been brought to a miſerable end in this world by the negligence and unfaithfulneſs of their parents this way; ſome going to the gibbet have bitterly reflected on their parents as the cauſe of their ruin, for giving them ſuch a bad example, and not inſtructing them in the time of their youth. But, above all, conſider how your children and ſervants may riſe up and accuſe you at the bar of God at the great day, and ſay, "Lord, there ſtands my father, there ſtands my maſter, he never taught us, prayed with us, or for us; he neglected prayer, he curſed, he lyed, he brake the Sabbath, and ſo did we after his example. It is true, we are juſtly condemned, but yet we periſh thro' their neglect, our blood is upon their heads." O parents, will it not make you ſpeechleſs, and ſting you to the heart, to hear your poor children crying out againſt you in that day, ſaying, "Had you noticed our ſouls as well as our bodies, had you been as careful to teach us the knowledge of God as of ſuch a trade, it had not been with us as it is this day; we had not now ſtood trembling in expection of that dreadful doom, which is juſt ready to be paſt upon us. Curſed be the man that begat us, and the paps that gave us ſuck; it is to you we owe our eternal ruin and miſery." O negligent parents, what horror and confuſion will then ſeize you in that great and terrible day of the Lord, to hear ſuch a charge from your children! but much more to hear God charge you with their blood, and ſay, "O unnatural wretches, behold how many precious ſouls you neglected and ruined, whoſe happineſs you were bound to procure by ſo many ties of duty and affection: They were ignorant, and you inſtructed them not; they were prayerleſs, and you taught them not; they were Chriſtleſs, and you pitied them not: Yea, you not only neglected to give them good inſtruction, but you gave them bad example; you ſwore, lyed ſpoke obſcenely, broke the Sabbath, mocked religion, *&c.* and lo, in theſe very practices they have followed you to hell, to be an addition to your torments there for ever."

Would you then prevent this ſad reckoning and be found with your children upon the Judge's right hand? ſee that you inſtruct them and pray for them. O fathers, would you wiſh to have your children well provided then lay up a ſtock of prayers for them, both family and ſecret prayer: This is a ſtock that would not be ſoon ſpent, nay, it will be bringing them in ſomething when you are dead and rotten. O mothers, your bodies travailed in pain at their firſt birth, let your ſouls travail in pain for their ſecond birth: Where is your motherly tenderneſs toward the fruit of your womb? Would you not be ſorry to hear them ſcreeching, or ſee them frying in hell's flames, without remedy? Then do what lies in your power, to prevent it, by inſtructing them, praying for them, and praying with them.

Thirdly, Beware of neglecting ſecret duties this day, ſuch as were afore mentioned, and particularly prayer. If thou be one, O ſinner, that reſtraineſt prayer before God this day, it is a black mark of a graceleſs heart; for a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication go ſtill together. As difficulty of breathing, and painfulneſs in ſpeaking, are ſymptoms of a ſick body; ſo averſion to prayer is a ſad ſign of a ſick ſoul: For prayer is the ſoul's breath and ſpeech to God, Lam. iii. 16.——Again, conſider the danger of living in the neglect of this duty. "If ſatan might have his wiſh againſt thee, (ſaith one) it would be this, that thou mighteſt lead a prayerleſs life; for then he is as ſure of thee as a robber is of a traveller, whom he has faſt bound, lying in a ditch, and his mouth ſtopt that he cannot cry for help" O prayerleſs ſinner, conſider ſatan has thee faſt bound, and is juſt ready to murder thee; and wilt thou not cry to God for help?——Moreover, think what a brutiſh thing it is to live prayerleſs, as alas many do; they riſe like the beaſts in the morning, they work with the beaſts all day, and ly down like beaſts at night, and never mind to look up to God, till he lay them on their backs upon a death bed, and then they begin to cry like the beaſts when the knife is at their throat. Conſider, O man, why God hath given thee a countenance erected towards heaven, and hath not made thee to creep on all four, as other creatures, with their backs to heaven, and mouths to earth; but to teach thee, that thou art made to converſe with thy Maker, and have intercourſe with heaven, and that the world's huſks are not fit food for thy ſoul. We would pity a poor man that were all bowed together, and forced to go like a beaſt upon hands and feet, with his eyes always to the earth: And is it not a more pitiful ſpectacle to ſee a ſoul that is a ſparkle of heaven, and created for communion with God, ſo crippled with ignorance and earthly mindedneſs, as ſtill to be poring and grovelling upon the earth, without looking up to God its Maker and happineſs!

Of the ſins of commiſſion on the Lord's day.

II. IN the next place, I proceed to warn you againſt ſins of commiſſion, by which the Lord's day is too commonly profaned: And theſe are either *inward* or *outward*.

I. *Of inward ſins of commiſſion.*

Inward ſins, or heart ſins, ſhould be carefully guarded againſt this day, as being moſt provoking to God, polluting to his worſhip, and hurtful to our ſouls. Sinful thoughts are an abomination to God every day, Prov. xv. 26. but more eſpecially this day. Thoughts are as loud in God's ears as words; and he commands *evil thoughts* to be forſaken, as well as *evil ways*, if we would have pardon, Iſa. lv. 7. Wherefore let us get renewed and ſanctified hearts, and overawe them with the thoughts of God's preſence and omniſcience: Let us imagine this day, that we hear the ſound of the laſt trumpet, and ſee the throne ſet, and God calling for an account of hearts; (for in that day he will *judge hearts* as well as lives) and, when any evil thought breaks in, ſay, *What if God, who ſees this ſhould preſently call me to account?* Let us keep a conſtant watch over our hearts this day, ſtriving to cruſh all ſinful thoughts in the bud, at their firſt riſing cry out for God's help.——Let us be ſenſible what a maſs of villany is in the heart, *It is deſperately wicked,* as Jeremiah ſaith; yea, *our inward part is very wickedneſs,* Pſal. v. 9. Hence it was that Luther profeſt, that *he feared his heart more than the pope or the cardinal;* And Auguſtine prayed. *Libera me, Domine, a meipſo.* The heart is like the Trojan horſe, out of whoſe belly proceeded armed enemies; ſo out of the heart proceed all evil words and actions, Matth. xv. 19. It is the corrupt fountain, from whence all the impure ſtreams of actual ſin do flow: Therefore we ſhould look narrowly to it.

But, beſides incident evil thoughts, we have many evil habits and plagues of heart that we ſhould guard againſt on the Sabbath, being ſuch as profane the day, and hinder the ſanctification of it: Particularly,

1*ſt*, *Atheiſm*, and miſbelief of God's truths. If this harbour or prevail in us, we can reap no profit by the word read or preached this day. Why do people delay or refuſe to embrace Chriſt, and leave their ſins, but becauſe they want a fixed and firm impreſſion of the truths of the goſpel upon their hearts? It is true, you will not ſay that you miſbelieve any of them, but you give no heart-aſſent to the truth of them, which is little better; you give no firm inward credit to the goſpel, and to all its aſſertions, commands, threatenings and promiſes, that they are come from God, and are moſt true, certain and infallible. Were you once firmly perſuaded of the certainty of eternal life and eternal death, you would not ſtand ſo long hovering betwixt heaven and hell. If once you had the firm impreſſions of eternal death, you would preſently *flee from the wrath to come;* and if you had a due ſenſe of eternal life, you would *run to take hold of the hope ſet before you,* Heb. vi. 18. But alas! *nature* is half blind, and *cannot ſee afar off,* 2 Pet. i. 9. To carnal hearts and eyes there ſeems to be a miſt upon eternity; they cannot ſee into another world, and they cannot believe things not ſeen. But, O if you would be happy, you muſt ſtedfaſtly believe the *immortality of the ſoul, and a future life; that the Bible is the true word of God, and that the bleſſed God, ſent his eternal Son Jeſus Chriſt into the world to aſſume man's nature and die for to redeem him from ſin and hell.* With abhorrence renounce all doubting or unbelieving thoughts of theſe great truths; rather doubt of your own being than of theſe; believe that what now you hear with your ears concerning a future life and judgment-ſeat, you will ſhortly ſee with your eyes: If you do it not you rub the higheſt affront on God that a creature is capable of; for you make your Creator a lyar, 1 John v. 10. This is a ſin that devils are not chargeable with, for *they believe and tremble.* O ſinner, what further confirmation of the truth wouldſt thou have from God, than he hath already given thee? Thou haſt his word, yea, his writ, ratified by his oath, confirmed by his miracles, and ſealed by his Son's blood, which is far more, and far ſurer than either a voice from heaven, or a meſſenger from hell, according, to 2 Pet. i. 19. Luke xvi. 31.

II. Ignorance of the truths you hear this day, greatly hinders the ſanctification of it. You cannot prize Chriſt, cloſe with him, or follow him, till ſuch time as you know him. How can ſuch hear the goſpel, or embrace Chriſt offered therein, that know not their ruined natural condition, and their remedy through Chriſt? Many they know not Chriſt's love and beauty, his ability, ſufficiency and fitneſs in his natures, offices, relations, graces, Spirit and fulneſs: They know not the deſign of his coming into the world; the manner of his throughing our redemption by his obedience and ſufferings, and the manner of applying it, and our getting an intereſt therein, and the neceſſity and nature of faith in order thereto. For as oft as many have faith in their mouths, they know not what it is; they are ignorant what it is to receive Chriſt as a Surety and Saviour, as a Prieſt and King; and therefore many goſpel ſermons and Sabbaths are entirely loſt to them.

O ſinners, conſider the danger of ignorance, it is a ſoul murdering ſin, Hoſ. iv. 6. *My people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge.* Do not think your ignorance will excuſe you at a tribunal, or ſave you from hell: No, it will rather aggravate your ſin and condemnation to be found ignorant in a land where the light ſhines ſo plentifully about you. Ignorance will be ſo far from keeping off wrath from you, that God tells you it is a ſpecial procuring cauſe of wrath, and makes you more miſerable than others, according to Iſa. xxvii. 11. *This is a people of no underſtanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour.*

Again, as ignorance is a damning ſin in itſelf, ſo it is the fruitful mother of many other ſins and luſts, according to 1 Pet. i. 14. What is the reaſon why many ſwear, lye, cheat, break the Sabbath, drink drunk, commit uncleanneſs, ſlight ordinances, neglect prayer in their families and cloſets, and go on in their ſins, without repenting or fleeing to Chriſt? It is becauſe of their ignorance: They are ignorant of God, his infinite juſtice and holy nature, the evil of ſin, and what Chriſt hath ſuffered for ſinners; they know not what regeneration, repentance and faith are, for all they ſpeak of them; and how then can they practiſe them, or cry to God for them?

Object. ‘O (ſay ſome ignorant creatures) many have ‘knowledge that make no good uſe of it; yea, they ‘are more graceleſs and profane than we.’

Anſ. All this is too true, and theſe will have a ſad account to make one day for ſinning againſt ſo much light. But this will be no help to you, for profanity kills them, and ignorance kills you; they die of one diſeaſe, and you die of another; and your diſeaſe is as ſure to kill as theirs. For you to reject knowledge, becauſe ſome who have it abuſe it and periſh; is as ridiculous as for you to ſay, becauſe many die who have both food and phyſic, and plenty of means for preſerving life, I will uſe no means for preſerving my life at all; for, whoever die, you are ſure to die: They that have both food and phyſic may die, but they that have none of them cannot live. So, whoever periſh, ignorant perſons are ſure to periſh; for they know not their remedy, they cannot make uſe of the means of life. O ignorant ſouls, you are nearer hell than others; your ſtate is darkneſs, and it borders upon utter darkneſs; ſo that you are, as it were, lodging in the next room to hell, having but a weak partition betwixt you and it, which death may break down in a moment, and let you paſs into it. When an ignorant ſinner dies, there goes not only duſt to duſt, but darkneſs to darkneſs; the darkneſs of ignorance to the darkneſs of hell: And is not this a fearful ſtate for you to continue in? What madneſs is it for you to do it, when Chriſt is daily inviting you to come to the light?

O ignorant ſinners, why ſhould you continue in your ignorance, more than theſe of your rank in other places, who can diſcourſe moſt ſenſibly of the principles of religion, and the concerns of their ſouls, and can pray to excellent purpoſe? Have you not rational ſouls as well as they? Have you not the ſame helps and advantages that they have, if you would but make uſe of them? Are you not as capable as they? You are as ſharp and knowing about worldly affairs as others: You know well enough the rent of a piece of ground, the value of corn or cattle; but, alas! know nothing of the worth of your ſouls, of Chriſt and pardon to them: You are well verſed in the art of plowing, ſowing and reaping, and know the right ſeaſons for them: but, alas! you know not your ſeaſons of mercy: You know your almanacks, the fairs and changes of the moon, you know your ſtory-books and ballads; and why might you not know your bibles as well, if you would employ the ſame parts and abilities to get ſpiritual knowledge? Have you not great plenty of the means of knowledge, if you would but attend them, and make uſe of them?

Object. ‘But I cannot read the bible, how ſhall I ‘learn knowledge?’

Anſ. You are at a very great loſs indeed, it is hard to get ignorant perſons inſtructed that cannot read: You ought to lament your loſs, and be the more in prayer for the Spirit of God to teach you, and make up that loſs; and the more deſirous to hear others read, and to wait upon the public catechiſing: And alſo, lay out yourſelves with all care yet to learn to read.

Object. ‘But I am to old to learn.’

Anſ. Are you too old to ſeek after Chriſt and ſalvation? Will your age ſave you from hell and wrath, if you die Chriſtleſs? will God ſpare old folk dying in ignorance, more than the young? Many have learned to read, who have been as old as you? were you but willing and deſirous, you would ſoon conquer all difficulties. I have heard of ſome ſervants, who have been ſo fond to learn, that they have offered to their maſters or miſtreſſes to quit part of their meat and fee, upon condition they would teach them to read: And, are not your ſouls as dear to you as theirs were to them?

Object. “It was my parents fault that did not teach “me when I was young.”

Anſ. Alas! that parents ſhould be ſo cruel to their children when young! But, wilt not thou be merciful to thyſelf, becauſe they have been cruel? Their neglect will not excuſe thine. As it was their fault that did not learn you in youth, ſo it is yours now if you remain in ignorance, and will be your eternal ruin if you continue wilfully ſo: Yea, you will thus not only bring your own blood on your head, but alſo the blood of your children and ſervants when you get families; for you will not be capable to inſtruct them yourſelves, nor will you, in all likelihood, be at pains to cauſe others do it; and ſo you will be guilty of the ſame neglect to your children, that your parents were guilty of to you.

Object. “But I am aſhamed to be learning at this “age.”

Anſ. It is indeed a ſhame for old people to be ignorant, but no ſhame to learn: Yea, though one foot were in the grave, and the other following, you ſhould ſtill be learning ſomething for your ſoul. For, what is the world's ſhame and deriſion to that woful confuſion of face that will befal the ignorant, Chriſtleſs ſinner at a day of judgment, and eſpecially ſuch as ſlight knowledge, and will not be at pains to learn? Read that fearful and thundering threatening, Prov. i. 26. 27. 28. *I will laugh at your calamity, when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you; when ye call upon me, I will not anſwer; when ye ſeek me early, ye ſhall not find me.* Oh! theſe words threaten againſt the ignorant, who refuſe to learn, *puniſhment without pity, miſery without mercy, crying without comfort,* and *torment without eaſe.* O what is the cauſe, ſay you, of all that ſad vengeance? See verſe 29. *For that they hated knowledge,* &c. As then you love your own ſouls, and would eſcape eternal damnation, as you would honour God and his Sabbath, ſee that you learn to read, ſeek inſtruction, and wait carefully upon all the means of knowledge.

III. *Earthly-mindedneſs* doth greatly hinder the ſanctification of the Lord's day; for, when the vanities of the world are entertained, they ſo poſſeſs the mind, that there is no room left for other thoughts: The thoughts of the world ſhut out the thoughts of God: The duſt and ſmoke of this world ſo blind the eyes of many, that they cannot diſcern the beauty of Chriſt or holineſs, tho' the brighteſt diſcoveries be made thereof this day in the ordinances: Thus, alas! ſatan defeats the whole deſign of the goſpel as to many; ſo that, though miniſters tell them from God's word of their ſoul's worth, hazard, and only refuge in Chriſt, yet they are ſo hot in purſuing the world, they do not hear or think on what is ſaid. This man hath his *farm,* the other his *merchandize,* the other his *trade* to look after, Luke xiv. 18. ſo that there is no time in their lives, no room in their hearts left for Chriſt. It is in vain to tell many of ſecuring a manſion or inheritance in heaven; they muſt have houſes and lands on earth. It is needleſs to tell them of providing for their ſouls; they have their families to provide for: Or to tell them of heavenly manna to their ſouls, they muſt have bread to their mouths. It is to no purpoſe to tell them of a way to get juſtice ſatisfied, or the debt of ſin paid; they muſt have their debts paid to their earthly creditors. It is in vain to preſs them to ſeek the favour and friendſhip of God; all their care is to get the countenance of this or the other man, that can do them kindneſs. And ſo, upon theſe worldly conſiderations, Chriſt *the pearl of price* is ſlighted, the precious ſoul rejected, and Sabbaths and ſermons are quite loſt.

Again, it is a groſs profanation of this holy day, for people to allow themſelves to think upon their trades and worldly commerce when they are in God's houſe. As Chriſt whipped buyers and ſellers out of the temple when he was on earth, ſo he will not ſuffer you to make the public aſſemblies of his people a place of merchandize, by your thoughtfulneſs about worldly gain and profit. Your buſineſs in God's houſe this day is with the great God only, and therefore you muſt attend to nothing but his work and ſervice: But, if you indulge worldly thoughts, you will provoke God, and mar all your public performances.

Be not like Martha this day, *careful and troubled about many things*, things that will not avail you at the dying hour, or through eternity; but imitate Mary this day, ſit at Chriſt's feet, mind the *one thing neceſſary*, and *chuſe the good part which ſhall not be taken from you.*

Moreover, conſider how dangerous this evil is to the ſalvation of your ſouls. It may be ſaid of worldlineſs, compared with other ſins, as was ſaid of Saul and David, when any one ſin *kills its thouſands*, *this ſlays its ten thouſands*: O what havock makes it in the viſible church! What Pharaoh ſaid of the Iſraelites, Exod. xiv. 3. may well be applied to many profeſſed Chriſtians, *they are intangled in the land, the wilderneſs hath ſhut them in.* The world, like bird lime, clogs the ſoul's wings, that it cannot mount up to heaven. Many, like Lot's wife, ſet out fairly for the Zoar of heaven; but their hearts hanker after the Sodom of this earth, which cauſeth them to look ſtill back, back, till they periſh in the way.

Again, conſider what a vain and empty thing the world is, tho' obtained. It ſuits not the nature, nor ſatisfies the deſires of the immortal ſoul: It deceives all its lovers, and in midſt of ſufficiency leaves them in ſtraits; ſo that we ought rather to pity than envy a worldling, whoſe portion is ſo ſmall, happineſs ſo ſhort, miſtake ſo great, and miſery eternal.

Think what folly it is to dig for droſs with mattocks of gold, to beſtow the precious affections of our ſouls on white and yellow clay. How monſtrous is it to ſee a man with his head and heart where his feet ſhould be! to ſee the world in the heart and on the throne, and Chriſt at the foot ſtool! to ſee the world poſſeſſing God's room both week day and Sabbath-day, and getting the ſervice which is due to him alone! How many are they, who, even on the Sabbath day, worſhip the trinity of this world, mentioned 1 John ii. 16. more than the Trinity of heaven?

IV. *Forgetfulneſs* of God and Chriſt is a great evil, and greatly hinders Sabbath-ſanctification. How can theſe ſanctify the Sabbath, who never mind the Author nor the end of it? And, alas! there are too many who have nothing of God in their thoughts, either Sabbath-day or week-day, Pſal. x. 4. Tho' the heart be ſtill thinking, and hundreds of thoughts paſs thro' it every hour of the day, yet God is in none of them. Strange! that every worldly trifle ſhould find room in the heart, and God can find no place in it! What is the reaſon of this? You may ſee it, Rom. i. 28. *They did not like to retain God in their knowledge.* Surely there is nothing in the world that we have ſo frequent *mementos* of, as of God: How can we look to the heavens, earth, flowers, or graſs, without minding him? A very heathen could ſay,——*Præſentem refert quælibet herba Deum.* Or, how can we look to our bodies, but their curious ſtructure ſhould preſently mind us of God? Yea, every time we breathe, every motion of our lungs, and beating of our pulſe ſhould be a prick or ſpur to us to mind our Preſerver; and in a ſpecial manner, on the Sabbath-day, every ordinance, every duty, every ſentence, every word ſpoken by the miniſter, ſhould mind us of God: But the matter is, the thoughts of God are burdenſome to all that live careleſs and ungodly lives; they cannot think upon him, but they mind their Judge.

But, O Chriſtian, conſider what a ſin it is to forget God, eſpecially on his own day. If we ought to ſpend every day in the fear of God, Prov. xxiii. 17. much more the Sabbath-day. What ingratitude is it to forget him this day that minded us in our low eſtate, yea, minded us when we could not mind ourſelves? The love of God in Chriſt ſhould ſwallow up all our thoughts this day. When we ſeriouſly conſider what Chriſt hath done for his people, one might think that Chriſt would never be one whole hour together out of their minds, but that they ſhould carry him up and down in their thoughts and deſires, that they ſhould lie down with thoughts of Chriſt at night, and have him like *a bundle of myrrh lying all night betwixt their breaſts*, that is, in their hearts; and, when they awake, *they ſhould be ſtill with him*: That their very dreams in the night ſhould be ſweet viſions of Chriſt, and all their words ſhould ſavour of him.

V. *Averſion to duty* is another heart evil, that hinders the ſanctification of the Sabbath. O how backward do we find our hearts to the duties of the Sabbath! how glad to put them by with any frivolous excuſe! how unwilling to pay God a viſit on his own day! We are ſlow to begin, and in haſte to make an end; we are heavy while the duty is a doing, and glad when it is done. Many are driven to their cloſets, as if they were going to the rack, or as if prayer were a *penance* rather than a *privilege*; they are conſtrained to it, to ſatisfy a natural conſcience. It is rather a ſervile than a ſon like performance. If conſcience, like a taſk maſter, did not laſh them to their duty, they would never perform it. Many, they would rather toil their bodies whole days and weeks at the ſoreſt labour, than ſpend one hour in ſecret upon their knees on the Lord's day. How ſad and lamentable a thing is this? Is not God's company moſt deſirable? is it not God's admirable condeſcenſion, and our higheſt honour, that ſuch poor worms as we ſhould be admitted into his preſence? Are we not naturally deſirous of acquaintance with great perſons, and why ſo backward to acquaintance with the King of heaven? Is not the Sabbath a delight to God's people? and ſhall the work of it be a drudgery to us?

Object. 'The duties requiſite on this day are ſo 'many, they coſt much difficulty and pains to perform 'them.'

Anſ. It is better to take pains, than ſuffer pains; better be bound with the cords of duty, than with the chains of darkneſs. The bonds of duty are not grievous; nay, they are our ornament and greateſt freedom, Pſal. cxix. 45. whereas ſatan and the world's ſervice is the greateſt drudgery; there is ſin in the work, and hell in the wages. Alas, that many will be at no pains for that which will bring eternal glory, but are content to be at great pains for that which will coſt eternal pains! The drunkard, thief, adulterer, run many hazards to ſerve the devil, and win damnation; they ſuffer bodily pains, want ſleep and reſt, and weary themſelves to commit iniquity. *They draw iniquity with cords, and ſins as with cart ropes,* Iſa. v. 18. They are yoked as it were, in the devil's plough or cart, and he makes them ſweat and draw in his ſervice. What bad work, ſad wages, and a terrible maſter have they? Who would be hired by any wages to ſerve lions and tygers? Is not the devil a roaring lion? and, will you ſerve him that will devour and tear his ſervants both ſoul and body, after they have ſerved him never ſo faithfully? Oh! ſhall the devil's ſervants out-ſtrip Chriſt's ſervants in diligence and activity? Is there any maſter like Chriſt? Is there any work or wages like his? Was there ever any of his ſervants a loſer at his hands? Will not his experienced ſervants tell us, that *wiſdom's ways are pleaſantneſs,* and that Sabbath days work is the ſweeteſt recreation? Here they have the moſt pleaſant walks, the moſt lightſome proſpects, the choiceſt company, and the ſweeteſt fellowſhip, Pſal. xxiii. 2. 3. Pſal. l. 23. There is heaven in holineſs, and gain in godlineſs; no ſuch gain or delight to be found elſewhere. Godlineſs is the moſt enriching trade in the world; God's people ſometimes gain more by it on a Sabbath day in one hour, in one ſermon, one promiſe, one prayer, one communion-table, one ſpiritual breathing, than all the rich men of the ſhire are worth, put all their eſtates together. The world will not believe this; but ſure I am, one return of prayer, one ſmile of Chriſt's face, one look of faith, one grape of Canaan, one glimpſe of the promiſed land, the head of one Goliath, the death of one luſt, the ſtrengthening of one grace which may be obtained in the duties of the Sabbath, any of theſe is an abundant recompence for all the pains we can be at in God's ſervice this day; they yield more ſweetneſs and content to the ſoul, than all the pleaſures the world can afford: The ſmalleſt gleanings of ſpiritual joy are better than a whole vintage of carnal delights.

But what is all this to that eternal weight of glory which is treaſured up in heaven, for rewarding the laborious ſervants of Chriſt? What can we do for ſo vaſt a reward? Had the Lord ſaid to us, unleſs you be content to ſpend your days in ſome howling wilderneſs, quit all worldly riches and pleaſures, pine away with poverty and want, give the fruit of your bodies, ſuffer martyrdom, or take a dip in hell, you ſhall never ſee my face in glory; ſurely there is none that knows what it is to eſcape eternal miſery, and inherit endleſs happineſs above, but would have been willing to accept of theſe conditions. How much more then, when he only requires us to accept of his Son as our Surety, and love him, part with theſe ſins that would damn us, and follow him in the pleaſant ways of holineſs; and to do all this in his grace and ſtrength, for he ſends none a warfare on their own charges? Say not then, I have no ſtrength for ſo many duties as are required upon the Sabbath. Is there not enough in Chriſt for thee? Look with an eye by faith to the power and promiſe of God in Chriſt, and every new duty will bring new ſtrength with it; *they that do theſe things ſhall live in them.*

VI. Hardneſs of heart hinders the ſanctification of the Sabbath. Why? hard hearted ſinners can have no delight in Sabbath work; they are not affected by the word; they cannot prize Chriſt offered in the goſpel; they are not capable of receiving the goſpel-comforts. Oh how many ſuch do every Sabbath appear before God! who can ſit and hear the moſt terrible threatenings of the word and curſes of the law denounced againſt ſin, and the ſins they are giuilty of; and yet be no more concerned than the ſeats they ſit on, or the dead that ly under their feet. Mercies or promiſes do not allure them, judgments or threatenings do not alarm them. This is a ſad caſe, and yet very common, and few ſenſible of it. Who is complaining of this plague of heart hardneſs, and laying their caſe before God, ſaying, *Ah! what ſhall I do with this ſtone in my heart?* A ſtone in the bladder, or kidney, is a woful pain, but the ſtone in the heart is much more dangerous and deadly; yet who is pained with that and crying to the Phyſician of ſouls to take it away, and give a heart of fleſh?

O hard hearted ſinner, conſider thy miſerable condition while thou remaineſt in a fallen ſtate under wrath. Many a ſtroke has been given thee by the hammer of the word to no purpoſe; many of the Spirit's motions haſt thou reſiſted; many a knock haſt thou deſpiſed. O tremble, leſt God give thee over, and take no more pains on thee. A heathen Felix trembled, the devils tremble for fear of God's wrath; and will thy heart be unmoved? God calls you to flee from it, miniſters call, mercies and promiſes call, judgments and threatenings call, the wounds and blood of Chriſt call; and will not thy heart be affected? *The voice of the Lord is powerful, full of majeſty, breaketh the cedars, ſhaketh the wilderneſs,* hath melted the hearts of thouſands; and yet cannot it break thy hard heart? Thou haſt mountains of unpardoned guilt lying on thee, and haſt thou no feeling thereof? Remember, if you be not brought to feeling now, you ſhall be brought to it ere long, to your eternal coſt and ſorrow; if the word do not waken thy heart, it is like, death will. When you begin to draw by the curtain of fleſh, and look into eternity, you will then cry, Lord, what will become of me for ever? If you do not awake, then to be ſure the firſt moment of your entry into eternity will bring you to your ſenſes; the bitings of the worm of conſcience will then make you feel; the ſtream of fire and brimſtone will melt the hardeſt heart; the hammer of juſtice will then break the heart, which the hammer of the word could not.

O then, beg of God, with the greateſt earneſtneſs, that he may give you *the broken heart and a contrite ſpirit,* that ſo you may have that acceptable ſacrifice to offer to him, which he never yet frowned upon, Pſal. li. 17. *A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.* Auguſtine cauſed write this text over his bed when ſick. Let us cry to God for it, who alone can give it. Gravel ſtones men may remove, but heart ſtones none can remove but God: We may as eaſily remove mountains as do this; yet we muſt uſe the means: And therefore, *look to him whom you have pierced,* that you may mourn. Think much on the free love of Chriſt, and the bloody ſufferings your ſins did put him to. If Chriſt's love and blood will not ſoften thy heart, nothing will. Beg the Spirit of God to come and make application of the blood of Chriſt, the bleſſed Scape-goat; and then the adamantine heart will diſſolve. Cry, "Come, O Spirit of God, blow the fire of the word with thy own breath, and then it will melt hearts: Take this hammer in thy own hand, and it will break rocks. Lord, wound and heal; do the work throughly and effectually; begin it, carry it on and finiſh it: For if any of it be left for me to do it will be eternally undone, and I will be loſt for ever. Lord, complete this work, looſe my bonds, thaw my affections, and draw my heart, and take eternal glory to thee."

VII. Hypocriſy and formality in duty is oppoſite to Sabbath-ſanctification; for God requires heart-ſincerity in every piece of worſhip and duty that we perform. Yet, O how many are they who give God no more but the outward man, and the ſervice of the body! They *draw nigh to God with their lips* only; they pray ſo ſuperficially, as if they were unwilling that God ſhould hear them, and take away that luſt which conſcience forces them to pray againſt. They are ſo careleſs and irreverent in ſecret prayer, they would be aſhamed if any ſaw them, or overheard them. A ſtatue on a tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good ſervice as many; only it wants a voice: And what ſignifies the voice without the affections? A parrot may be taught to repeat ſome few words of prayer, but none will call that a prayer; ſo neither will God own thy formal words of prayer. It is ſpeaking, and not praying, when the heart is wanting; he looks upon thy worſhip as no better than a ſtage-play. Many worſhip God as careleſly as if they were *praying to an idol,* that neither ſaw nor heard them: Nay, many heathens have worſhipped their falſe gods, Jupiter and Mars, with greater ſeriouſneſs and devotion than you do the great JEHOVAH, who made you and all the world. Why? the reaſon of all this is, all that many ſeek of religion is the name of it; and the outward form of it makes them paſs under the name of good Chriſtians among men. Tho' God ſees their hypocriſy, yet man knows it not; and that is enough to them. But, O hypocrite, conſider, the day is approaching when God will unmaſk thee before all the world. As Paul ſaid to the high prieſt, Acts xxiii. 3. ſo may I ſay to thee, *God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall;* ſo as thy paint ſhall fall off, and thy inward rottenneſs appear to all. There will be no hiding of thyſelf among the crowd, no impoſing on an all-ſeeing God. He can eaſily diſcern a traiterous Judas under a deceitful kiſs, a ravening wolf under a ſheep's ſkin, a murdering Herod under a pretence of worſhip, a hypocritical Phariſee under a broad phylactory. He can ſpy a diſſembling devil under a Samuel's mantle, or when he would ſhroud himſelf among the ſons of God; for neither the ſophiſtry of men or devils can blind his eyes.

Again, let the hypocrite think on his folly, in loſing both his heaven here and hereafter, in drawing down upon him both the hatred of the world, and the hatred of the God of heaven. The world hates him for his ſhew of religion, and God hates him for his hypocriſy in it. Is it not lamentable folly in hypocrites to do ſomething for Chriſt, and go ſome length in the way to heaven, and yet to loſe both Chriſt and heaven for not going one ſtep further? To be like that ſcribe, Mat. xii. 34. *not far from the kingdom of God,* and yet never come thither? How ſad is it to periſh with heaven in view, and go to hell by the very gates of glory? The hypocrite's hope brings him to the ſhady valley, Job xviii. 14. but his candle goes out in that dark trance, and then he ſtumbles and falls for ever. It is ſad to periſh in the wilderneſs, when come to the very brink of Jordan, and in ſight of the promiſed land; to make our voyage with a pleaſant gale all the way and ſhipwreck at the very mouth of the harbour; to come within a ſtep of the gate, and die with our hands upon the threſhold.

Laſtly, Remember, as hypocriſy, if continued in, will certainly damn you; ſo it will provide a hotter hell for you than that of other ſinners, Matth. xxiv. 51. therefore be wiſe in time, and ſtudy ſincerity and uprightneſs of heart in all your dealings with God.

VIII. *Wandering of heart* greatly mars the performance of Sabbath duties, eſpecially hearing, praying and praiſing. Jewiſh rabbis ſay, "That tho' on the Sabbath there was much fleſh uſed for ſacrifice in the temple, yet not ſo much as one fly was ſeen ſtirring there." So neither ſhould there be a wandering thought or eye allowed, when we are about God's ſolemn worſhip this day in his houſe. What encouragement hath a huſband man to ſow upon a high way, where every man and beaſt has free paſſage? No better is the heart of a wandering hearer: We may as well caſt ſeed upon *the waves of the ſea,* as preach unto ſuch; for the good ſeed of the word is quite loſt upon them. Think what an affront it would be to a king, to turn your back to him, or diſcourſe with others, while he is ſpeaking to you? The motions and poſtures of your ſouls are as viſible to God, as the motions and poſtures of your bodies are to one another. Or, if a criminal were allowed to petition his prince for his life, would he break off at every ſentence, and chaſe flies through the room; you would ſay, a remiſſion were ill beſtowed upon ſuch a creature. O beware of ſuch a ridiculous behaviour before the King of heaven, when you are addreſſing him for the life of your condemned ſouls. Would you have God to hear you, when you do not hear yourſelf? Can you think he will be mindful of you, when you are not mindful of yourſelf? Think, if your prayers were written down, and all your vain thoughts interlined, what incoherent nonſenſe would they be? would you not be aſhamed to hear them all read over? would not the world cry, "Shame upon you for mocking your dread Sovereign with ſuch an impertinent addreſs?" O but thoughts are the ſame as words with God; nay, they ſpeak louder in his ears than words do in ours, Amos iv. 13. *He declares unto man what is his thought.* And David ſays, *He tells my wanderings.*

Wherefore when you enter this day into the ſanctuary, or into your cloſets, ſhut the door of your heart, ſo that worldly thoughts may not enter to trouble you. Lay ſolemn obligations and charges upon your hearts, that they wander not from God; *bind the ſacrifice with cords to the altars horns;* and if the birds of prey come by ſurpriſe down upon the ſacrifice, then, like Abraham, Gen. xv. 11. *drive them* preſently away, and ſummon every thought to attend your main buſineſs. Retract every vain thought with a ſigh, and chide with your hearts for vain excurſions; check them as Chriſt did his drowſy diſciples, *What? cannot you watch* with Chriſt *for one hour?* How then will you like to be engaged in heaven's work to all eternity, where there is no interruption?

Again, conſider the uncertainty of your time for prayer. Had a criminal but a quarter of an hour allotted him to beg his life before an earthly judge, would he ſpend it in gazing upon the court and their fine clothes, or in aſking ſome ridiculous queſtions? No, he would intreat and beg his life with all the arguments and fervency he were capable of. O ſinner, when thou kneeleſt down to beg thy ſoul's life at the hands of the Judge of quick and dead, thou knoweſt not if thou ſhalt have ſo long as a quarter of an hour for it; and wilt thou trifle it away? What if death ſurpriſe thee, and find thy heart wandering from God?

For remedies of this evil, beſides what is ſaid, ſtudy to overawe your hearts this day with a ſenſe of God's preſence and omniſcient eye. A ſervant will not ſport himſelf in his maſter's preſence, but carry gravely. Did you believe that God's eye is ſtill upon you, and notices all your thoughts, words, looks and geſtures; would you not be more circumſpect than you are? May not angels, when they ſee what gravity and decency you obſerve in preſence of a prince, and your careleſneſs and irreverence in preſence of a glorious God, conclude you no better than infidels in midſt of God's houſe? Conſider then how ſolemnly you ſet yourſelves in God's preſence, when you attend public ordinances. It was the ſenſe of this that made Bernard ſay, when he came to the church door, *Stay here, all my earthly thoughts*. But if they do thruſt in after you and come upon you, to divert you this day, pretending neceſſary buſineſs, as Nehemiah's enemies did to him when about the temple work, then give them ſuch a repulſe as he did, Neh. vi 3. *I am doing a great work, I cannot come down; why ſhould the work ceaſe, whilſt I leave it, and come down to you?* and, like him, repeat this over and over, as they repeat their ſolicitations.

Again, get love to God and his ordinances; for what we love, that we fix our minds upon, be it gain, honours or pleaſures. David found love to the word a good remedy againſt wandering thoughts in time of reading or hearing it, Pſal. cxix. 113. *I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.* Alſo, ſtudy to accuſtom yourſelves to holy thoughts at other times; for a vain heart out of duty will be little better in duty. If your hearts be much ſet on the world at other times, your thoughts will be driving thither in time of duty, whether praying or hearing: But if they be habitually ſet upon Chriſt, then will your prayers aſcend to him like a pillar of incenſe.

Moreover, be putting up frequent ejaculations unto God, to fix your hearts, and gather your ſtraying thoughts. Pray with the pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxxvi. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy name.* Look to him that can *ſtay the raging waves of the ſea*, to ſtay the wandring thoughts of your heart.

Laſtly, Conſider how Jews and Heathens may put Chriſtians to the bluſh in this matter. We read of ſurpriſing inſtances of their fixed devotion in their acts of worſhip. It is a ſtrange conſtancy and fixedneſs that is ſpoken of the Jewiſh prieſts at Jeruſalem, that when the Romans broke into the city, and ruſhed into the temple ready to kill them: yet they went on with the rites of the temple, as if there had been no ſuch thing. Alſo, ſtrange was the fixedneſs of that Spartan youth, that held the cenſer to Alexander while he offered ſacrifice, who ſuffered a coal, that fell on his arm, to burn his fleſh, rather than by crying, or letting fall the cenſer, he ſhould diſturb that worſhip. May not theſe inſtances ſhame us, that have more light, for our unfixedneſs and inconſtancy in the ſervice of the Great Jehovah?

IX. *Wearying of the duties of the Sabbath* is another evil we muſt guard againſt this day. O how many are there like thoſe, Amos viii. 5. who ſay in their hearts, *When will the Sabbath be gone?* and with thoſe, Mal. i. 13. *What a wearineſs is it?* Many weary as much of ſermons, as if they were in the ſtocks all the while they attend them. O what would come of you, if Chriſt were as ſoon weary of calling, as you are of hearing! How many Sabbaths have you kept Chriſt ſtanding and knocking at your doors, and he is not yet weary, for all your long deafneſs to his knocks, and refuſing to open to him, but continues ſtill to knock? O let this ſhame us out of our wearying to knock at God's door. Alas! a quarter of an hour in prayer wearies many of us. Is this the requital we give to Chriſt for all his love and patience? May not he ſay, "O believer, I did not ſoon weary of my bloody ſweat " in the garden for thee; nay, I was longer on the " painful croſs, than ever thou waſt on thy knees in " prayer, or meditating on my love and ſufferings." O ſhould a believer ever weary of that ſubject? Theſe idolaters, Acts xix. 45. could *cry out with a loud voice for the ſpace of two hours*, and not weary in commending their idol Diana; and ſhall we weary of hearing a ſermon in commendation of Chriſt, for the ſpace of one hour? O where are theſe animal ſpirits that men have in worldly buſineſs? where is that vigour and activity that many ſhew in their bodily recreations, nay, in ſerving of their luſts? Many weary not to ſpend whole days and nights in drinking and gaming; but they grudge to give God one day for his worſhip or ſo much as one hour of his own day. You weary not to provide for your bodies and preſent things, but ſoon weary to provide for your ſouls and eternity: You weary not to beſtow time and pains to purchaſe a ſmall eſtate; but you can ſpare no time nor pains to ſeek the kingdom of heaven Many are quick enough about worldly things, but, like Dagon, they have no head to think, nor hands to act, when the ark is preſent. The Sabbath is a long and weariſome day to them. Some think both forenoon and afternoon of this day too much to be given to God; one of them may ſerve: Or they linger in coming to the church in the morning, as being glad to have a part of God's day and worſhip driven by ere they come; and not a few ſteal away before worſhip be ended; they'd rather ſpend the day any way than in God's ſervice. O ſinner, who is the loſer by this, but thy own ſoul! Doſt thou think a Sabbath long, a ſermon long, a prayer long? How long then will it be to be baniſhed from God's preſence, and lie on beds of fire thro' a whole eternity? You will weary eternally there, but it will not mend you: The doors are not open there, as the church doors now are, to let you go in and out at your pleaſure (as ſome greceleſs perſons do in time of divine worſhip) no, you will find hell's gates ſhut with invincible bolts, and mountains of braſs rolled to them; and there you muſt dwell and lie roaring, as priſoners of wrath for ever. Poor carnal wearying ſoul, canſt thou ever think of going to heaven, to worſhip and adore God for ever without intermiſſion, when ſo ſhort a time of this work wearies thee now? To be ſure, heaven would be a hell to thee in thy preſent unconverted ſtate; thou wouldſt give never ſo much to be out of it again, wert thou in it.

But, O believer, how ill doth it become thee to weary of Sabbath-work here below, that profeſſeſt to be preparing for that everlaſting Sabbath above, the work of which hath no end? Wilt thou weary to ſpend one whole Sabbath here in ſerving Chriſt, who wearies not to ſpend many whole Sabbaths and years in ſerving thee? Conſider how buſy Chriſt is this day in heaven in thy behalf: Tho' the Sabbath be a day of reſt to us from our ordinary work, yet it is none to Chriſt; he is buſy thro' the whole of it pleading and making interceſſion for thee, without fainting in this work; and wilt thou ſo ſoon tire to act for him? Doth he mind thee ſo conſtantly, and wilt thou ſo ſoon weary to think on him?

X. *Sleeping* or *drowſineſs*, in time of divine ſervice, is a profanation of the Lord's day, and hinders our profiting by the ordinances. Therefore guard againſt it. Many are watchful enough about the devil's ſervice; they can ſpend whole nights in drinking, gaming, *&c.* without ſleep; but cannot hold up their eyes half an hour in hearing a ſermon. Conſider what an evil cuſtom this is, you who are chargeable with it, and reform it. How ridiculous were it for a man that came to the market to buy proviſion for himſelf and his family, to fall aſleep in the market-place, and ſo miſs his errand? Do you not come on the Sabbath, which is heaven's market day, to the ordinances to get proviſion for your ſouls; and will you fall aſleep in the mean time of the market, and ſo go home empty? What do you know but, while you ſlept, that truth was delivered that might have ſaved your ſouls? Will a man fall aſleep at his food? and yet you ſleep while the bread of life is breaking to you, and the waters of life are running by you. How ſad is it, that the ſoul's mouth ſhould at this time be clothed with drowſineſs and aſleep, that it cannot receive one crumb or drop? O how would a damned ſoul prize the opportunity that you ſleep away! Remember it will not always laſt with you, the Sabbath and ſermon will quickly come that will be your laſt; and who knows but this or the next may be it? If you thought you were going ſtraight from the church to God's tribunal, would you not be more watchful in hearing? There is none can aſſure you but it may be ſo: However that be, I can aſſure you, you muſt ſhortly anſwer for every ſermon you are preſent at; God will aſk, Where are the fruits of ſo many ſermons? It will be a fearful *item* in your accounts, *So many ſermons ſlept away*: How will you anſwer for it?

Again, conſider how provoking this practice is to God. Would not a prince be diſpleaſed with a ſubject, if he ſhould fall aſleep while he is ſpeaking to him? would not a judge be angry with a criminal, if he ſhould ſleep when he were about to pronounce his ſentence? And have you not to do with the *King of kings*, and *Judge of the world*, while you are hearing the word? Is not your life at the ſtake when you are hearing it? according to that word in Deut. xxxii. 46. 47. *Set your hearts unto all the words which I teſtify among you this day; for it is not a vain thing for you; becauſe it is your life.* Remember what befel Eutychus when he ſlept in time of ſermon, Acts xx. it almoſt coſt him his life: God made him a monument of diſpleaſure, for a warning to all ſleepers: He got a ſad fall, but you may get a worſe; he fell to the ground, but you may fall to the loweſt hell, and there you will not get a Paul to take you up as he got. Your ſin is more aggravated than his: it was mid-night when he ſlept, but you ſleep at mid-day; Paul had preached ſeveral hours, but half an hour and leſs puts you aſleep. You have cauſe to fear, leſt God make you a monument of his wrath, or that he ſay, *Sleep on, till the flames of hell awake you.* It is truly a wonder how any can ſleep at the worſhip of God, either in the church or family, and not dream of hell fire in their ſleep; for their danger is greater than they are aware of; ſatan is very buſy at ſuch a time; *While you ſleep, he* ſucceſsfully *ſows his tares*, Mat. xiii. 25. your ſleeping time is a ſeed time for the devil, and a ſpring time for luſts.

If you would remeid this evil, ſtrive and wreſtle againſt it, and pray for help to do it; go timeouſly to bed on Saturday's night, and ſee that you be temperate thro' the week; for they that wake much in the alehouſe, will be fair to ſleep in the church.

XI. *Prejudice at preachers*, and quarrelling with them for their plainneſs and freedom in reproving ſin, mars the ſanctification of the Sabbath, and your getting good by the ordinances. Some hear miniſters, as the Phariſees heard Chriſt, with ill-will to them, and a deſign to catch advantage againſt them; they *would make a man an offender for a word*. Others are ſo faſt aſleep in ſin, that they cannot endure miniſters to thunder in their ears, or lighten in their eyes by plain and piercing ſermons, becauſe they diſturb their reſt. Aſa was *wroth with the ſeer* upon this account, and *put him in priſon*; ſo dealt Herod with John, and Ahab with Micaiah. Many, like Ahab, think the miniſter has a pique at them, when he reproves ſin freely: *He never ſpeaks good of me*, ſaith Ahab. O ſinner, this is the wrong way; for when God wounds thy ſin, and darts conviction into thy ſoul, thou ſhouldſt thank the ſpirit of God for his merciful viſiting of thee, and lay open your luſts, and ſay, 'Smite, Lord, with a deadly 'blow theſe enemies that would not have thee to rule 'over them; kill my luſts, and ſave my ſoul. Bleſt 'Phyſician, wound and heal; cauſe theſe convictions 'end in my converſion here, and ſalvation hereafter.' —An honeſt heart loves that ſermon beſt, that wounds his luſts deepeſt. He ſays to the word, or the miniſter, that ſtops his career in ſin, as David to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, which ſent thee this day to meet me; and bleſſed be thy advice*, &c. If your eyes were opened, you would look on plain rouzing preachers as your beſt friends in the world. If you were in hazard of burning or drowning by falling into the fire or water, would you be angry with one that will pull you out, and ſave your life, tho' he ſhould wound you, or break an arm of you in the doing of it? Nay, you would think him your friend, and thank him for his kindneſs. And will you be angry with a miniſter for plucking you as a brand out of the burning, by denouncing wrath againſt ſin, and telling you your hazard in plain language?

XII. Slighting the offers of the goſpel, and Chriſt tendered to us therein, is a great profanation of the Lord's day, and directly oppoſite to the deſign of it: Yet alas! it is a moſt prevailing evil among us. Chriſt calls, but we will not hear; he offers himſelf and his purchaſe, but we will not accept; he allures us with his mercy, but we will not turn to him; he oft waters us with the dew and rain of goſpel ordinances, but little fruit follows: We are like the barren field, on which much coſt is beſtowed, but the crop is nothing anſwerable. How many Sabbaths are ſpent, and ſermons preached and no good done? At one ſermon of Peter's, there were three thouſand ſouls converted: But, alas! we fear there are three thouſand ſermons preached now, and not one ſoul brought in. Many times is the goſpel net let down in vain: O that Chriſt would come and direct it to be let down on the right ſide of the ſhip! I ſhall endeavour briefly to lay before you the great ſin and miſery of rejecting Chriſt and the goſpel offers.

1ſt, It is againſt reaſon to refuſe a remedy when in our offer; as for a wounded man to ſlight a phyſician, or a condemned man a pardon, none in his right wits would be guilty of this: Nay, it is even ſelf-murder; for he is as guilty of his own death that rejects a medicine, or tears a plaiſter from off his wounds as he that cuts his own throat. Now, you know what an heinous ſin ſelf-murder is; yea, this is not only ſo, but it is ſoul murder, which has a louder cry than any other murder, by ſo much as the ſoul is more precious than the body: You are afraid to ſhed the blood of others, O do not embrue your hands in the blood of your own ſouls.

2dly, It is the greateſt affront and indignity that can be offered to the majeſty of God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. It is even called a *treading under foot the Son of God, and his precious blood*, Heb. x. 28. 29. which is there reckoned a greater ſin than the breach of all the ten commands; it is a ſin which neither heathens nor devils are guilty of. To *tread upon the Son of God*, O monſtrous guilt! who would be guilty of this? May you ſay, *Am I a dog* (as Hazael ſaid to the prophet) *that I ſhould do this thing?* Yea, every ſoul that ſlights Chriſt and his goſpel offers, doth it. How provoking muſt it be, to trample on God's moſt precious Jewel, wherein he is highly delighted and well pleaſed, Mat. iii. 17. to lothe that which is moſt ſweet unto God? What horrid ingratitude is it, to ſlight the remedy that the infinitely wiſe God hath been at ſo much pains and expences in preparing for us, and which hath coſt him more than the creating of ten thouſand worlds would have done? a work upon which his heart is ſo ſet, and wherein he hath ſo diſplayed his glorious attributes and perfections; yea a work which he prefers to all his other works: How criminal muſt it be to undervalue that? Again what a ſlight muſt it be to the divine Majeſty, to prefer the devil and luſts before him? When ſatan and luſts knock, they preſently find acceſs; yea, the leaſt whiſper they make is hearkened to: But tho' Chriſt cry aloud, and lift up his voice like a trumpet in the goſpel offers; yea, tho' he call, intreat, beſeech, and complain, he is diſregarded, and finds ſhut doors. 'What iniquity (may Chriſt ſay) do you find in me,' that the devil and luſts ſhould be preferred before me? Can they do for you what I can do? 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh and unwiſe?'

3dly, Refuſing Chriſt as offered in the goſpel is the great condemning ſin of the world, ſee John iii. 19. 36. Heb. iii. 19. The ruin of ſinners under the goſpel is laid at the door of this ſin, as if there were none other charged upon them: And juſtly it is ſo; for if a malefactor were offered his life upon his kneeling and accepting the king's remiſſion, if he refuſed to do this, it may well be ſaid, that his refuſal hangs him. O ſinner, no other ſin in the world, however great it be, would condemn you, if you were not guilty of this ſin of ſlighting Chriſt: But this is the ſin which binds the guilt of all your other ſins hard and faſt upon you; yea, it is the ſin that binds up the hands of omnipotency, that it cannot ſave you. Chriſt's merits, tho' infinite, cannot juſtify you, if you reject them; for the beſt medicine that ever was compounded cannot heal, unleſs it be applied.

4thly, Unbelief and ſlighting of Chriſt, tends to defeat the whole deſign of the goſpel, and to render Chriſt's whole undertaking uſeleſs: For, what is it but a ſaying on the matter, *You have no need of him;* and *His death was to no purpoſe?* May not Chriſt look with a grieved heart upon unbelieving ſinners, and ſay, 'I have gone a long journey, ſhed my precious blood, and ſuffered the pains of hell, to ſave ſinners: But theſe ſay on the matter, I might have ſtaid in heaven; I might have kept my blood in my veins; or, I died as a fool dieth: They give me no thanks for all my pains.' O ſinners, conſider what you are doing; would you go about to fruſtrate Chriſt's glorious expedition, or give him cauſe to repent of his death and bloody agony?

5thly, This ſin brings on inevitable wrath and miſery, Heb. ii. 3. As Chriſt hath cords of love, ſo he hath a *rod of iron*; if you break his *cords*, he will take his *rod*: If *mercy* manage it, it will but wound you; but, if *juſtice* take it, it will grind you to powder. O provoke not the Mediator to take his *iron rod*; for his vengeance is heavy. Tho' he be the meek *Lamb of God*, and be clad with *prieſtly garments*, yet he hath *feet like braſs, as if they burned in a furnace*, both heavy and hot to trample on his enemies, Lev. i. 13. 15. If you refuſe Chriſt, your miſery is as inevitable as that of the devils: For they periſh, becauſe they have no Mediator; and you periſh, becauſe you will not have a Mediator. O why will you put yourſelves in the ſame caſe with devils? Nay, your caſe, in ſome reſpects, will be worſe than theirs; for they never rejected a remedy. The moſt ſcorching corners in the *fiery oven* of God's wrath ſeem to be reſerved for unbelievers, Luke xii. 46. The breath of his mouth, that before invited them, will eternally blow their fire, Iſa. xxx. 33. Mercy itſelf will be incenſed, and plead againſt them at the great day. You will be more inexcuſable than the heathens: They will have ſomething to ſay for themſelves, *We never had an offer of Chriſt, we never once heard of him*; but what can you ſay for yourſelves, who have had ſo many thouſand offers, and ſo many knocks and calls every Sabbath to accept of Chriſt? You muſt ſurely ſtand ſpeechleſs: there remains nothing for you but a *fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which ſhall devour the adverſaries*: Yea, *it will be more tolerable for Sodom in that day of judgment, than it will be for you*, Mat. xi. 22. 23. The ſins of Sodom were ſo monſtrous, that they made a hell upon earth. O what puniſhment muſt they have now, when the beginnings of it in this world were ſo terrible? If the puniſhment of the leaſt ſin will be intorable in that lake, O what will the puniſhment of the Sodomites horrid and unatural ſins be? Yet their caſe will be eaſy, in reſpect of them that have ſlighted the goſpel: Theſe will even gnaſh their teeth for envy of the happineſs of a damned Sodomite. Nay, O goſpel ſlighter, you will then wiſh a thouſand times you had rather been living in Sodom, when fire and brimſtone was rained from heaven on it, than have lived in Scotland, where manna was rained, and the light ſhined ſo abundantly.

So much for inward ſins.

Of outward ſins of commiſſion on the Lord's day.

II. I Come, in the next place, to caution you againſt outward ſins, whereby the Lord's day is too commonly profaned.

Firſt, Beware of the ſins of the tongue: It is a moſt eſſential part of true religion to govern the tongue aright: For, *if any man ſeem to be religious* (ſaith James) *and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain*. The tongue is a moſt unruly thing; and therefore the pſalmiſt treats it, as he would do an unreaſonable beaſt, Pſal. xxxix. 1. *He keeps it in as with a bridle*. God hath ſet a double hedge about this unruly member, both of the teeth and lips (to ſhew with what care we ſhould keep it) and yet how oft doth it break looſe, notwithſtanding of both? God hath alſo placed it betwixt the brain and the heart, that it might take counſel of both; and yet how oft doth it act, without adviſing with either the one or the other? God hath given us two ears and but one tongue; to teach us to hear much, and ſpeak little. *Be ſwift to hear and ſlow to ſpeak*, James i. 19. for *he that refraineth his lips is wiſe*, Prov. x. 19. often have we cauſe to repent our ſpeaking, but ſeldom our ſilence.

As we ought to watch our tongues every day, ſo eſpecially on the Lord's day; for on this day we are forbid to *ſpeak our own words*, Iſa. lviii. 13. not only muſt we this day abſtain from lying, ſwearing, reproaching, backbiting, *&c.* but alſo from all *idle words*, yea from all ſuch diſcourſe as is unſuitable to the work of this day, tho' it might be lawful on other days. The hearts of men may be very much known by their Sabbath day's diſcourſe; for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh*. We gueſs by people's language what country they belong to. Is thy ſpeech vain and worldly upon the Lord's day? It is a ſhrewed ſign of a carnal unrenewed heart; *Thou art a Galilean, thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee*. This is God's holy day, and he will have it ſanctified by our whole man, and by our words as well as our actions: *Set a watch then this day before your mouth and keep the door of your lips*, and ſtrive to *ſeaſon your ſpeech with grace*; for you may profane the Sabbath by your words as well as by your works, and by vain words as well as by vile words. O then, what cauſe have we to lament the profanation of the Sabbath by vain and idle diſcourſes, which is ſo common among us? If Chriſt ſhould join himſelf to many this day, in their coming to and going from the church, as he did the two diſciples going to Emmaus on this day, Luke xxiv. 15, 17. and aſk, *What manner of communications are theſe which you have one with another?* might not this queſtion ſtrike us ſpeechleſs, and make us bluſh? Who can tell what day this is by many people's diſcourſes? Jeſts, ſtories and idle talk are as common with them this day as any other. It was Plato's propoſal, *That mens ſpeeches at their meetings and tables ſhould be written*. If this were practiſed on the Sabbath, would it not put many to ſhame, to read over their words before them? But tho' men do not regiſter them, yet, remember, God doth it, eſpecially on his own day, which he hath ſo much honoured. He has a book of remembrance to write down all that men ſay, as well as what they do, Mal. iii. 16. See what he ſaith, Mat. xi. 36. that ſcripture may cauſe us all tremble, and take heed to our words, while we have a day to live; *I ſay unto you, that every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak they ſhall give account thereof at the day of judgment*. O what long counts will many have to clear for idle words on the Sabbath, beſides on other days! And if they muſt account for idle words, how much more for ill and ſinful words, for baſe lyes, and bloody oaths? O the tongue is a world of iniquity? How ſhall we anſwer for it at God's bar, without timeous repentance, and fleeing to Chriſt for mercy? If you would have your tongues renewed and to become as choice ſilver, to ſpeak the language of Canaan on the Lord's day; then ſee to get ſanctified hearts: Cleanſe the fountain, that the ſtreams may run clear; *waſh your heart from wickedneſs, and let not vain thoughts lodge within you*, Jer. iv. 14. Shut out vain thoughts, as well as vile thoughts: And, if they break in upon you this day, do as the raviſh'd virgin under the law, cry out to God for help, and you ſhall not be held guilty.

Secondly, There are ſins in action, whereby the Sabbath is frequently profaned by many.

1ſt, Many incroach upon the Lord's holy day, and profane it by worldly diverſions and recreations, and by ſeeking their pleaſures in the fields, which I have handled already at ſome length: Others profane this holy day by making it a day of idleneſs, or a viſiting-day among their friends and neighbours: Others by making it a reckoning day with workmen and ſervants: And many profane it by doing unneceſſary ſervile work in and about their houſes, which might either be done on the Saturday before, or delayed till Monday thereafter; ſuch as *the gathering peaſe, ſhearing of graſs, cutting and ſhearing of kail, fetching in water, ſweeping the houſe, drying of cloaths, brewing of ale*, and the like. Theſe things not being works of neceſſity or mercy, but our own works, done for our worldly profit, or to indulge our carnal eaſe or pleaſure, are certainly unlawful on the Sabbath, according to Iſa. lviii. 13. Yet, alas! how is the Lord's day profaned by theſe practices in ſome places of the land? Let miniſters do and ſay what they will, ſtill many will be ſtealing a part of God's day for their ſervile work: and it cannot but be heinous and provoking in the ſight of God, being done againſt ſo much light and manifold reproofs.

Object. "Why do you exclaim ſo againſt us on this account? we do no harm to any; we thank God we are not thieves, extortioners, drunkards," &c.

Anſ. Nay, you are thieves, for you rob God, and ſteal from him that which is his proper right, for *the ſeventh day is the Lord's*. You would be aſhamed to be found ſtealing any of your neighbour's goods, and think you no ſhame to be found robbing God of his holy day? Is not ſacrilege the worſt kind of theft, ſtealing from God worſe than ſtealing from man, the ſins againſt the firſt table greater than the ſins againſt the ſecond table? Beſides, they that begin thus to ſteal from God, may, ere all be done, come and ſteal from men too; for *falſe to God, true to no man*. Many a thief at the gibbet hath confeſſed, that he began his looſe life and ſtealing with breaking of the Sabbath-day; that this was his leading ſin, and the occaſion of all the reſt.

Object. "We are not ſingular, we do but what neighbours and others about us do."

Anſ. You ought to be ſingular, and do more for God and your ſouls than others, if you would *enter in at the ſtrait gate*. God forbids you to *follow a multitude to do evil*, Exod. xxiii. 2. The commonneſs of a ſin doth not extenuate but aggravate it in the ſight of God; for, the more common it be, it hath the louder cry in his ears for vengeance. God hath *common plagues* for *common ſins* in this world, and a *common hell* for *common ſinners* in the world to come. Think not, that your aſſociation with others will anywiſe alleviate your torments in that lake below; nay, it will rather heighten them: For the more faggots are thrown into a fire, it will burn the more vehemently.

Object. "Theſe things which we do are but little trifles, ſoon done, and do not hinder God's ſervice on the Sabbath."

Anſ. 1ſt, Was not gathering a few ſticks on the Sabbath as little? yet we ſee how highly God reſented it. Think no ſin ſmall which is committed againſt an eternal God, and his holy law. There is more evil in the leaſt ſin, than all the angels in heaven, or ten thouſand worlds can expiate; and, if its guilt or puniſhment due to it were laid upon thee, it would make thee gnaſh thy teeth eternally, and curſe the day that ever thou waſt born: Nothing leſs than the death of the eternal Son of God can make atonement for the leaſt ſin. Believe it then, that leſſer ſins, if known and reſerved, will carry thee to hell as ſurely as greater ſins; for, the leſs the ſin be, the leſs tentation haſt thou to commit it, and the leſs excuſe for it. A ſmall leak in a ſhip kept open will ſink her, as well as a greater; a ſtab with a pen knife will kill a man as well as a ſword. If thou alloweſt ſatan but the ſmalleſt grip of thy ſoul, he will pull thee to hell by it, even as a butcher can drag a beaſt to the ſhambles by one foot, as well as when bound by all four: And, if ſatan get thee to hell, he doth not much care by what ſins thou goeſt thither, whether ſmall or great.

2. God hath framed all his commands in infinite wiſdom, and he beſt knows what is conſiſtent with his own worſhip, and what is moſt for his own glory. It is preſumpion in any man to ſay, that this or that piece of our work on the Sabbath will be no hinderance to the ſervice of God, ſeeing he himſelf hath ſaid, *In it thou ſhalt do no manner of work*: The Iſraelites muſt not gather manna this day, Exod. xvi. O might ſome have ſaid, "Why? it will not hinder God's ſervice; we gather it early in the morning, and ſo we will be at God's worſhip in time enough, and have all the reſt of the day to ſerve him: Again, we need not travel for it; it lies round about the camp, and near our very doors; it will be no great labour: And beſides we may have good thoughts in time of doing it." No you muſt not be wiſer than God; he hath ſet apart this day for his own uſe, and you muſt not cut and carve upon it.

In like manner, ſome excuſe their walking or travelling upon the Lord's day; *O*, ſay they, *we can employ our thoughts profitably by the way*. But, tho' you could do it, pray, can you undertake that your example ſhall have no ill effect upon others who are looking on you? What think you of that awful word, Matth. v. 19. *Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo* (that is, ſhall make others break it by what he doth or ſaith) *he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven?*

2dly, *Vanity and gaudineſs of apparel* is oppoſite to the ſanctification of the Sabbath. Some dreſs up themſelves this day in ſuch vain attire, and undecent faſhions, as tend to draw the eyes of others to gaze upon them, and ſo their hearts to wander from God and his worſhip. Think what guilt you hereby draw upon yourſelves, of the ſins of others as well as your own. The practices of ſome heathens may put many profeſſed Chriſtians among us to the bluſh. Valerius Maximus tells of a heathen young man, named Sparina, who was exceeding beautiful; but obſerving that many fixed their eyes on him, and fearing the conſequences of it, he diſfigured his face, leaſt his beauty ſhould prove a ſnare to others. May not this heathen condemn ſuch, who are ſo far from diſfiguring themſelves leſt they ſhould prove a tentation to others, that they diſfigure their faces by painting and patching, to ſeem more beautiful than God has made them, without fearing whatever the conſequences of it may prove. Is not this a ſhewing a diſlike of God's workmanſhip, and a deſire to mend it? Jezebel was infamous for this art, and no ſober woman ſhould deſire to follow her faſhion. A Chriſtian ſhould be ſo far from being proud or vain of his apparel, that the ſight of his garments ſhould humble him, and keep him in mind how he came to need them: Was it not ſin that ſtript man of his glory, covered him with ſhame, and put him to ſeek clothes for to hide it? Would it not be diſtraction in a malefactor to pride himſelf in a ſtigma which he had got for a foul crime? Conſider alſo the garments you are proud of, what they are: The beaſts have the ſame naturally to cover them, and will you be proud of a beaſt's covering? It was the ſaying of a heathen to a vain gallant, 'Why art thou proud of that which a ſheep wore before thee?' Or, what tho' they be finer than wool? yet their original is no better, but rather worſe: What are velvets, ſilks and ſatins, but the excrements of a vile worm? and is that a matter to be vain of? Remember, that ere long God will cauſe thee wear another ſuit thou wilt have ſmall reaſon to be proud of; he will even clothe thee with worms and putrefaction. May not the thoughts hereof keep you humble, and teach you to come to the church gravely and decently apparelled? eſpecially ſince you come into the preſence of that God who *reſiſts the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

3dly, The inſtitution of *holy days* is an incroachment upon the fourth command, and oppoſite to the ſanctification of the Sabbath, which is the only day now appointed to be kept holy to God. What is it, but an uſurping of Chriſt's legiſlative power, and a viliſying of the Lord's day to ſet ſaints days, or days of human inſtitution, on a level with it, by obliging people to abſtain from labour thereupon. The church hath no power to conſecrate ſuch days: nay, the apoſtles did it not: There is no word of their conſecrating a day to Stephen the proto-martyr, nor to James whom Herod killed with the ſword. Yea, it may be reckoned an idolatrous practice to conſecrate days to ſaints and angels, and keep them to their honour for publiſhing their praiſe, and commemorating their acts, ſince this is a piece of worſhip that belongs only to God.

Laſtly, Not a few in ſome parts of the country do profane this holy day, by their ſet cabals and drinking-meetings upon it, by reading profane books, and telling profane ſtories, by ſcoffing at religion and religious perſons, and by many other acts of wickedneſs. Alas! what helliſh madneſs is this, that ſome are given up to! It is even a riding poſt to hell, a dedicating God's holy day to the honour and ſervice of the devil, a hanging out a flag of defiance againſt heaven, and declaring war againſt your Maker. It is the ſaying of one, “To “keep the Sabbath in an idle manner, is to keep the “Sabbath of oxen or aſſes; to keep the Sabbath in di-“verſions and pleaſures, is to keep the Sabbath of the “golden calf. But to keep the Sabbath in drunkenneſs “and lewdneſs, is the Sabbath of ſatan, or the devil's “holy day.” O profane ſinners, what a dreadful mark of wickedneſs is it, to dedicate God's day to the devil! You cannot poſſibly offer a greater affront and indignity to the God of heaven, than to ſerve the devil in the works of darkneſs, upon that very day which is ſolemnly conſecrated to the honour and ſervice of the great God. And, can you think that a jealous God will paſs ſuch an indignity, and take no notice of it? *Do ye thus provoke the Lord to jealouſy? are ye ſtronger than he?* Will you fight againſt him that made heaven and earth with a word, and by a word can unhinge them again; yea, by the breath of his mouth can crumble you to duſt? What are you in his ſight, but as a handful of ſilly worms? and do you think to be able to wage war againſt the Almighty? No, no; be the *combination* never ſo ſtrong, the *rebels* never ſo ſtout, the *enemies* never ſo numerous, he is fully able to maſter them, and will certainly do it, Prov. xi. 21. *Tho' hand join in hand, yet the wicked ſhall not be unpuniſhed.* O what cauſe have we to pity and pray for ſuch heaven daring ſinners, and *weep in ſecret places* for their ſouls, who wilfully deſtroy themſelves, and pour contempt on their Maker; who live as if either there were no hell, or were afraid it ſhould be full ere they got thither; and who ſeem to long to be *companions of devils*, and *damned ſpirits!* The God of infinite mercy open the eyes and ſtop the career of ſuch, before they be beyond the reach of mercy.

And, before I cloſe, let me aſk the breakers of the Sabbath, What they will anſwer to the Author of the Sabbath, for deſpiſing and abuſing ſuch a rare privilege as the Sabbath is? When the Lord calls you poor ſinful creatures, who deſerve to be puniſhed eternally from his preſence, to come and enter into his reſt, and refreſh your ſouls with the views of his redeeming love, and enrich them with the treaſures of his grace ſet open before you; O what a ſin muſt it be for you to turn your back upon them, and go about to weary the Lord by your ſins, when he offers ſweet reſt to you! O believe it, ſirs, Sabbath breaking is not ſuch a light ſin as many imagine; ſurely the day is very near when you ſhall be brought to think on theſe days you now miſ-ſpend and make light of. O how will you then mourn for the loſs of theſe precious Sabbaths which God gave you to find peace and reſt to your ſouls in, when you ſhall have *no reſt night nor day*, but the *ſmoke of your* burning and *torment* ſhall *aſcend for ever and ever!* How will you mourn then to ſee Abraham's boſom afar off, and thouſands at reſt in it whom you hated, and where you might been at reſt as well as they, if you had not diſpiſed the reſt of the Sabbath here below! It is ſaid, Lam. i. 7. *Jeruſalem remembered in the days of her miſeries, all her pleaſant things that ſhe had in the days of old; then the adverſaries ſaw her, and did mock at her Sabbaths.* O the days of your miſeries approach. O Sabbath-breakers, when with ſad hearts ye ſhall remember the pleaſant ordinances and ſeaſons of grace you had of old; and then the devils and heathens will mock at you for the loſs of your Sabbaths! Why then ſhould you go to add to the ſins and miſeries of your eternal ſtate, the heinous guilt of abuſing ſuch a great number of precious Sabbaths as God in his mercy now affords you for the ſaving of your ſouls!

An EXHORTATION *to ſanctiſy the* LORD'S DAY.

I Shall conclude this ſubject with a *ſerious exhortation* to all ranks, ſtrictly to obſerve the Lords day. Read and conſider what hath been already ſaid, and you will find many arguments for preſſing this exhortation: Nay, this is the ſcope of all that hath been ſaid. But, that you may the more effectually be convinced of the excellency and neceſſity of this duty, I ſhall further ſubjoin theſe few motives.

I. The ſtrict obſervation of the Sabbath is the moſt effectual mean for preventing atheiſm and profaneneſs, in regard that, by the frequent recurring thereof, the remembrance of Chriſt and heaven is ſtill kept up, and ſin and vice are kept under conſtant rebukes and diſgrace. If it were not for the obſervation of the Sabbath, atheiſm and irreligion would quickly overſpread the world: And there is nothing, tends more to harden the heart, ſear the conſcience, and give looſe reins to ſcandalous ſins and outbreakings, than the profanation of the Sabbath. This (as hath been ſaid) many malefactors at gibbets have confeſſed to have been the firſt beginning of their looſe lives, and that which paved the way to their other wicked courſes, and provoking God to leave them to fall into theſe heinous crimes which brought them to ſuch fatal ends.

II. God's great goodneſs and gracious deſign in allowing you the Sabbath, lays you under ſtrong obligations to keep it conſcientiouſly: He gives it not for a penance but a privilege. It is not that he may get advantage from you, but that he may give bleſſings to you. He hath not commanded the buſineſs of the world to ceaſe every ſeventh day, becauſe he is tried with governing the ſame, or to take any eaſe to himſelf; but it is that he may give reſt to your bodies, and heavenly refreſhment to your ſouls. Would you have Chriſt and the riches of his grace? Would you have your ſouls nouriſhed, and weak graces repaired? Then keep the Sabbath, for it is God's weekly market-day; and a free market it is, wherein we may *buy without money and without price*, the richeſt commodities that heaven and earth can afford, even the *bread and water of life* for the lives of our ſouls, the *wine of Chriſt's blood* to chear us, the *milk of his word* to nouriſh us, the *gold of his grace* to enrich us, and his *precious eye-ſlave* to enlighten us, the *white raiment* to clothe and adorn us. Is this day ſo profitable to us, and will we not regard it? It is the ſoul's *feſtival*, a day of reaping and ingathering, and of laying up in ſtore for the time to come. It is God's *ſtated alms-day*, or *public deal-day*, wherein he ſcatters bleſſings and crumbs of the *bread of life* among needy ſouls. It is the *queen of days*, the *dawning of glory*, and *day-break* of heaven. It is the day for aſcending mount *Tabor*, to ſee Chriſt tranſigured before your eyes: and for getting to the top of *Piſgah*, to get a ſight of the *promiſed land*. O then! what horrid ingratitude muſt it be to a good God to profane this bleſſed day, and ſlight God's unſpeakable kindneſs in allowing it to us for our ſouls advantage?

III. The ſtrict obſervation of the Sabbath is an excellent mean to ſweeten both the thoughts of death and heaven to us. *1ſt*, As for death a retiring from the world once a week, will prepare us to welcome our ſinful removal from it the more chearfully. But they who think it hard to leave their worldly concerns for a day to worſhip God, when they expect to return to them on the morrow; what a hard pull muſt it be for them to part with them altogether at death never more to come back to them? And this we muſt all ſhortly do, whether we will or no: But to a conſcientious keeper of the Sabbath, the parting with the world will not be ſuch a hard taſk. *2dly*, It will alſo ſweeten the thoughts of heaven to us; for the work and comforts of the Sabbath below, are the foretaſtes of the employments and enjoyments of the everlaſting Sabbath above: And they who delight in the Sabbaths on earth (which are *the days of heaven*, and typical reſemblances of it) cannot but rejoice in the forethoughts of celebrating the eternal Sabbath above, in the immediate fruition of God's preſence, and beholding him as he is forevermore. But the thoughts of heaven can be nowiſe pleaſant to a Sabbath-breaker; yea, it would be an uneaſy priſon to him: For, if it be a penance to him to be a few days in God's worſhip now, what a puniſhment would it be to him to be engaged in this work for ever?

IV. Conſider who it is that requires you to ſanctify the Sabbath, even that good and gracious God who giveth you all things richly to enjoy; that God who giveth you your being, your breath, your health, your food, and all earthly comforts. O how bountiful is he to the ſons of men! he gives you the ſun in the heavens to ſhine upon your bodies, and the Son of his love to die for your ſouls. He allows you ſix days for your profit and pleaſure, he reſerves one for his glory and ſervice; and will you not frankly give him his one day, when he is ſo liberal to you? Say then to your vain companions, when they would tempt you to profane the Lord's day, as Joſeph to Potiphar's wife, when ſhe tempted him to ſin, Gen. xxxix. 9. *My maſter hath not kept back any thing from me but thee, becauſe thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* So ſay you, God the ſovereign Lord and Maſter of the world hath kept back no time from me, but one day, becauſe it was his; how then can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?

V. A conſcientious keeping of the Sabbath diſpoſeth the ſoul the more for the ſervice of God all the week over. If your ſoul be in a good frame on the Sabbath, it will proſper the better all the week for it: Your conſcience will be the more tender, your thoughts the more ſpiritual, and your affections the more lively. If you be in the mount with God on the Sabbath, the face of your converſation will be fair to ſhine in holineſs through the week.

VI. Our regard to the Sabbath is a trying teſt of the ſtate and frame of our ſouls, whether we be ſpiritual or carnal, love God or the world moſt. It tries alſo the conditions of our graces, whether they be waxing or waning, in a proſpering or decaying ſtate. Hence God frequently calls the Sabbath a *ſign betwixt him and his people*, Exod. xxxi. 17. Ezek. xx. 12. 20. And indeed our conſcientious keeping and ſanctifying of the Sabbath is a ſign to us ſeveral ways.

1ſt, It is a ſign of God's ſanctifying our hearts, and an evidence of a good work wrought in us by the holy Spirit.

2dly, It is a clear ſign to diſtinguiſh us from the unſanctified and profane people of the world.

3dly, It is a ſign of our having a conſcientious regard to all the other commands of God; and all obſerving perſons will find this ſign to hold in their daily experience. If you keep not this command of ſanctifying the Sabbath, it is a ſign you will little regard all the reſt. If you ſerve not God on his own day, you will make little conſcience of ſerving him in the following days of the week; but on the contrary, if you worſhip God ſincerely on the Sabbath, and regard this holy day, it is a token you will regard all other duties of religion. Let us obſerve theſe noticeable words of God, Jer. xvii. 24. 26. *If ye hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; then ſhall they come from the cities of Judah, and all other places, bringing burnt offerings, meat offerings, incenſe, and ſacrifices of praiſe unto the houſe of the Lord;* that is, the church of God and true religion ſhall flouriſh, and the name of the moſt High be exalted in the world. And indeed for my part, I deſpair ever of ſeeing Chriſtianity and reformation conſiderably advanced in the world, till once the Lord's day come to be highly eſteemed, and ſtrictly obſerved: For ſtill it is to be ſeen, whereever religion flouriſheth in the power of it, there it is that moſt conſcience is made in the obſervation of the Sabbath.

4thly, The conſcientious keeping of the Sabbath is a ſign betwixt God and his people, in reſpect it is a token of a good underſtanding and correſpondence betwixt him and them, and controverſies are removed, and peace and friendſhip maintained. To whom is it that God manifeſts moſt of his gracious preſence, and the emanations of his ſpecial love? Surely it is to thoſe who have the Lord's day higheſt in eſteem, and who are the moſt ſtrict and careful obſervers of it. Upon all which accounts, *Laſtly,* The Spirit of God makes this duty a ſign and character of the bleſſed man: For, Iſa. lvi. 2. (ſpeaking with a ſpecial eye to the New Teſtament times) he ſaith, *Bleſſed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath, from polluting it.*

O Chriſtians, would you be bleſſed indeed? then ſanctify the Lord's day, by ſincere worſhipping your Creator, who this day made light firſt to ſhine; and honouring your Redeemer, who this day roſe from the grave, and compleated the work of your redemption. As the angel ſaid to the woman that came to the ſepulchre, Mat. xxviii. 6. *He is not here, he is riſen, as he ſaid; come ſee the place where the Lord lay*: So ſay to every true lover of Chriſt, *He is not here, he is riſen; come, abſerve the time when the Lord roſe.* Obſerve it to his honour and praiſe, and he will ſurely bleſs you, and make you glad with the light of his countenance. There was never any who truly obſerved this command, but will ſay, that rare and bleſſed are the fruits which are to be reaped from this bleſſed duty.

Would ye then ſhare of theſe fruits, and pleaſe God in keeping his Sabbath? Then take the following advices; (1.) Remember to honour and glorify God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, upon this holy day, by aſcribing to each Perſon of the bleſſed Trinity the glory of his proper work. As, 1. Aſcribe to the Father the glory of his power, wiſdom and goodneſs in creating the world for our accommodation, and contriving our recovery when we had loſt ourſelves, and, for an example to us, reſting on the Sabbath after he had reviewed his work with delight.—2. We ought to glorify the Son this day, by aſcribing to him the honour of undertaking and carrying on the work of our redemption, by his incarnation and death, and by his riſing from the dead on the third day, now ſet apart for the Lord's Sabbath.—3. We are to glorify the Holy Ghoſt, by aſcribing to him the honour of applying the purchaſed redemption to believers in his work of regeneration and ſanctification, which he began in a glorious manner by that wonderful effuſion on the church in the day of Pentecoſt, being alſo the Lord's day. In this manner we ought to glorify God, giving honour to the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, upon this holy day, if we would keep the Sabbath acceptably to the Lord.

(2.) Let us mind the direction of the holy Ghoſt in Iſa. lviii. 13. with reſpect to the keeping of this day, to wit, to *call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and honour him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking our own words.* Which direction teacheth us that the beſt way to prevent Sabbath-breaking, and to honour God on his own day, is to *call the Sabbath a delight.* O that we knew what this meaneth!

Queſt. "When may we be ſaid to call the Sabbath " our delight?

Anſw. 1. We call it our delight when we rejoice at the approach of the Sabbath, and make due preparation for it; and when we ſolace our ſouls, in the joyful expection of communion with God on his own day, ſaying with David, Pſal. xliii 4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.*——2. When we give the Sabbath an early welcome and ſtir up ourſelves to ſeek God betimes upon it; like David, Pſal. lxii. 1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee.*—3. When we are diſſatisfied, with theſe things that would hinder us from the right keeping of the Sabbath, and are grieved that we can keep Sabbaths no better——4. When we eſteem every minute of Sabbath-time to be moſt precious, and are careful that none of it be waſted away; but order matters ſo wiſely, that one duty of the Sabbath may not juſtle out another; *that is,* to be ſo early in our cloſet devotion, that the cloſet may not hinder family-duties: and ſo to perform theſe, that they may not incroach upon God's public worſhip.—5. When we are concerned to have all belonging to us to keep the Sabbath as well as ourſelves, and glad to ſee this holy day regarded and honoured by all about us. Then it may be ſaid, we *call the Sabbath a delight.*

Now, after all I have ſaid, let me come in the end, in the name of the great Lord who inſtituted the Sabbath for his own glory, and the good of men, earneſtly to exhort, beſeech and obteſt all ranks and degrees of perſons, whether they be parents or children, maſters or ſervants, magiſtrates or people, young or old, to put all honour and reſpect upon this holy day; to ſanctify it as God requires, and abſtain from all worldly employments and recreations upon it. Do not grudge your Maker his one day of ſeven, but be willing to dedicate it wholly to his worſhip and ſervice. O how do you think to ſpend a whole eternity in God's holy preſence, and in holy ſpiritual exerciſes, if you cannot bring yourſelves to ſpend one day in a week in holy work?—Again ſee that you be impartial in his ſervice; be as willing to hear what God ſaith to you from his word, as you would have God to hear what you ſay to him in prayer. Some are all for prayers, as if they were only to tell God what they would have from him; but care not for ſermons, or for hearing what God requires and expects from them: But, if you would have God to hear your prayers when you ſpeak to him, you muſt diligently hearken to his word when he ſpeaks to you. It is by hearing the word upon the Lord's day that God hath converted many thouſands to himſelf. The Sabbath is a merciful inſtitution to loſt ſinners for their ſalvation, and many have been and will for ever be thankful for it: For hereby they have been led to make proper ſtands in life, and to review their bypaſt actions, ſo as to order their courſe more wiſely for the time to come; which they had never done, if they had not been led to a religious retirement on the Lord's day.

Seeing this holy day is ſuch a bleſſing and privilege to the world, let me intreat parents, maſters, magiſtrates, and all who have power to exert it for promoting the keeping of it. You are not only to ſanctify the Sabbath yourſelves, but alſo you muſt do your utmoſt that theſe under you do it likewiſe. This you are bound to by the Lord's expreſs charge in the fourth command, where it is ſaid, *Thou, thy ſon, thy daugh-*

ter, thy ſervants, the ſtranger within thy gates; importing, that you are to uſe your power and influence over all within your gates, to cauſe them obſerve the Sabbath, and keep them from profaning it; leſt God impute their ſins to you, as to Eli in the like caſe, for not uſing your power to reſtrain them. It is not indeed in the power of perſons in authority to make all thoſe religious who are under their juriſdiction; but it would put them in a likely way of being ſo, to keep them from ſuch things as would hinder the religion of that day, and cauſe them attend the means of inſtruction; and alſo to tell them in private of the reſt and happineſs of the world to come purchaſed by Chriſt, which the right keeping of the Sabbath leads unto. This ought to be the great care of parents with reſpect to their children in younger years. It is one of the firſt things that children are capable of, namely, to diſtinguiſh this day from others: And then they ſhould be taught to lay aſide their other days diverſions, even before they are capable of godly exerciſes; and thus they are gradually to be inured to Sabbath keeping as the beginning of wiſdom. This method took God to introduce religion into the world: It was his firſt appointment and inſtitution, to reſt on the ſeventh day, and to ſanctify it, Gen ii. 3. as if he deſigned this to be the foundation and beginning of all religion. Let all heads of families follow this great example.

Likewiſe, we ſee God requires maſters to take care that their ſervants and all within their gates keep the Sabbath: And indeed it is highly their intereſt and wiſdom to do ſo; for, if you be careful that your ſervants do their duty to God, God will take care that your ſervants do their duty to you.——In like manner, the civil magiſtrates, who are the fathers of cities and ſtates, ſhould uſe their power over all within their gates or juriſdiction, to cauſe them obſerve God's holy day. We ſee Nehemiah threatened bodily puniſhment on the men of Tyre for breaking of the Sabbath, Neh. xiii. 21. And Jeremiah, by God's appointment, calls upon the princes to ſee that the Sabbath be not profaned, and that upon their higheſt peril, Jer. xvii. 19, 25, 27. and hence it is, that our kings and parliaments have made ſo many excellent laws againſt the profanation of the Sabbath. May God put it into the hearts of theſe, who ought to be preſervers and executers of laws, to put them in execution! This would tend much to the glory of God, and to the welfare of nations, cities and families.—But, *laſtly*, Let me exhort all in inferior ſtations, both young and old, to obſerve the fourth command, as they regard the ſalvation of their precious and immortal ſouls in the eternal world, and the peace of their conſciences when they come to ly on a death bed, which they ſhould be looking out for every day. Let me addreſs both young and old upon this head.

I. As for you that are young, I entreat you to *remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy*. Improve this day with all care and earneſtneſs; for it is the day wherein poor ſinners uſually begin their acquaintance with God, and converſion to him: And the proper ſeaſon for this work is the time of youth; for now the heart is moſt tender and pliable, and ſooner melted for ſin, than afterwards, when you come to greater age: For, the longer you go on in ſin, the heart will turn the harder, and the conſcience more ſeared. The longer you forget God, the more eſtranged you will grow, and unwilling to return to him. The branches of a tree while young, may be bowed and trained up any way; but, when they are old they will not ply.

Again, conſider, that the ſooner you begin to ſanctify the Sabbath, and be ſerious about your ſouls, God will love you the better. See how he remembers the kindneſs of youth, Jer. ii. 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindneſs of thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals, when thou wenteſt after me in the wilderneſs*, &c. He loves thoſe who come in at the firſt ſound of the goſpel, far more than rebels, who ſtand out till the laſt, that they can do no more. The fewer calls and invitations you reſiſt, the more kindly will you be accepted of God: He loved a young Abijah, a young Joſiah, a young Timothy; and John is called the *diſciple whom Jeſus loved*, John xiii. 23. becauſe he was youngeſt and earlieſt converted. See how affectionately Paul ſalutes Epenetus, by the title of his *well-beloved*, becauſe of his being *Chriſt's firſt fruits in Achaia*, Rom. xvi. 5. And if Paul loved him ſo much, to be ſure Chriſt loved him far more.

Moreover, do not think that juſtice will ſpare you, if it find you in ſin, and out of Chriſt, becauſe you are young. Preſume not upon mercy upon this account; remember that threatening, Pſal. lxviii 21. *God ſhall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of him that goeth on ſtill in his treſpaſſes*. You have no ground to think that he will ſpare you till you be old and bald headed: No, he may even take you by the hairy ſcalp while you are in your youthful vigour and freſhneſs, and puniſh you, as he hath done many others before you.

O young folk, if you would mind your ſouls, and ſanctify the Sabbath in the days of youth, take theſe few directions:

1ſt, Look always on death as near, and within a few ſteps of you. Alas! many young folk think it as improper for them to be thinking on their graves, as to think of going to bed at noon; their ſun is high, and it is a long time to night; they look on death at forty or fifty years diſtance. O what folly is this! Do you not ſee graves of your length, and ſkulls of your ſize, in the church yard? Yea, do you not ſee twenty die young, to one that lives to old age? Let death and eternity be then the frequent ſubjects of your meditation on the Lord's day.

2dly, Think much this day upon your vileneſs and miſery by nature, that you are *children of wrath, heirs of hell, enemies to God and ſtrangers to Chriſt and the covenant of grace; yea, ſervants to ſin, and bond ſlaves to the devil*: For the prodigal never thought of turning to his father, till he ſaw himſelf in a loſt and undone condition.

3dly, Think much on Chriſt's fitneſs, fulneſs, and ſuitableneſs for all your wants and maladies. In him you may find a remedy for whatever troubles you. Is it guilt? here pardon. Is it great ſins? here's a Redeemer's blood that cleanſeth from all ſin. Are you condemned? here ſufficient righteouſneſs to juſtify you. Is pollution and filthineſs your fear? here a deep and open Fountain that runs continually. Are you chained priſoners? here liberty. Are you drowned in debt? here a Ranſom and Surety. Are you diſeaſed? here Balm. Are you poor? here fine gold. Are you dead?

here the Reſurrection and the Life. Are you ſtarving? here the manna and the fatted calf. Are you weak, and unable for duty? here all ſufficient grace and ſtrength. Yea, he 'is able to ſave them to the utter-'moſt, all that come to God by him:' And particularly, he ſays of little children, *Suffer them to come unto me; and, him that cometh* (ſaith he) *I will in no wiſe caſt out.*

4thly, Let children and young folk carefully attend ordinances this day in the church; lie cloſe by the pool ſide, till it pleaſe the Angel of the covenant to come and put you in. Study to remember what you hear, and give an account thereof to your parents when you come home.

5thly, Early acquaint yourſelves with the ſcriptures; read much of them this day, and meditate on them, Pſal. cxix. 9. *Wherewithal ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? by taking head thereunto, according to thy word.* How came Timothy to be well acquaint with Chriſt and his way? but becauſe *from a child he knew the ſcriptures*, 2 Tim. iii. 15.

6thly, Be much this day in prayer; for the prayers of young folk are very pleaſant muſic in God's ears. It would be both very pleaſant and profitable, if children of the ſame family would take ſome time this day to meet, and read and pray together; for ſo the examples, and hearing of one another, would be mutually helpful, and ſtir up them to a concern about their duty. It is the fault of parents, that do not put them on to this practice. If children did thus begin early to the ſervice of God, it would become habitual and delightful to them afterwards. But, alas! inſtead of this, many parents let their children run and play thro' the ſtreets, and in the church and church-yard, on the Sabbath, without reſtraint. But, let ſuch parents remember, that tho' children die in their iniquities, yet their blood God will require at their hand one day.

II. I ſhall cloſe with a word to aged people. You that are old men and women give ear to what I am to ſay. Conſider how many Sabbaths you have miſſpent, and mourn for it. In threeſcore years time, you have above three thouſand Sabbaths to reckon for, And if God *lay judgment to the line and righteouſneſs to the plumet*, you will not be able to anſwer for one of them. O humble yourſelves deeply before God, and employ Chriſt to clear your counts for you. Put on reſolutions in his ſtrength, to improve time better for the future, and particularly the Sabbaths which God may yet allow you, for ſecuring an intereſt in Chriſt, and making proviſion for long laſting eternity. Have you not great need for it? Alas! there are many old perſons who have all yet to do. Their glaſs is near run, and their ſun is at the ſetting; and yet they have their work to begin, and their journey to ſet out for, tho' they have lived threeſcore years in God's world, yet they never ſpent three hours of all that time in ſincere ſerving of God, or providing for endleſs eternity. They never communed with their hearts, thought on their ways, ſhed a tear for ſin, or fell on their knees to cry, *Lord, what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* What hope ſhall I have in a dying hour? Where will I take up my lodging through eternity? How many old perſons are groſly ignorant of the firſt principles of religion? Yea, many children of five or ſix years old will far outſtrip them. O what is the reaſon of all this, but the neglect and miſpending of the Sabbath day, and the contempt of the means of grace and knowledge which you might have enjoyed thereupon? Well then, what reſolve you to do for the time to come? Have you not forgotten God and Chriſt, and neglected your ſouls and heaven long enough? Or, will you do it to your dying hour? Are you content to go to the grave without Chriſt, and without hope? O what a ſad ſight is it, to ſee gray hairs and graceleſsneſs meeting together! to ſee men put to look thro' their ſpectacles, but never minding to look to their Saviour! to ſee them leaning on their ſtaves, but never thinking of relying on Chriſt for ſalvation! to ſee age forcing them to bow and bend their bodies to the earth, but yet never bowing a knee in ſecret, to beg repentance! O what a ſhame is it to live fifty or ſixty years in the world, without a fervent prayer, or penitent tear for ſin! to live without God, without Chriſt, and without faith! O what will you anſwer for the fearful abuſe of God's long-ſuffering patience! Old ſinner, better thou hadſt died when a child, or when firſt born, than to have lived ſo long, and go to hell at laſt! If thou dieſt old in age, and old in ſin, what a hot and fiery hell mayſt thou look for at laſt! O how many Sabbaths and ſermons! how many calls, counſels and exhortations have you to anſwer for. Remember, you will be called to an account for every year, month, day and hour you have lived: And, what account can you give of fifty years ſpent in ſin, ſixty years lived in a Chriſtleſs and prayerleſs ſtate, or three thouſand Sabbaths trifled away? Will you be perſuaded then to flee to Chriſt, as thy Surety and Cautioner, to clear thy counts and pay thy debts before the door be ſhut; and improve the time and Sabbaths which remain, for God's glory, and your precious ſouls advantage. And to him, who can effectually perſuade and enable you ſo to do, be praiſe for ever. *Amen.*

GOSPEL HYMNS,
IN MEMORY OF
REDEEMING LOVE,
AND OF
CHRIST's DEATH and SUFFERINGS.

HYMN I.

A THANK-OFFERING *to the Bleſſed Trinity, for Redeeming Love.*

1 O Holy, holy, holy Lord,
  Jehovah One in Three,
By all the hoſts above ador'd,
  We'll ever ſing to Thee.
    Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
    Hallelujah, Amen.
2 We'll ſing ſalvation to our God
  That ſits upon the throne;
Salvation alſo we'll aſcribe
  Unto the Lamb his Son;
    Hallelujah, &c.
3 And likewiſe to the Holy Ghoſt,
  Who doth with ſinners ſtrive,
And them convince of ſin and wrath,
  That ſo their ſouls may live.
    Hallelujah, &c.
4 Ye heav'nly hoſts, Jehovah praiſe:
  Them join men of all ranks;
Praiſe Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt,
  To Three in One give thanks.
    Hallelujah, &c.
5 Theſe Three at Jordan did atteſt
  God's wondrous work of love:
The Father ſpeaks, the Spirit lights
  On Jeſus like a Dove.
    Hallelujah, &c.
6 Our heav'nly Father we will praiſe,
  Who ſent Immanuel
To be our Prieſt and Sacrifice,
  To ſave from ſin and hell.
    Hallelujah, &c.
7 From love to men, thou gav'ſt thy Son
  To drink the cup of wrath:
Chriſt drank, and ſaid, I'll caſt out none
  That come to me by faith.
    Hallelujah, &c.
8 What ſhall I render to my God
  For all his gifts to me,
And for his gift unſpeakable,
  His Son for men to die?
    Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
    Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN II.

CHRIST's *Love and Excellency.*

1 WHat love is this! that Chriſt ſhould bear
  Man's curſe and puniſhment,
And ſhed his blood upon the croſs,
  Till ev'ry drop was ſpent!
2 Love made him come to ſave the loſt,
  Give ſight unto the blind,
To looſe the captives that are bound,
  And eaſe the grieved mind.
3 His name's *The Lord our righteouſneſs:*
  There's nothing to me ſounds
So ſweet as Chriſt his name and croſs,
  His love, his blood and wounds.
4 He is my life, my food, my hope,
  My refuge, and my guard,
My guide, my pattern, and my prop,
  My free aud full reward.
5 My Love, my Lamb, my Ranſomer,
  My Prieſt, my Sacrifice,
My Surety, God, my glorious All,
  My ſoul that ſatisfies.
6 Chriſt is the maſter I will ſerve,
  He ſhall have all my heart:
Away with ſatan and his luſts,
  To them I'll give no part.
7 While I go thro' the wilderneſs,
  By faith I'll lean on thee:
My way, my ſtrength, my ſtaff, and reſt,
  My Jeſus ſtill ſhall be.
8 I'll here below of Jeſus ſing,
  And humbly him adore:
Him take as Prophet, Prieſt, and King,
  And praiſe him evermore.

HYMN III.

The BLOOD of JESUS.

1 BY faith mount Calvary aſcend,
  Hear there Chriſt's piercing cries;
See there him bleeding unto death
  As our dear ſacrifice.
2 Come let us ſpread our ſins and griefs
  At the foot of his croſs:
If we in Chriſt believe, his blood
  Will purge away our droſs.

3 His blood, when ſprinkled on our ſouls,
Will our protection be;
His blood will fright our enemies,
And get us victorie.
4 His blood will mollify our hearts,
And bonds of ſin will looſe;
His blood will quench the fiery darts
Which ſatan at us throws.
5 His blood will waſh our ſcarlet ſins,
And make us white as ſnow;
His blood will warm our love to God,
And make our graces flow.
6 O Lamb, when thy blood on me drops,
It doth my pardon ſeal;
It is the balm of Gilead,
That doth my conſcience heal.
7 I daily to thy blood reſort,
In it I humbly boaſt;
It rais'd me from the dreadful pit,
When I was ſunk and loſt.
8 Of crimſon ſins thy blood removes
Their guilt and power to damn;
Wrath cannot reach me, ſince I fled
Unto my bleeding Lamb.

HYMN IV.

The Lord's TABLE.

1 A Feaſt of Love God makes below,
A ſign of that above;
To which he calls poor worms to go,
To feaſt on JESU's love.
2 Come here, admire Chriſt's love to us,
That gives his fleſh for food;
And drink to us he doth provide,
By pouring out his blood.
3 This blood doth life unto the dead,
Health to the ſick impart:
This drink revives the fainting ſoul,
and melts the frozen heart.
4 What folly is't for men to ſtarve,
Or feed on huſks like ſwine;
When Chriſt calls to a table ſpread,
To feaſt on food divine!
5 Unto Chriſt's table we will go,
There view his love and tears,
With all the ſuff'rings he endur'd
For three and thirty years.
6 In feeding we remember thee
Till thou return again;
We call to mind thy ſtripes and wounds,
Thy griefs, thy cries, and pain.
7 Our Lord was of a woman born,
A manger was his bed:
He's firſt a babe, and next a man,
Then on the tree he bled.
8 Th' eternal God became our Lamb,
For us to agonize;
Yea in our ſtead, to death he bled,
To be our ſacrifice.

HYMN V.

CHRITS's *Sufferings for us.*

1 OUR God would ſuffer in our place,
For our ſins to atone;
A world of guilt he underlay,
The wine-preſs trode alone.
2 He would his throne and ſervants leave,
And honours great above;
For worms a ſervant he would be:
Amazing is that love!
3 Yea, in the room of ſinful worms
My Lord the law obey'd,
And bore its curſes on the tree,
When he was crucify'd.
4 Gethſemane will tell how much
He ſwate, he bled, and cry'd;
So will mount Calv'ry, and the croſs
On which my Saviour dy'd.
5 I view his great ſoul-agony,
Which cauſed his bloody ſweat:
His pierced hands and ſide I hug,
I kiſs his bleeding feet.
6 I hear my Jeſu's melting voice
Saying, For you I dy'd;
Think on my pains and agonies
When I was crucify'd:
7 Of my love then do no more doubt,
Since out of love I dy'd:
Behold my pierced hands and feet,
And view my wounded ſide.
8 'Tis open: Look and ſee my heart,
It bleeds and beats with love;
It pants to get you freed of ſin,
To dwell with me above.

HYMN VI.

CHRIST's *Wounds and Blood.*

1 CHriſt's bleeding wounds did once atone
For our guilt on the tree;
And now they plead before the throne,
Us from ſin's pow'r to free.
2 Thy wounds ſtill in our hearts remain,
Thee bleeding ſtill we view;
Since thou appear'ſt above us ſlain,
Thy death is ever new.
3 Allow me, Lord, to pitch my tent
Beſide thy ſtreaming wounds;
There many have got rich ſupplies,
There joy and peace abounds.
4 Purſu'd by juſtice' flaming ſword,
To Jeſu's wounds I come
For ſhelter and a hiding-place;
O let me there find room.
5 Under thy righteouſneſs me hide,
In thy wounds make me dwell;
So there my ſoul ſhall reſt ſecure,
From all the pow'rs of hell.
6 Thy wounds are guilty mens refuge,
To them have thouſands fled;
None ever diſappointed were,
Their ſtreſs who on them laid.
7 Thy wounds do for our pardon plead,
They rocky hearts melt down:
To heav'n we ſwim upon thy blood,
And thereby get the crown.
8 No condemnation reach them ſhall
Who lodge in Jeſu's wounds;
They're ſafe from fears, and in their ears
His name moſt ſweetly ſounds,

HYMN VII.

The Wonders of GOD's *free Love.*

1 GReat God, enthron'd above the ſky,
How low a ſtep is this,
For worms like us to give thy life,
To buy eternal bliſs!
2 What love is this, that God ſhould die
For theſe his laws that broke!
Himſelf ſhould anſwer for our crime
In caſting off his yoke!
3 The love and ſuff'rings matchleſs were
Of Chriſt our bleeding God,
When he was bruiſed for our ſins,
And cruſh'd beneath our load.
4 More than his life he lov'd our race;
Yea, heav'n he did forſake,
To ſnatch men from the flames of hell,
And them to glory take.
5 Thy love and grace, dear Lamb of God,
Shall be my laſting theme:
I'll ever bleſs that victim ſlain
Without Jeruſalem.
6 Thy free grace, Lord, moſt wonderful,
To me it doth excel:
What coſt haſt thou beſtow'd to ſave
A brand pluckt out of hell!
7 With warm affection I will bleſs
My great high Prieſt above,
Whoſe heart is made of tenderneſs,
And bowels melt with love.
8 O may thy love conſtrain mens hearts
To love and follow thee!
We've heard thy love has melted rocks;
Let all ſuch wonders ſee.

HYMN VIII.

CHRIST's *pleading above.*

1 UPon mount Zion's diſtant top
A Lamb by faith we ſee:
'Tis Jeſus, for we know his voice;
He calls, Come up to me.
2 O Lamb, ſee pilgrims trav'ling here,
And our ſoul-wants ſupplie;
Keep ſpeaking to us by the way,
Till we come up to thee.
3 By faith we have thee bleeding ſeen,
Rais'd on the croſs to die;
By faith we thee now pleading hear,
When lifted up on high.
4 In higheſt heav'ns the Lamb doth reign;
Yet as our Prieſt he ſtands,
And for us pleads his ſtripes and wounds,
And ſhews his bleeding hands.
5 As newly ſlain, he ſtill preſents
His bleeding wounds to God,
Which plead his flock may ſtill hold on,
And keep the heav'nly road.
6 In this great Advocate we truſt
Who for our ſins was ſlain;
We on his pow'rful blood depend,
Which cannot plead in vain.
7 Bleſt ſouls above, now with the Lamb!
You cloſly him attend:
Take courage, for we tread their path,
To them we'll ſoon aſcend.
8 Adieu, vain world, with all thy charms;
To our dear Lamb we go,
Who pleads to keep's from ſin and harms,
From enemies below.
9 Hoſanna to king David's Son,
And to king David's Lord;
King David's root and offſpring's one
Who heav'n to men reſtor'd.

HYMN IX.

HEAVEN *begun on* EARTH.

1 OUR Lamb's God-man, in perſon one,
The great Immanuel:
This union ſtrange is God's device
To ſave our ſouls from hell.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 The Lamb is worthy for to reign,
Both ſaints and angels cry;
Let heav'n and earth, with all their hoſts,
Adore thy majeſty.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 With theſe to praiſe we do preſume,
As ranſom'd by thy blood:
Reign here, and in the world to come,
Thou everlaſting God.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 We praiſe thee, Son of God, whoſe pow'r
Did bring about our peace;
We praiſe thee, Son of man, whoſe blood
Redeem'd our fallen race.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Incarnate God, our Lord, our Love.
Our Lamb, our Sacrifice!
We'll thee adore, tho' hell ſhould roar,
And worldlings thee deſpiſe.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 Worthy of glory is the Lamb,
Who was at Calv'ry ſlain:
For he gave up himſelf to death,
To ranſom fallen men.
Hellelujah, &c.
7 Be pow'r and glory ever thine,
Thy name be ſtill ador'd;
Let all the creatures thee proclaim
Their everlaſting Lord.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 Let ev'ry nation, land and tongue
Thy wondrous love confeſs:
Cauſe all men know thy charming name,
"The Lord our Righteouſneſs."
Hallelujah, &c.
9 Now, great Immanuel, to thy name
Be endleſs glory giv'n:
Our broken hymns on earth begun,
Them perfect make in heav'n.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN X.

HEAVEN's HAPPINESS.

1 'TIs heaven on earth, Chriſt's love to taſte,
And feel his pow'rful grace;

'Tis heav'n begun to dwell in love,
And ſee his glorious face.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Lord, in my breaſt the fire doth burn
Of love which thou haſt giv'n:
Nothing on earth can quench this flame,
Nothing but Chriſt in heav'n.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 Men here would know the things below;
But I determin'd am
Chriſt crucify'd alone to know,
My ſacrificed Lamb.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 The ſweeteſt days we have on earth
Are in thy ſervice ſpent:
The comforts I enjoy in theſe
Do yield me moſt content.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Communion Sabbaths here are ſweet;
But them we ſoon do ſpend:
In heav'n the Sabbath ſweeter is,
Which never hath an end.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 There Hallelujahs to the Lamb
No period will know:
No willows there to hang our harps,
As oft we find below.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 O happy theſe who ſhall aſcend
Where they ſtill Sabbath keep,
Where in the heav'nly work of praiſe
They ſlumber not nor ſleep!
Hallelujah, &c.
8 There to the Lamb that once was dead,
But now doth live again,
With joy and wonder do they ſing:
He's ſaints eternal gain.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XI.

The Lord *our* Righteouſneſs.

1 WE from our free-will and our works
No help at all can draw;
For our free-will and nat'ral pow'rs
Are haters of God's law.
2 The ſtream which from Chriſt's pierced ſide
In blood and water flow'd,
Muſt juſtify and cleanſe our ſouls,
Ere we can live with God.
3 Lord, all my doings and my works
Can ne'er with God prevail:
Both I and they, for ſin, deſerve
To be thrown down to hell.
4 My righteouſneſs is filthy rags,
I humbly muſt confeſs:
But, Lord, I plead my Saviour's name,
'The Lord our Righteouſneſs.'
5 Tho' I could weep a flood of tears,
I'd lay no ſtreſs thereon:
Chriſt's blood muſt waſh me and my tears,
Or elſe I am undone.
6 Chriſt bears the burden of our ſins,
And of our duties too:
His blood muſt cleanſe our pray'rs and praiſe
And all that we can do.
7 Chriſt, who's our Righteouſneſs, perfumes
Our duties unto God:
Weak mints, thro' Chriſt, he doth accept;
They're ſprinkled with his blood.
8 Chriſt's works and wounds alone I truſt,
His life and death I bleſs:
I'll ever ſing his precious name,
'The Lord our Righteouſneſs.'

HYMN XII.

The Goſpel-Paſſover.

1 IN this our Goſpel-paſſover
God ſets before our eyes
The ſubſtance of the ancient types,
God's Lamb our ſacrifice.
2 Here view his body broke, and blood
Down ſtreaming from his heart,
To ſave our ſouls: and thus our Lamb
Fulfill'd the Saviour's part.
3 Here divine Wiſdom doth provide
A free ſoul-ſtrengthning feaſt;
And freely bids each hungry ſoul,
O come and be a gueſt.
4 Here things of ſenſe, but there's far more
Than hallow'd bread and wine;
Lo! there is here immortal cheer,
And ſtreams of life divine.
5 Here's for our ſouls Chriſt's body broke,
To feed and make them grow;
Here's running ſtreams of divine blood,
To make us white as ſnow.
6 Lord, grant thy preſence with thy gueſts,
Thy peace to them afford;
No muſic can delight our hearts
Like thy forgiving word.
7 Grant faith to eat the bread of life
Which God ſent down from heav'n,
And alſo faith to drink the blood
For our redemption giv'n.
8 Awake, repentance, faith and love,
Come feaſt on Chriſt, and ſing:
Rouze up, my pow'rs and graces all,
Attend this mighty King.
9 View here the wounds and dying pangs
Of our dear bleeding Lord,
Whoſe head, and ſide, and heart, were (pierc'd;
Whoſe hands and feet were bor'd.

N. B. *The twelve preceding hymns are all done in common metre; the ten following hymns are compoſed in different meaſures, to ſuit ſome pleaſant tunes, which many have learned, and delight in.*

HYMN XIII.

The Communion Sabbath.

1 FAther, this day we'll ſing:
From love thou gav'ſt thy Son,
To buy ſalvation to our ſouls,
When ſin had us undone.

8 F.

2 We'll bleſs thy Son, who came
To bear our guilt and ſhame,
And thy juſt law which we had broke,
Fulfilled in our name.
3 We bleſs thy Sp'rit, who guides
Men in the heav'nly road:
Come, heav'nly Dove, our Saviour's love
Shed in our hearts abroad.
4 Our crucified Lord
Was laid among the dead:
But ſoon the grave its prey reſtor'd;
He roſe for us to plead.
5 To-day, Chriſt left the dead,
And ſatan's empire fell:
'This is the day the Lord hath made,'
We'll triumph over hell.
6 We'll ſhew his death, who bled
To ſave our ſinful race,
And in the ſupper to us comes
With meſſages of grace.
7 We magnify thy love
For ſuch a taſte below,
And that thou mak'ſt to ſaints above
Far nobler bleſſings flow.
8 We'll haſte to Chriſt above;
We'll then need ſigns no more:
We'll ſee his face, and know his love;
We'll feaſt, and him adore.
9 To Father, Son, and Sp'rit,
JEHOVAH, One in Three,
Sing HALLELUJAHS; for 'tis meet
Thus God to glorifie.

HYMN XIV.

The wonders of REDEEMING LOVE.

1 DEar Father, we thee bleſs,
Thy wondrous love adore
In giving us thine only Son;
What couldſt thou give us more?
2 Behold how God commends
His love to men undone!
That he might ſpare his enemies,
He would not ſpare his Son.
3 What ſaw the Lamb in man,
That could his pity move,
To draw the rebel from hell's gates
With cords and bands of love!
4 A love that was not quench'd
By death or deepeſt wound,
Nor by deep ſtreams of wrath and blood;
By floods it was not drown'd!
5 A glorious crown he left
A thorny crown to wear!
And on his bruiſed wounded back
A heavy croſs won'd bear!
6 Mens ſins, each was a thorn,
A whip, a nail, a ſpear!
By them thy bleſſed fleſh was torn;
Let men view ſin with fear!
7 Yet garments dy'd with blood,
The thorns thy head that tare,
Endear thee more to thine, than robes
And gems which monarchs wear.
8 Our ſlain Lamb now appears
Before God's awful throne;
There offers up our praiſe and pray'rs:
He takes them from his Son.
9 Let ſaints and angels join
The dear love to proclaim
Of him that ſits upon the throne,
And of the worthy Lamb.

HYMN XV.

The LAMB *ſlain.*

1 HOw moving is the ſight I ſee!
My God nail'd bleeding to a tree!
Let countleſs myriads of men
With pierc'd hearts cry, *the Lamb is ſlain.*
2 My deareſt Lamb, thy blood was ſpilt
For ſinful man's imputed guilt:
Hard is the heart that feels no pain
For ſin, for which *the Lamb is ſlain.*
3 Let men thy dying love proclaim,
Which caus'd thy blood for men to ſtream:
Fix in their hearts ſtill to remain
This glorious truth, *the Lamb is ſlain.*
4 Our ſinking ſtate thou didſt bemoan,
Yea, all our ſins and curſe took on,
To ſave us from eternal pain:
My deareſt Lord, *the Lamb is ſlain.*
5 To us the goſpel ſweetly ſounds,
We flee for ſafety to thy wounds;
Yea, theſe to us do glory gain.
To open heav'n, *the Lamb is ſlain.*
6 Reſolv'd I'll ly before thy throne,
And ſay, I never will be gone
Till I ſhall peace with God obtain,
That peace for which *the Lamb is ſlain.*
7 Doth not thy blood for ſinners plead,
And for great en'mies interceed?
Still hopes of life I will maintain,
While God proclaims, *The Lamb is ſlain.*
8 Thy blood I will on ſin revenge;
Help me from ſin my ſoul to cleanſe:
Thy wounds from ſin ſhall ſtill reſtrain,
Since for my ſin *the Lamb is ſlain.*

HYMN XVI.

JESUS *his Name fragrant.*

1 CHRIST JESUS is the Lamb that's ſlain,
To ſave the very worſt of men:
No name like JESUS ſounds to me,
For JESUS brings ſalvation free.
2 JESUS his name doth ſinners tell,
His work's to ſave from ſin and hell:
All ſweetneſs centers in his name;
My naming it makes love to flame.
3 When ſunk are names of greateſt worth,
'His name's like ointment poured forth;'
It ſpreads a fragrant ſcent around,
And brings refreſhing with its ſound.
4 JESUS his name charms heart and ear,
Makes me content his croſs to bear:
His name doth chear my fainting ſoul,
And makes my wounded ſpirit whole.
5 His Name to me is a ſtrong tow'r,
It ſaves me from the wrathful ſhow'r:

His name with comforts doth abound
To ſouls with ſorrows almoſt drown'd,
6 Jesus his name doth ſweetly ſound,
It rings ſalvation all around;
It doth the heavy-laden keep
From ſinking downward in the deep.
7 When in our place dear Jesus ſtood
With all his garments roll'd in blood,
To faith a lovely ſight is he:
All guilty men, to Jeſus flee.
8 O Jesus, glorious is thy name;
May all the nations hear thy fame!
Moſt ſweet thy name will ever ſound
Above, where praiſes have no bound.

HYMN XVII.

The crucified Jesus.

1 CHRIST crucified ſhall be the ſong
Which will employ my heart and tongue:
This ſong ſupports men in diſtreſs,
And cheers their hearts in wilderneſs.
All ſongs but this I'll lay aſide;
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd.
2 Up Calv'ry mount I'll climb by faith,
And ſee my Saviour vanquiſh death;
I'll wond'ring ſtand, and view the blood
He ſhed when in my place he ſtood:
From love he ſtretch'd his arms and dy'd;
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd.
3 To me his bonds do freedom buy,
And bring to glorious liberty;
The cruel ſcoffs he bore from foes
To me obtain divine applauſe.
Of Chriſt I'll ſing, let men deride;
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd.
4 The ſtrokes he got on back and face
Raze out the marks of my diſgrace;
The thorny crown which he endur'd,
A crown of life for me procur'd.
Let ſtill this ſong with me abide,
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd.
5 On's back he bore the bloody tree,
Puſh'd foreward by the ſoldiery;
Pity'd by none, by all blaſphem'd,
Inſulted, hated and condemn'd:
In all he wondrous love diſplay'd;
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd.
6 His diſciples were fled and gone,
The wine-preſs he muſt tread alone:
He's pierc'd in head, in hands and feet,
Till ſtreams of blood each other meet.
Why ſhould I think of ought beſide?
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd.

HYMN XVIII.

Know Christ *crucified.*

1 CHRIST crucify'd is all my bliſs,
In all my ſtraits I'll him addreſs,
His wounds and blood do make me whole;
Look up, and live, each ſin-ſick ſoul;
If you would have all wants ſupply'd,
'Know Jeſus, and him cucify'd.'
2 That bloody ſweat of Chriſt's, ſo free,
Proves a choice cordial unto me;
Thoſe nails which gave him torture vaſt,
My ſeat in heaven ſhall make faſt.
Let hearts that would be fix'd and ſtay'd,
'Know Jeſus, and him crucify'd.'
3 Chriſt ſuffer'd naked, me to clothe
With righteouſneſs and glory both;
His parching thirſt, and cup of gall,
In bitter griefs me comfort ſhall.
Let ſouls that would be ſatisfy'd,
'Know Jeſus and him crucify'd.'
4 Chriſt's five wide wounds do bid me come
To lodge in them; for there is room:
His loud and agonizing cry
Heav'n's gates will open when I die.
If you would ſee them open'd wide,
'Know Jeſus, and him crucify'd.'
5 Chriſt's open'd ſide my cave ſhall be,
To which from foes my ſoul ſhall flee;
The water which from it did flow
Shall quench my thirſt while here below.
Would you in this dear refuge hide?
'Know Jeſus, and him crucify'd.'

HYMN XIX.

Gratitude for Redeeming Love.

1 IMMANUEL's fame I'll ſpread abroad,
And loudly praiſe my bleeding God;
For theſe love-wonders now I ſee,
I'll praiſe thee thro' eternitie.
Lord, make me meet with ſaints above
To ſing thy everlaſting love.
2 The *Word made fleſh*, the *Lamb once ſlain*,
Aſtoniſh angels as well's men;
This ſhews God's love in ſuch degree
As it can never fathom'd be.
Lord, make me meet with ſaints above
To ſing thy everlaſting love.
3 Why, Lord, didſt thou ſuch pain endure?
He ſaith, Thy ſinful ſoul to cure;
My crimſon blood to you doth ſay,
Your crimſon ſins I'll waſh away.
Amazing love, that God ſhould die
For man that was his enemy!
4 I plac'd myſelf in ſinners room,
Your fleſh and frailties did aſſume;
I for your debt engag'd alone,
And for your ſins dy'd to atone.
Amazing love, that God ſhould die
For man that was his enemy!
5 O Lamb of God, to men thou'rt good:
How ſhall I ſhew my gratitude?
I'll kiſs thy feet, and thee adore,
And grieve that I can do no more.
Lord fit my ſoul to live with thee,
To ſing his praiſe who dy'd for me.
6 I thank thee, Jeſus, my dear Lord,
For all the pains thou haſt endur'd:
Cauſe thou my ſoul thy love to know,
Who bled to make me white as ſnow.
Lord fit my ſoul to live with thee,
To ſing his praiſe who dy'd for me.

HYMN XX.

The FEAST *of* COMMEMORATION.

1 TO ſaints aſſemblies I'll repair,
And vent my heart in praiſe and pray'r:
The day Chriſt roſe, I'll him extol,
And ſhew his death with heart and ſoul.
I none deſire to know beſide
My Jeſus, and him crucify'd.
2 Chriſt crucify'd is ſtill my feaſt;
They Jeſus love, who Jeſus taſte:
I'll on his purchaſe fix mine eyes,
And feaſt on fruits of paradiſe.
I none deſire to know beſide
My Jeſus, and him crucify'd.
3 We take the bleſt ſigns in our hands,
And ſo obey our Lord's commands:
Remembring thee, we do attend;
And this we'll do till time ſhall end.
Thy death to ſhew, ſaints will take care,
Until they meet thee in the air.
4 Thy bleſt remembrance yields delight,
But far more ſweet will be thy ſight:
Hence 'tis my daily cry to Thee,
O deareſt Jeſus come to me.
I none deſire to know beſide
My Jeſus, and him crucify'd.
5 A ſight of Jeſus on the croſs
Makes all this world appear as droſs:
Lord, what are earthly things to me,
But clouds that part my ſoul and thee!
O tune my ſoul for ſongs above;
Increaſe my light, inflame my love.
6 Never did angels taſte above
Redeeming grace, and dying love.
Worthy is Chriſt our bleſſed Lamb,
That bore for men the croſs and ſhame,
On God's eternal throne to reign,
Since he for us was pierc'd and ſlain.

HYMN XXI.

Know JESUS *only.*

1 JOIN, ye tribes of ranſom'd men,
With hearts and tongues to ſing,
Worthy's the Lamb that was ſlain
To be our Lord and King:
Let mens wills unto him bow,
Since out of love for men he dy'd:
Only Jeſus will I know,
And Jeſus crucify'd.
2 For our ſins Chriſt's blood was ſpilt,
His ſoul did torments feel:
If we mourn not for our guilt,
Our hearts are hard as ſteel.
Lord, cauſe tears from hearts to flow:
O pity them whoſe hearts are dry'd.
Only Jeſus will I know,
And Jeſus crucify'd.
3 Sin I ſhun with all its charms,
Since it would me deſtroy:
Take me, Lord, into thy arms,
Me ſafe to heav'n convoy;
While I travel here below,
Still keep me near thy pierced ſide.
Only Jeſus will I know,
And Jeſus crucify'd.
4 Earth affords not my chief good,
In Chriſt my bliſs doth ly;
Earth's vain dreams mens hearts delude,
Its arts I do deſy:
Empty world, I thee let go,
Adieu to all thy pomp and pride.
Only Jeſus will I know,
And Jeſus crucify'd.
5 Earth I quit for reſt above,
Below there's nothing ſure:
Chriſt I make my Lord, my Love;
In him my all's ſecure.
O let faith ſtill in me grow,
All vanities I'll lay aſide.
Only Jeſus will I know.
And Jeſus crucify'd.

HYMN XXII.

A Saint chuſes not to ſtay behind Chriſt

1 IN the wine-preſs of God's wrath
My deareſt Lamb was cruſht;
There he groan'd and bled to death,
Yea, low was laid in duſt:
But he roſe, to ſhew his love;
To plead for us, to heav'n he's gone.
Since my head and heart's above,
Why ſtay I here to grone?
2 Friend of ſinners, King of ſaints,
Plead for me with thy blood;
While I'm in the land of wants,
Still ſend me heav'nly food:
My heart-plagues do thou remove,
Of them to thee I make my mone.
Since my head and heart's above,
Why ſtay I here to grone?
3 Into Jeſu's hands I fall,
By faith I thee embrace;
King of glory hear my call,
And heal me by thy grace;
Let thy Spirit in me move,
To fix my faith on Chriſt alone.
Since my head and heart's above,
Why ſtay I here to grone?
4 Lord, thou ſay'ſt, I quickly come;
Saints for thy coming pray:
While thou ſtay'ſt, I'm far from home;
Lord Jeſus, come away:
On things earthly I'll not rove,
Like Chriſt among them there is none.
Since my head and heart's above,
Why ſtay I here to grone?

HYMN XXIII.

The Fountain of CHRIST's *Blood.*

1 WE bleſs God for this matchleſs blood,
Which to us freely ſtreams,
And fallen men from ſin and hell
Moſt powerfully redeems.
2 Eternal thanks to God's dear Son,
Who pour'd this ſtreaming flood,
To waſh from ſin, and to enſure

Our ſouls eternal good.
3 Betheſda, Jordan, Siloam's pool,
Are vain, they do no good
For cleanſing ſouls, or purging ſins,
As doth this divine blood.
4 Come, leprous ſouls, to this new pool,
And bathe yourſelves therein:
Why ſhould you die, when God provides
This remedy for ſin?
5 Unto this open fountain bring
My ſinful ſoul, O God,
And all my ſpotted garments cleanſe
In my Redeemer's blood.
6 Upon this remedy divine
Alone my hopes are built:
This many thouſand ſouls have tried,
It purg'd away their guilt.
7 Give acceſs, Lord, unto thy blood,
And faith to waſh, till I
Be purify'd and throughly clean
From all iniquity.
8 Praiſe for the doctrine of free grace,
Which Jeſu's goſpel ſounds;
Praiſe for free love, and cleanſing blood
That flows from Jeſu's wounds.

HYMN XXIV.

CHRIST *our* PASSOVER *Sacrificed for us.*

1 LY at the foot of Jeſu's croſs,
See what the Lamb endur'd;
Contemplate there his bleeding wounds,
Which life to us procur'd.
2 Sore wounds and bruiſes, ſtripes and pain,
With fearful agony,
Did he endure to ranſom us
From endleſs miſery.
3 Jeſus our paſſover is ſlain,
And for us ſacrific'd;
The tokens of thy death remain,
Let theſe by us be priz'd,
4 A feaſt upon this ſacrifice
Thou haſt on men beſtow'd,
Where we may feed upon thy fleſh,
And drink thy precious blood.
5 Thanks to our God, who loved us,
And look'd on ſinking men,
And for us found a ſacrifice,
The Lamb for ſinners ſlain.
6 A ſacrifice that's infinite
Thy juſtice did demand,
Ere guilty men ſhould be forgiv'n,
Or they in judgment ſtand.
7 Behold how mercy interpos'd
In this nonpluſſing caſe,
And ſent the Lamb our paſſover
To bleed in ſinners place!
8 Till we aſcend to Chriſt above,
And fully ſhare thy feaſt,
We'll ſit content beneath thy croſs,
And bleſs thee for a taſte.
9 Dear Lamb, ſhine on our ſolemn days,
Thy preſence makes the feaſt:
Come fill our hearts with love, and joy
That cannot be expreſt.

HYMN XXV.

Thankſgiving to the bleſſed TRINITY.

1 EXalted Father, we thee praiſe,
And bleſs thy ſacred name:
Thou waſt, and art, and evermore
Remaineſt God the ſame.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Father of mercies, God of love,
May thou be ſtill ador'd,
Becauſe thou freely gav'ſt thy Son,
To be our Prieſt and Lord.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 O Son of God, we thee do bleſs,
That freely undertook
To be a Ranſomer, to ſave
All who to thee do look.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 Unto the Lamb, our Saviour God,
Let praiſes ſtill increaſe;
For thro' thy precious wounds and blood
Comes all our happineſs.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 O Holy Ghoſt, we thee exalt,
Who doſt with ſinners ſtrive,
Till they be brought to cloſe with Chriſt,
And made in him alive.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 We praiſe thee, O thou promis'd Dove,
Who, as Chriſt ſaid, art come
To raiſe our dead ſouls unto life,
And ſafely guide us home.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 To purge our guilt, and buy our peace,
God ſent his Son to bleed;
His blood procur'd a treaſure full
To anſwer all our need.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 Thanks to our heav'nly Father's love,
Who gave the Lamb to men:
The Lamb we praiſe, and Spirit too,
Theſe Three in One. *Amen.*
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XXVI.

Give thanks to God for a crucified JESUS.

1 BLeſt be our Lamb, who undertook
Loſt ſinners to deliver:
O praiſe our King, for he is good
His mercy laſts for ever.
2 No blood, but that of him who's God,
Could take away our ſin;
No ſmaller ſacrifice than this
Could heaven for us win.
3 This made the glorious Son of God
Leave heaven for our good;
Our fleſh and frailties he aſſum'd,
To ranſom us with blood.
4 Beneath the vail of human fleſh
His Godhead he did hide;
To pay our debt, and purge our guilt,
Our ſacrifice he dy'd.

5 God's praiſe in goſpel-hymns we'll ſing,
With thankful hearts thee bleſs;
We will ſound forth thy glorious name,
'The Lord our Righteouſneſs.'
6 In ev'ry place and company
Where it may tend for good,
Chriſt crucify'd we will extol,
And tell men of his blood.
7 His wounds and merits we'll ſpeak forth,
His ſteps we will purſue;
From him we'll holy learn to be,
Meek, lowly, juſt, and true.
8 What love, what ſervice, and what praiſe,
To our God do we owe,
Who left his glorious throne above,
To die for us below!
9 Till we the vail of fleſh put off,
Accept our weaker ſongs;
And, when we reach the manſions bright,
We'll praiſe with better tongues.

HYMN XXVII.

The COMMUNION-FEAST.

1 HOW greatly ſhould the love of God
All our affections move!
He foes forgives, and next invites
Them to a feaſt of love.
2 The feaſt's prepar'd, we nothing want
But Chriſt the Lord our gueſt:
Thy preſence grant to hungry ſouls,
And we'll begin the feaſt.
3 Thy preſence would ſupply each want
On a communion day:
Communion with thyſelf us grant,
Thy grace and pow'r diſplay.
4 O make us witneſſes to ſhew
The virtue of thy blood,
That it gives peace, and makes us cry,
'My King, my Lord and God.'
5 Under thy croſs with great delight,
Lord, make us down to ſit;
For weary travellers to reſt
Let's find this ſhade moſt fit.
6 Let's here poſſeſs thy love, and wounds
In our hearts make abode:
No muſic hath ſuch charming ſounds
As theſe two words, MY GOD.
7 Pardon of ſin, and peace thro' blood,
Do make a glorious feaſt:
This food is entertainment ſweet,
Which angels ne'er did taſte.
8 Yet of this royal coſtly cheer
Poor ſinful men partake;
It was for Adam's race alone
God did this banquet make.
9 Communion ſweet is thro' the Lamb:
To him be glory giv'n
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hoſts of heav'n.

HYMN XXVIII.

The free GOSPEL-CALL.

1 COme, guilty ſouls, and flee away
Like doves to Jeſu's wounds:
Your lot falls in the goſpel-day,
Wherein free grace abounds.
2 How joyful is the ſound you hear!
To you men Chriſt doth call,
Come to me with your loads of ſin,
And I will eaſe you all.
4 I do not ſay, 'Depart from me
Into eternal fire;'
But kindly bid you to my wounds,
Where troubled ſouls retire.
4 Come to the balm: behold the Lamb,
Which for your ſins was ſlain:
Come flocking to my healing blood,
Which eaſes ſouls of pain.
5 No more reſiſt my preſſing calls,
Your ſouls to me up-give:
O dying men, my voice regard,
And you ſhall ever live.
6 O rebels to my ſceptre bow,
Your weapons caſt away;
Come to me in this day of grace,
And make no more delay.
7 For, lo! the flaming ſword is drawn,
And ſhaken o'er your head:
If divine Juſtice be provok'd,
The blow will ſtrike you dead.
8 Comply then with my Spirit's work,
In your hearts give me room:
In ſtraits you'll find me ſtill a friend,
I'll bring you ſafely home.

HYMN XXIX.

Fitneſs for the GOSPEL-FEAST.

1 WILL God let worms approach to him,
Heav'ns manna for to taſte;
Yea, call a piece of duſt and ſin
To ſit at Jeſu's feaſt?
2 Come, holy, holy, holy Lord,
Who lov'd us when undone;
Come, thou united myſtic Three,
Unite us all in One.
3 Come, Prince of love and peace, with pow'r
Our grudges all remove;
Come join our hearts, and make us fit
To keep the feaſt of love.
4 Let charity our hearts poſſeſs;
O ſhed thy love abroad:
And may we Jeſus all embrace
As our own Lord and God.
5 Let Jeſu's friends with humble faith
His table compaſs round,
Partake his food, admire his blood,
That ſprings from ev'ry wound.
6 O let the flinty ſtubborn heart,
Which threat'nings cannot move,
Be broken, melted, and diſſolv'd
By Jeſu's bleeding love.
7 Let no ſin in my heart remain
To give my Lord offence:
Help me to act and live by faith,
And not by corrupt ſenſe.
8 Let worldly clogs all ſtay behind,
When I to Chriſt draw nigh;

Let faith's wings now be ſtretched out,
And to his wounds I'll fly.

HYMN XXX.

CHRIST *the Bread of Life.*

1 CHriſt's fleſh and blood, the rareſt food
That ever was prepar'd,
Is ſet before the needy's door;
Yet few it do regard.
2 Shall ſtarving ſouls ſlight ſuch a feaſt,
Made ready at ſuch coaſt,
And chuſe to feed on ſwiniſh luſts
Until their ſouls be loſt?
3 Here bread of life, which doth exceed
The manna of the Jews:
Our bread is Chriſt, ſubſtantial food!
Theirs but this ſubſtance ſhews.
4 Their manna came but from the clouds,
Ours comes from heavens high:
Who ate their manna now are deed,
Who eat ours live for ay.
5 'Lord, evermore give us this bread,'
Give daily now ſupply;
Give faith to eat, that we may live,
And may not faithleſs die.
6 With heav'nly manna ſent by God
Let hungry ſouls be fed,
Since richly is thy table ſtor'd
With this immortal bread.
7 For multitudes there is enough
In Jeſu's fulneſs free;
Ten thouſand thouſands all at once
This bread can ſatisfie.
8 Dear Jeſus, meet with hungry ſouls,
Let none of them complain
They waited on thee all the day,
And cry'd for bread in vain.
9 O Bread of life, we ſtarving come
To thee for to be fed:
When ſome thou fills, us paſs not by;
With ſoul-food make us glad.

HYMN XXXI.

GOD's *hiding his face is grievous.*

1 A Beggar, Lord, cries for an alms;
Look on me not in wrath:
Thy ſmiles are better far than life,
Thy frowns are worſe than death.
2 Dear Lord, I pray thee, now be found
Of ſouls that pant for thee;
Be not a ſtranger in our land,
When ſouls their wants do ſee.
3 When, Lord, thou hides thy face from me,
Like fading flow'rs I mourn:
I droop, I grieve, I can't look up,
Till thou again return.
4 I'll of no other croſs complain
Which thou ſhalt me lay on;
But oh! the hiding of thy face
I cannot think upon.
5 Lord, when thou ſmiles, I conquer ſin;
I then get ev'ry thought,
And all that's oppoſite to thee,
Into ſubjection brought.
6 But, when thou hides, I loſe my ſtrength;
Like Samſon when betray'd,
My locks are cut, my heart is faint,
My faith and hope are dead.
7 If clouds remain, I'll wander far
Out of the king's high-way;
If Chriſt his loſt ſheep do not ſeek,
Still farther will I ſtray.
8 Good Shepherd, ſeek and bring me home;
Thou art the ſinner's friend:
Reſtore the ſhinings of thy face,
Let me no more offend.

HYMN XXXII.

The MOURNING PENITENT.

1 WIth low abaſement I reflect
On my original;
I ſee my nature black and ſtain'd
By my firſt parents fall.
2 In ſin and guilt I was conceiv'd
Before I firſt drew breath,
And early was expos'd unto
Both firſt and ſecond death.
3 My heart and life ſin doth corrupt,
Yea, makes my heart as ſtone;
It makes me ſlight God's remedy:
My folly I bemone.
4 How awful is the thund'ring voice
From Sinai's flaming mount,
To criminals who break God's laws,
Of crimes here's your account!
5 With trembling this would fill my ſoul,
And even ſtrike me dead,
Did I not ſee on Zion mount
The Lamb for ſin that bled.
6 A ſinner I, thro' Adam's fall,
Have loſt my way to bliſs:
When God a new way doth reveal,
Forbid this way I miſs.
7 Unto this way I mourning look,
No other help I know:
If thou declineſt helping me,
O whither ſhall I go?
8 Thy word ſaith, I ſhould not deſpond,
But plead and keep in mind
The blood and bowels of the Lamb,
Who is loſt mankind's friend.

HYMN XXXIII.

The penitent ſinner's hope.

1 IN Jeſu's name a penitent
Doth at God's footſtool ly;
My ſins I do confeſs and mourn,
And for free mercy cry.
2 Chriſt bids me *aſk*, and *ſeek*, and *knock*,
And promiſeth I'll *find*:
Thus I ſeek pardon and relief;
Lord, eaſe my grieved mind.
4 Chriſt's blood and merit is alone
The ground on which I plead
With God, that I may mercy find
In this my time of need.

4 The doctrine of free grace I plead,
Which thy dear goſpel ſounds,
And tender love to penitents
That flows from Jeſu's wounds.
5 Since Chriſt our ſurety paid the debt,
That ſouls condemn'd might live;
With honour to thy juſtice now,
Great ſins thou canſt forgive.
6 Where ſhould I go with all my ſins
But to Redeeming blood?
Thouſands have try'd it, and are waſh'd;
The fountain's large and good.
7 I plead thy blood, and ancient love;
I humbly own my guilt:
Was it not for ſuch ſtraying ſheep
The Sepherd's blood was ſpilt?
8 That trembling woman in diſtreſs
To Chriſt was fear'd to come:
She touch'd his hem; he heal'd her ſoon,
And ſent her joyful home.

HYMN XXXIV.

Thankſgiving to GOD *the Father.*

1 PRaiſe to the Father's love, that gave
His dear and only Son
To be our prieſt and ſacrifice,
For our ſins to atone.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Thou gav'ſt thy Son and Spirit both
To free us from all fears:
Diſſolve our hearts in thankfulneſs,
Melt down our eyes in tears.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 But drops of tears can ne'er repay
The debt of love we owe:
Our whole ſelves then we give to thee;
There's no more we can do.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 We praiſe the Son, who in our room
Was willing to be ſlain;
We praiſe the Spirit, who applies
His blood to fallen men.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Slain beaſts for ſin could not atone:
Such off'rings had been vain,
Had not the Father giv'n his Lamb
For ſinners to be ſlain.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 This ſacrifice, more precious
Than all created things,
To men eternal happineſs
In ſoul and body brings.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 Father, thy love me overwhelms:
What love like thine ſo free,
That thou haſt not withheld thy Son,
Thine only Son, from me!
Hallelujah, &c.
8 When men rejoice in earthly things,
And ſing of things of nought,
I'll ſing of thy redeeming love,
And wonders thou haſt wrought.
Hallelujah, &c.
9 Father, to thee eternally
Our grateful ſongs we'll raiſe;
But O! eternity's too ſhort
To ſhew forth all thy praiſe.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XXXV.

The amazing Love of CHRIST.

1 AMazing love! that made God's Son
So willingly conſent
For worms, yea, foes and rebels baſe,
To bear their puniſhment.
2 Love made him lay aſide his crown
And robes of majeſty,
And like a ſervant to come down
To bear the croſs, and die.
3 Love brought him down for worms to die,
Love laid him in a tomb;
Love brings him down a ſecond time,
To lead his people home.
4 When devils rag'd, he then engag'd
To combat all hell's pow'rs;
He them defy'd, when that he dy'd
To ſave us from hell ſhow'rs.
5 When heav'n and hell both on him fell,
Our ſouls he faſt did hold;
His life gave up, the flood to ſtop,
And bring us to his fold.
6 Love made him on the croſs to bleed,
And fall our ſacrifice;
Love made the tree him brought to duſt
Raiſe men unto the ſkies.
7 Chriſt ſuffer'd: why? he's pleas'd to ſee
Poor ſtraying ſheep brought home,
And unbelieving ſouls allur'd
Into his wounds to come.
8 Hence he declares none periſh ſhall
Who in him do believe;
Their ſins he'll pardon, and them take
To heav'n with him to live.
9 All things to me are dung and droſs
But Jeſus crucify'd;
Under the ſhadow of his croſs
I'll ſit down and abide.

HYMN XXXVI.

A HYMN *to the* HOLY GHOST.

1 LORD, ſend thy Spirit down to us,
Chriſt's purchaſe to apply;
He'll cauſe us ſee our fall and help,
And unto Jeſus fly.
2 Thou, who at Pentecoſt didſt ſend
Heav'n's wind to fill the place
Where thy apoſtles met for pray'r,
Grant us part of that grace;
3 That gladly we, like them, may ſound
The wondrous works of God,
And ſhew the mighty pow'r and fruits
Of Jeſu's precious blood.
4 Come, Holy Ghoſt, thou heav'nly Dove
Deſcending from above,
Renew our ſouls, and fill our hearts

With precious faith and love.
5 We are thy workmanſhip; but ſin
Hath ev'ry thing miſplac'd:
Come o'er thy handy-work again;
Thy image is defac'd.
6 Create in us all things anew,
Cauſe *old things paſs away;*
Our corrupt habits quite ſubdue,
Sin weaken ev'ry day.
7 Let David's houſe in us grow ſtrong,
But weak the houſe of Saul;
Let ſatan's holds and all our luſts
Before God's Spirit fall.
8 O kindly guide poor travellers
Into the paths of peace,
And bring us to our Father's houſe,
Where ſins and ſorrows ceaſe.

HYMN XXXVII.

The Balm of CHRIST's *Blood.*

1 CHRIST's blood that univerſal balm
which thouſands long have try'd,
Doth quicken, ſoften, cleanſe and heal,
Where-e'er it is apply'd.
2 This ſov'reign blood doth purge out ſin,
And doth allay our fears;
It gives us light and ſtrength within,
And dries up hurtful tears.
3 By this blood, hell its prey hath loſt,
Juſtice is ſatisfy'd;
Now willing ſouls may be forgiv'n,
Since Jeſus bled and dy'd.
4 No blood like this was ever ſhed,
For heav'n it makes us meet;
Mens hearts it draws, and pleads their cauſe:
No voice like it's ſo ſweet.
5 Abel's ſhed blood did vengeance cry:
But Chriſt cry'd, Mercy ſhew;
Them pity, 'Father, and forgive;
'They know not what they do.'
6 What love is this, that God ſhould ſtoop
In human fleſh to dwell,
And ſhed his blood for enemies,
To keep them out of hell!
7 Great love it was for God to bleed
For rebels doom'd to death;
But more to ſuffer hell, to ſave
Them from eternal wrath.
8 O let this divine blood of thine
My hard heart overflow:
This bleſſing grant, tho' earthly gifts
Thou ſhouldſt no more beſtow.
9 In my faith's arms I take the Lamb,
As offer'd unto me:
His precious blood I do apply,
Me from all guilt to free.

HYMN XXXVIII.

Shew forth CHRIST's *Death.*

1 SInce our Redeemer ſaith, *Do this;*
This we will always *do:*
Till Chriſt to us return again,
Thus we his death will ſhew.
2 How ſweet and welcome to our ſouls
Is Chriſt's dear feaſt of love!
Tho' it be no more but a taſte
Of that great feaſt above.
3 Thy fleſh, Lord, is the ſweeteſt food,
Thy blood is drink divine;
Thy pucrhas'd fruits are the beſt fare
On which thou mak'ſt us dine.
5 Pardon of ſin, and peace with God,
Do make a noble feaſt;
Coſtly to Chriſt, tho' free to us:
Moſt ſweetly do they taſte.
5 Here we ſet forth our ſuff'ring Lord,
As bleeding unto death;
Likewiſe the ſorrows of his ſoul,
When lying under wrath:
6 The nails which pierc'd his hands and feet,
Which cauſed ſtreams of blood;
The thorns which crown'd his bleſſed head,
And ſwell'd the crimſon flood.
7 Since Chriſt requires us for to ſhew
His love to us when loſt,
What wounds, and blood, and agonies,
To ſave us, it did coſt;
8 Thus we review thy death for us,
O Lamb, for ſinners ſlain:
We praiſe thy love, and reſt upon
The merit of thy pain.

HYMN XXXIX.

The Believers Work at the Holy Supper.

1 I'LL ſit beneath Immanuel's croſs,
Under theſe ſhow'rs of blood:
On my hard heart cauſe drops to light
From thy wounds, O my God.
2 My Lord I ſee nail'd to the tree,
And dying for my ſin;
Thy ſide wide open'd with a ſpear,
To lodge my ſoul therein.
3 I kiſs the nail-holes in thy hands,
And ſide the ſpear did pierce:
I ſhelter here, this cave me hides
When ſtorms blow ſharp and fierce.
4 My heart doth bleed, my eyes do drop,
When I thy anguiſh ſee,
And think theſe bruiſes ſore and pangs
Were all deſerv'd by me.
5 I ſee my ſins prepar'd the croſs,
The thorns, the nails, and ſpear,
Which tore thy fleſh: they made thy ſoul
The pains of hell to bear.
6 In thy wounds I ſin's ill do ſee;
In ſin I'll not proceed,
No more abuſe thy love, nor make
Thy wounds afreſh to bleed.
7 I mourn, and hate my cruel ſins,
Which pierc'd my Lord to death:
Theſe murderers ſhall find no more
Place in my ſoul to breathe.
8 Awake, my ſoul, with all thy pow'rs
Join with the hoſts above,
To celebrate forgiving grace,
And praiſe redeeming love.

HYMN XL.

Sweet Fruits of CHRIST's *Sufferings.*

1 THY goſpel, Lord, holds forth thy love
In ſweet and melting ſounds,
And us a ſov'reign balm preſents
From Jeſu's bleeding wounds.
2 It is thy pain that giveth eaſe
To my diſeaſed ſoul;
When I am full of pains and wounds,
Thy ſtripes do make me whole.
3 Thy cries bring anſwers to my pray'rs,
Thy wounds are my refuge;
Thy blood doth waſh my crimſon guilt,
And ſave from wrath's deluge.
4 Thy croſs doth bring me nigh to God,
And doth his wrath appeaſe;
Thy blood brings pardon for my guilt,
And gives my conſcience eaſe.
5 Thy death hath purchas'd life to me;
Thy grave hides all my ſin,
And all the curſes of the law;
Which yields great peace within.
6 Vaſt ſums of debt for us thou paid
With thy own dear heart's blood,
And calls us to be pure and white,
By waſhing in this flood.
7 This is our loving Ranſomer,
Who our whole curſe endur'd;
And, having paid our dreadful debt,
Our rooms in heav'n ſecur'd.
8 To him that lov'd us unto death
All honour we will give:
He ſhed his blood our ſouls to waſh;
We'll to his glory live.

HYMN XLI.

The Believing Soul's Feaſt.

1 HERE faith may ſpy our Saviour's fleſh
Upon the table ly;
Salvation flow in ſtreams of blood,
To drive our ſins away.
2 Grant, Lord, thy preſence at this feaſt,
And make it a good day:
Give to each gueſt what thou ſeeſt beſt;
Empty ſend none away.
3 To thee we look for living bread;
We languiſh and are faint:
If faſting thou ſhalt us diſmiſs,
Our ſouls will die for want.
4 Thy heav'nly manna, Lord, rain down
Our ſp'ritual ſtrength repair;
Give food, till we ſhall get above,
And feaſt with Jeſus there.
While in this deſert we ſojourn,
Send us grace from above;
Our ſouls refreſh, our faith increaſe,
And warm our hearts with love.
6 Thine ordinance, Lord, countenance;
Shew us thy ſmiling face:
Cauſe ſtreams of living waters flow
In channels of thy grace.
7 Thy people, Lord, lament for thee:
O comfort them that mourn;
Meet with them as in former days,
To goſpel feaſts return.
8 Charge not on us our former ſins;
Let all thine anger ceaſe:
Look to the croſs on Calvary,
And bid us *go in peace.*

HYMN XLII.

Thankſgiving after a Goſpel-Feaſt.

1 I Bleſs God for the food he gave
To me a worm to eat,
And that himſelf did condeſcend
To ſit with me at meat.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 He made me ſhare immortal cheer,
And ſweetly taſte his grace;
My hungry ſoul he did refreſh,
And looſe my tongue to praiſe.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 "What ſhall I render to my God
For all his gifts to me,"
And for this gift unſpeakable,
His Son for me to die?
Hallelujah, &c.
4 He from his fulneſs did me feaſt
With riches of his grace;
He took me in his loving arms,
And ſhew'd his ſmiling face.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 My heart when faint he did ſupport,
Diſpell'd my guilty fears:
He ſet my feet upon the rock,
And wip'd away my tears.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 His pard'ning voice makes me to ſing,
And doth inflame my love;
His Spirit lifts my thoughts from earth
Unto the things above.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 I praiſe thy name, who pity'd me,
Poſſeſt my heart as thine,
Reſtor'd me thy ſalvation's joy,
Fill'd me with love divine.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 In heav'n thy ſaints feaſt on thy love,
Where living ſtreams do flow;
They praiſe their Head in hymns above,
And we in hymns below.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XLII.

Suitable Walking after a Goſpel-Feaſt

1 TO Chriſt we now devoted are,
By ſolemn oath we're thine:
Give grace and ſtrength now to obey
And love thy law divine.
2 Since for us thou haſt bled and dy'd,
To thee our all we give;
And for our ſins haſt ſatisfy'd,
To thee we'll only live.
3 Help us to grow in faith and zeal,

And thrive in every grace ;
And let Chriſt's love conſtrain us ſtill
To run our Chriſtian race.
4 O let us walk with tenderneſs,
And with humility :
Lord, break the power of unbelief,
Our heart-ſins mortify.
5 We'll make them our familiars,
Who our dear Lamb do love,
We'll travel in their company,
Who ſeek the land above.
6 But looſe companions we will flee,
Who would lead us aſtray :
To ſinful thoughts and tempting ſnares
We will no more give way.
7 May I the Lamb now imitate,
And in his footſteps tread,
And ſtill grow in conformity
To my exalted Head.
8 Lord, give more faith, more love and hope,
That I may live to thee,
And by my converſation ſhew
The Lamb hath dy'd for me.
9 Thou meeteſt them who do rejoice
In thy ſweet ways to go,
Who would their days ſpend to thy praiſe
While they are here below.

HYMN XLIV.

Revive Primitive Chriſtianity.

1 BLeſt Spirit come with mighty pow'r,
And melt mens hearts in tears ;
Thy work revive throughout the lands
In theſe declining years.
2 Let yet God's ordinance be lov'd,
Chriſt's dying words thought on ;
Let cold and careleſs ſouls be mov'd
To honour God's dear Son.
3 When the firſt ſaints oft broke thy bread
With love and life divine,
They drank the ſpirit of their Head,
As well's their ſacred wine.
4 Their meek and pure lives did proclaim,
They liv'd and walk'd with God :
To aliens they endear'd the Lamb,
And ſpread his fame abroad.
5 Their zealous hearts would nothing know
But Jeſus crucify'd ;
Him they confeſs'd while here below,
And martyrs for him dy'd.
6 Their love to Jeſus was ſo ſtrong,
All tortures they endur'd :
While they the ſlain Lamb made their ſong,
Thus ſtrangers they allur'd.
7 O where's that ancient holy flame
That in their hearts abode,
Which made them witneſs for the Lamb,
And ſuffer for their God ?
8 O God, ſend ſhow'rs of grace, and cauſe
Mens backward wills to yield,
And turn us from a wilderneſs
Unto a fruitful field.
9 Cauſe numbers flee to Jeſu's wounds,
Convince them there is room ;
Rebels ſubdue, reign in their ſouls :
O let thy kingdom come.

HYMN XLV.

Revenge the Death of CHRIST *upon Sin.*

QUESTION.

1 O Harmleſs undefiled Lamb,
What caus'd thy wounds and pain ?
Thou knew'ſt no ſin, thou did'ſt no wrong ;
What caus'd thee to be ſlain ?

ANSWER.

2 " Of all my wounds and anguiſh ſore,
My preſſures and complaints,
And of my racking bloody death,
Your ſins were inſtruments.
3 To you theſe bitter pains belong'd,
On you they would been laid ;
But love to you made me them bear,
That God's wrath might be ſtay'd."
4 O monſtrous ſin, thou murderer !
Can I be reconcil'd
To ſuffer thee to lodge with me ?
No more to this I'll yield.
5 I bitterly bewail my ſins,
Which gave my Saviour pain :
I them abhor, and caſt to door ;
They ſhall no more remain.
6 I'll ſin purſue, the Lamb that ſlew ;
All luſts I'll crucifie,
By nailing them to Jeſu's croſs,
Till they expire and die.
7 Subdue my heart, O mighty King ;
Let no corruption live :
Kill praſſion, pride, and all thy foes,
Let none of them ſurvive.
8 Tear up the roots of inbred ſin,
And let it rage no more ;
All ſatan's pleniſhing break down,
And turn it to the door.

HYMN XLVI.

The Complaints of ſerious Souls.

1 WHen doubts and fears oppreſs my ſoul,
In Chriſt's arms let me fall ;
For he's my ſtrength and righteouſneſs,
My Surety, and my All.
2 Allow me, Lord, to fall and ly
At thy dear pierced feet,
To ſpread out my complaints and griefs,
And taſte thy mercy ſweet.
3 With ſhame and grief I do bewail
That my heart is not ſoft,
For all the wounds my ſins gave Chriſt,
Which made him bleed ſo oft.
4 Alas ! I oft turn cold and dead,
And backward to obey ;
Yea, ſlow to praiſe the Lamb of God,
And negligent to pray.
5 Backſliding hearts thou ſeeſt we have,
Which wander and grow cold :
Lord, bring again thy ſtraying ſheep
Into thy happy fold.
6 Whatever croſs thou lay'ſt on us,

Give ſtrength to bear the load ;
Let it be pain or poverty,
We'll not refuſe the rod.
7 But, Lord, we dread inward decays
Of love and holineſs ;
From theſe our ſouls relieve and keep,
And with thy preſence bleſs.
8 My Lord, betwixt my ſoul and thee
The breaches all make up :
No cold nor dryneſs let there be ;
Withhold this bitter cup.
9 Let Jeſu's blood bring mountains down,
And diſtance all remove :
Make me, like Enoch, walk with God,
And ſpend my time in love.

N. B. *I advertiſe now (as I did before the 13th Hymn) that the fourteen following Hymns are compoſed in different Meaſures. See the Reaſon given before.*

HYMN XLVII.

The REPENTING PRODIGAL.

1 FAther, behold, thy ſon,
A wand'ring prodigal,
By ſin and folly quite undone,
Now at thy feet doth fall.
2 Aſham'd of all my ways,
My wand'rings I confeſs ;
I ſee great need of Jeſu's blood,
And his pure righteouſneſs.
3 Open thine arms to me,
And take the wand'rer home :
By goſpel-offers I'm aſſur'd,
Thro' Chriſt to me there's room.
4 I ſelf-condemned ly ;
O hear my humble pray'r :
Thou feeds the ravens when they cry,
Soul-food for me prepare.
5 Father of mercies, hear ;
Thy bleſſing now beſtow :
For this I cry, and wreſtling ly,
And will not let thee go.
6 O ſay, "This is my ſon,
Once dead, but now doth live ;
Once loſt, but now in Chriſt is found ;
I do him home receive."
7 O great Immanuel,
Accept my new-born cry ;
Behold the travail of thy ſoul
Which doth thee ſatisfy.
8 By faith I thee embrace,
Thy blood I do apply :
O ſend thy Spirit with his grace,
My ſoul to ſanctify.

HYMN XLVIII.

Weak FAITH *not rejected.*

1 I See Chriſt's bleeding ſide ;
Lord, hide me in thy wounds :
Thy ſheltering ſuch helpleſs ſouls
Unto thy praiſe redounds.
2 Into thy arms I fall,
In free love me embrace :
In weakneſs great on the I call,
O ſhew thy ſmiling face.
3 I wait at thy command,
Until the pool ſhall move,
When thou wilt ſend thy healing pow'r
To cure me in thy love.
4 Thou know'ſt my feeble voice,
Which I to thee direct :
The goſpel method is my choice,
All others I reject.
5 Thou know'ſt my heart's deſire,
My doubts and fears doſt ſee :
Thy ſounding bowels cauſe me hear,
And kindly ſay to me,
6 "Poor ſoul of little faith,
O wherefore doſt thou doubt ?
Whoe'er he be that comes to me,
Him will I not caſt out."
7 On thy word I depend,
Thou faithful art and true ;
My weak faith ſtrengthen and defend,
My unbelief ſubdue.
8 Teach me to know thy name
JESUS, and it to bleſs ;
Thy title alſo to proclaim,
'The Lord our Righteouſneſs.'

HYMN XLIX.

The Remembrance of CHRIST *in the Supper.*

1 CHriſt in that night he was betray'd,
Took bread, gave thanks, it brake, and ſaid,
"My broken body here you ſee ;
"Take, eat it, and *remember me.*"
2 Thus alſo he the cup did take ;
"Here ſealing blood ſhed for your ſake,
"Which doth my teſt'ment ratiſie :
"Let all drink and *remember me.*"
3 Your pardon, with what's for your good,
Is purchaſt by my deareſt blood :
My blood to you makes pardon free ;
In drinking, then, *remember me.*
4 For hungry ſouls here's manna rare,
God ſends from heaven for your fare ;
This manna falls now plenteouſlie :
In eating, then, *remember me.*
5 Here God ſits on a throne of grace,
Where ſinful men may ſee his face :
My blood procures your acceſs free ;
In drinking, then, *remember me.*
6 See here the *Tree of Life* with fruit,
And leaves which heal and ſtrength recruit ;
Theſe I ſhake down, poor ſoul, to thee :
Eat freely, and *remember me.*
7 See Jacob's ladder here ſet up,
A covenanting God at top :
Climb, and God will tranſact with thee ;
In doing this, *remember me.*
8 Here runs *of Life the river* pure,
Which our ſoul-wounds doth cleanſe and cure ;
It freely runs to all, you ſee :
By faith drink, and *remember me.*

HYMN L.

Admire the LAMB *ſlain.*

1 COme here, admire, and gaze a while;
Behold Chriſt pierc'd for ſinners vile:
Who can this glorious truth explain?
Th' immortal God, *the Lamb is ſlain.*
2 Look not aſide to dung and droſs,
But glory only in the croſs;
And always in your thoughts retain
Theſe melting words, *the Lamb is ſlain.*
3 Draw near the croſs, that bloody tree;
Rich fruits it bears for you and me.
Help, Lord, to know, and ſtill maintain,
The Lamb of God for me was *ſlain.*
4 Thy ſuff'rings, Lord, I weep to ſee,
Theſe ſtripes and wounds I brought on (thee:
From ſins of all kinds I'll abſtain,
Theſe nails by which *the Lamb is ſlain.*
5 The croſs is now a tree of life
That men relieves from ſinking grief,
Yea, life to dead ſouls doth regain;
Draw life from this, *The Lamb is ſlain.*
6 No flaming ſword doth guard this tree,
Its fruit is to all ſinners free:
Good news this is to fallen men;
Come eat and live, *the Lamb is ſlain.*
7 Dear Lamb, thine everlaſting love
Draws men from hell to heav'n above:
Thy love doth us to ſing conſtrain
This heav'nly ſong, *the Lamb is ſlain.*
8 The Lamb redeems us by his blood,
And makes us kings and prieſts to God:
All praiſe and honour doth pertain
Unto *the Lamb* for ſinners *ſlain.*

HYMN LI.

Trace CHRIST's *Sufferings.*

1 LEt's trace Chriſt's ſteps, like foll'wers brave,
From the bleſt feaſt unto the grave;
Nor leave him when to Calv'ry led,
Like thoſe who him forſook and fled.
2 Firſt to Gethſemane we'll go,
There floods of wrath him overflow;
Both fears and foes beſet him round,
Our ſins him preſs down to the ground.
3 There he lies in a bloody ſweat,
Which him o'erſpread from head to feet;
He's bruis'd, he pours out prayer's and cries
With floods of tears from both his eyes.
4 His friends prove falſe; one him betrays,
Another him with oaths denies:
Men ſeize and bind him like a thief,
His friends him leave without relief.
4 Amidſt his foes he's left alone,
He's buffeted and ſpit upon,
His head is crown'd with wreaths of thorn,
His body is with ſcourges torn.
6 He's load with ſcoffs and blaſphemies,
Baſely inſulted, charg'd with lies;
Found innocent, yet doom'd to die,
And bear his croſs to Calvary.
7 For us a ſhameful death he dy'd;
Between two thieves he's crucify'd:
He's nail'd, and jeer'd by cruel men,
With lingring torments pierc'd and ſlain.
8 His God, his ſun, withdrew their light;
Earth, rocks and men were in a fright:
Yet he by death ſubdu'd his foes,
And from the grave in triumph roſe.

HYMN LII.

The Soul wondering at REDEEMING LOVE.

1 HOw full of wonder is that love,
That made God leave his throne above,
To dwell in clay with men below,
And death for them to undergo!
2 That God, who keeps the key of death,
Should on a croſs reſign his breath!
To bring us pleaſure, ſhould feel pain;
To give us life, he ſhould be ſlain!
3 Great love! that made Chriſt groan and die,
Yea, rend the heavens with his cry,
That loud cry, 'My God, my God, why
Haſt thou forſaken me, to-day!'
4 Our Lamb hell's pains for us would bear;
Let him the crown for ever wear:
Let all who love his worthy name
In ſongs of triumph ſpread his fame.
5 Inflame our hearts, refine our tongues,
To praiſe with heav'nly thoughts and ſongs:
O let our hearts be tun'd with love,
And make us meet for ſongs above.
6 Deep in my ſoul his truth ingrain,
My glorious friend the Lamb is ſlain:
I'll wondring ly, that God ſhould dy
For man that was his enemy.
7 O holy Ghoſt, come from above,
Withdraw my heart from worldly love,
That I may think of nought beſide,
My God, my Saviour crucify'd.
8 With Simeon, I the Lamb embrace,
And cry, 'Lord let me go in peace;
Now make me meet with ſaints above,
To ſing thy everlaſting love.

HYMN LIII.

The bleſſed Fruits of the curſed Tree.

1 IN mournful ſongs we will record
The pangs and ſorrows of our Lord,
The tears and blood he for us ſpilt,
To make atonement for our guilt.
My Jeſus on the curſed tree
Did bow his dying head for me.
2 The dying pangs of our dear Lord
The honour of God's law reſtor'd;
The death and ſuff'rings he endur'd
Eternal life for us procur'd.
Our glorious Jeſus, by his love,
Hath made the curſe a bleſſing prove.
5 We praiſe the Lamb, our deareſt Lord,
Whoſe hands and feet for us were bor'd:
It was the croſs, that curſed tree,
On which the prince of life did die;
Accurs'd it was, yet divine love
Hath made the curſe a bleſſing prove.

4 Each heavy blow, and bloody ſtripe,
Our ſums of debt quite out doth wipe:
Then all our debt was fully paid,
When he on Calv'ry bow'd his head.
That tree of death to us is made
A tree of life with pleaſant ſhade.
5 Behold, Chriſt's blood his garments dy'd,
When he was bruis'd and crucify'd:
He dy'd upon the curſed tree,
My precious ſoul from hell to free.
That tree of death to us is made
A tree of life with pleaſant ſhade.
6 Chriſt bore the curſe for wretched men;
To buy us heav'n, our Lamb was ſlain:
His wounds ſtand open to receive
All helpleſs ſinners who believe.
My Jeſus on the curſed tree
Did bow his dying head for me.

HYMN LIV.

CHRIST's *Blood calling aloud to us.*

1 I Hear my Saviour cry aloud,
O ſinner, haſten to my blood;
Each drop of blood cries to thee, Come,
In my pierc'd ſide yet there is room.
Let ſinners come, and no more doubt;
For 'him that comes I'll not caſt out.'
2 My blood ſhall ranſom all from wrath,
Who truſt and look to me by faith:
My righteouſneſs is free to all,
Who come to me upon my call.
Let ſinners come and no more doubt;
For 'him that comes I'll not caſt out.'
3 A ſaviour you cannot find
In creatures doings who have ſinn'd;
Pure righteouſneſs you ſeek in vain
In any but the Lamb that's ſlain.
To my wounds let the guilty fly,
For love to you brought me to dy.
4 Of works no more let ſinners boaſt;
Your inſide view, and cry, we're loſt:
Truſt in my blood, who for you dy'd:
Look to me and be juſtify'd.
To my wounds let the guilty fly,
For love to you brought me to dy.
5 Bleſt Lord, I hear thy gracious call,
And gladly at thy feet do fall;
The welcome offers of thy grace
My ſoul doth heartily embrace:
To Chriſt I fly, and do confeſs,
He is 'the Lord our righteouſneſs.'
6 Dear Lamb, thy voice doth ſweetly ſound,
I ſee a fountain in each wound;
The ſtreams which thence do freely flow,
Black ſouls do waſh as white as ſnow.
I'll ſhelter take, in all diſtreſs,
Under my Saviour's righteouſneſs.

HYMN LV.

Mourn for Sin, that pierced the LAMB.

1 MY ſoul, weep o'er thy ſin and guilt,
For which thy Saviour's blood was
Mourn for thy pride and unbelief, (ſpilt;
For which he dragg'd was like a thief:
He for thy debt his heart's blood paid;
My Lamb, my Love is crucify'd.
2 I ſee the drops of bloody ſweat
Fall from thy forehead to thy feet;
Theſe drops beſmear thy raiment all,
They move my tears as they do fall:
How heavy are my ſins when weigh'd
My Lamb, my Love is crucify'd.
3 Upon hard hearts let theſe drops light,
Who are not moved at the ſight;
Let hearts which terrors cannot move
Now be diſſolv'd by Jeſu's love:
Still I muſt look on ſin with pain,
Since for my ſins the Lamb was ſlain.
4 My ſins did ſpit in Jeſu's face,
They would the Prince of life diſgrace.
To ſhame they ſought him to expoſe,
They nail'd him naked to the croſs;
And bleeding, lift up on the tree,
Long hung the Man that dy'd for me.
5 My ſins thee griev'd and ſtabb'd thy heart;
They wounded thee in ev'ry part:
By ſin thy bleſſed fleſh was torn.
I view thee whom I pierc'd and mourn;
Thy bleeding body, pierc'd and tore.
I kiſs, and bleſs and thee adore.
6 Our griefs and burdens, gilt and ſhame,
Were all laid on the ſpotleſs Lamb:
Had he refus'd them, I had been
Quite ſunk and loſt in guilt and ſin;
But juſtice now is ſatisfy'd,
My Lamb, my Love is crucify'd.

HYMN LVI.

The ſoul bemoaning its Caſe to GOD.

1 TO God complaints and tears I ſend;
When ſhall my ſins and groanings end?
By unbelief I faint and fall,
Yet falling I for pity call:
I'm weaker than a bruiſed reed,
Always from Chriſt I ſtrength do need.
2 I nothing have me to commend,
My ſtony heart I cannot rend;
By nature I have nothing good:
Thou ſaw'ſt me in my filth and blood;
Yet then, in love, thou bids me live,
And for my ſoul a ranſom gave.
3 I'm dull when thee I come before,
I'm lifeleſs when I ſhould adore:
From clogs of ſin my ſoul ſet free;
Lord, rouze my ſoul to worſhip thee,
My drouzy frame I do abhor;
Awake me, that I ſleep no more.
4 A feeble helpleſs creature I
Do at thy pleaſure live or die:
O lift the rod, thy wrath remove,
My heart ſubdue to thee by love;
My ſins forgive, and to me turn:
Spare me, for ſin to weep and mourn.
5 Lord, rule my heart, and in me live,
And let no darling luſt ſurvive:
O bring my wand'rings to an end,
That ſo my thoughts may upward tend.

Thy feeble duſt with pity ſee;
It faints and creeps to win to thee.
6 O Father of my dying Lord,
Fulfil to me his gracious word:
Thy Spirit grant, for which he pray'd;
His influences on me ſhed.
Nothing but ſin I thee can give;
But quicken me, and I ſhall live.

HYMN LVII.

Give Thanks for REDEEMING LOVE.

1 FAther, thy love ſhines in thy Son;
Thou gav'ſt him, tho' thou had'ſt but one,
To ranſom a rebellious race,
And us tranſlate from ſin to grace.
O, for his ſake, our ſins remove,
And we'll exalt redeeming love.
2 Dear Jeſus bore the ſins of men;
Th' immortal God, the Lamb was ſlain.
Eternal bleſſings on the Lamb,
Let angels trumpet out his fame;
With angels bright, and ſaints above,
We'll join, and ſing his dying love.
3 We thee adore, O Chriſt the Son,
Who with thy Father dear art One,
And One the Holy Ghoſt with thee,
The One Eternal God in Three:
O make us meet with ſaints above
To magnify redeeming love.
4 Thou ſaw'ſt that all our pow'r was gone,
And to redeem us there was none:
If for us thou wouldſt not atone,
Eternally we were undone;
Therefore thou left thy throne above,
Vail'd thy perfections all but love.
5 For us thou pray'd, for us waſt ſlain,
For us thou lives and reigns again;
For us thy blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before thy throne.
To Jeſus only we do fly,
And on his ſacrifice rely.
6 For us Chriſt lives to interceed,
For us he doth this moment plead:
"Forgive their thoughts and actions too;
"Father, they know not what they do."
Lord, ſince our Surety paid the debt,
Our ſouls from wrath at freedom ſet.

HYMN LVIII.

CHRIST's *Incarnation wonderful.*

1 JEſus, immortal Son of God,
Thou choſe with mortals thy abode,
A virgin's womb thou didſt not ſcorn:
Angels are ſtruck to ſee thee born;
Thee, who the earth's foundation laid,
A little ſucking infant made.
2 Him whom the heav'ns cannot contain,
Behold, a woman's knees ſuſtain.
Great God, all praiſe we offer thee,
That thou vouchſaf'ſt a man to be,
To ſave loſt men from wrath and ſin,
That we might heaven enter in.
3 Let all admire that divine love,
Thich brought thee from thy throne above,
Our fleſh and frailties to aſſume,
To dy, and ly within a tomb;
That ſtrangers, who were far from God,
Might be brought nigh by Jeſu's blood.
4 Of him who did ſalvation bring,
Continually I'll think and ſing;
The Lamb ſhall be my conſtant theme,
I'll ſing his birth, his blood and name:
The Lamb is worthy that was ſlain,
On God's eternal throne to reign.
5 Us he did love when enemies;
To ſave us, on the croſs he dies.
'Tis finiſh'd, with loud voice he cry'd;
'You're ſafe, my friends, for all is paid;
'And, as my blood doth now atone,
'It goes to plead before the throne.'
6 No angel's tongue can ever tell
The glory of Immanuel.
O, for his ſake, my ſins forgive,
And let repenting ſinners live;
For me accept Chriſt's righteouſneſs,
And with more grace me daily bleſs.

HYMN LIX.

CHRIST *is our Treaſure and Bliſs.*

1 I'LL not ſeek my treaſure here
In this dry barren land;
Shadows only here appear,
And cares on ev'ry hand:
I would mount above to taſte
The feaſt thou gives to ſaints ſo free.
Lord, come down to me with haſte,
Or take me up to thee.
2 Jeſus purchas'd all my bliſs,
On him my hopes depend,
He himſelf my treaſure is;
Lord, keep me to the end.
Jeſus purchas'd me a feaſt,
When he dy'd on the curſed tree.
Lord, come down to me with haſte,
Or take me up to thee.
3 Hide me in thy bleſſed wounds,
And cleanſe me in thy blood;
Glory to thy name redounds
When thou doſt ſinners good:
Let me have thee for my gueſt,
Be not a ſtranger unto me.
Lord, come down to me with haſte,
Or take me up to thee.
4 Well thou know'ſt my ſin and ſhame;
Forgive me, and ſpeak peace:
Jeſus, cauſe me know thy name,
Shew me thy ſmiling face:
Lord, thy mercy ſtill doth laſt;
For good a token let me ſee.
Lord, come down to me with haſte,
Or take me up to thee.
5 Now by faith the Lamb we ſee
With pleaſure and delight;
Much increas'd our joy will be
When faith is turn'd to ſight:
I deſire with Chriſt to reſt,
Where I his face may clearly ſee.
Lord, come down to me with haſte,
Or take me up to thee.

HYMN LX.

CHRIST *interpoſing for fallen Man.*

1 OF ſhadows men dream
But we will proclaim
The Lamb's death and conqueſts, and ſound forth his name.
He ſaw when we fell,
Our face was to hell;
Our Lamb interpoſed for men that rebel.
2 Soon did he begin
For us to ſtep in:
" O Father, forgive them, they know not their ſin.
" Them do not conſume,
" For I the Lamb come
" To ſatisfy juſtice in guilty mens room."
3 He was not deny'd,
The Father comply'd:
Our guilt he laid on him, and for it he dy'd.
He's nail'd to the tree,
Us captives to free
From ſin and hell priſon, with God's enemie.
4 Our Lamb we'll adore,
Though devils do rore,
Envy us, purſue us, and tempt us ſo ſore.
They rage all in vain
But cannot detain
One ſoul as a captive, for whom the Lamb's ſlain.
5 His lambs Chriſt doth mind,
To weak ones he's kind;
He'll not dwell in heaven, and leave one behind:
For me he makes room
And then he will come,
Me ſafely to carry to my bleſſed home.
6 Griev'd ſoul, keep his road,
Pore not on ſins load,
Inſtead of thy Saviour, all cover'd with blood.
Chriſt ſaith, Look on me
(For eaſe) on the tree;
Look ſtraight to thy ſurety, and thou ſhalt be free.
7 When I'm with ſin preſt,
And fears are increaſt,
I'll look up to Jeſus, who gives ſinners reſt.
I will look to thee,
Dear Lord, on the tree;
Yea, ſing of thy bowels, and bleeding for me.

HYMN LXI.

A Song of Praiſe, and Addreſs to the bleſſed TRINITY.

1 TO God Almighty, One in Three,
Eternal praiſe be giv'n;
Who us from hell, thro' Chriſt, ſet free,
To reign with him in heav'n.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Unto the Father, and the Son,
And Spirit ever bleſt,
The undivided Trinity,
Be praiſes ſtill addreſt.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 Father, thou gav'ſt great proof of love,
To men by ſin undone,
When for our ranſom thou ſent down
Thy dear and only Son.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 When we were ſinking to the pit,
How did thy bowels move!
To ſave us, thou wouldſt have him die:
Great proof that God is love!
Hallelujah, &c.
5 The dear Son's love let all men praiſe,
Who from the Father came
At time appointed, for to be
Our ſacrificed Lamb.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 Father, to us thy Spirit ſend,
For which thy Son did pray:
Let him apply Chriſt's blood and fruits,
And baniſh ſin away.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 May he thine image on us ſtamp,
And what we loſt reſtore.
And cauſe us to obey thy will,
With all our mind and pow'r.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 Let ſaints and angels join in one,
That great love to proclaim
Of him that ſits upon the throne,
And of the worthy Lamb.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN LXII.

CHRIST's *Beauty and Lovelineſs.*

1 SINCE I beheld thy wondrous love
Diſplay'd upon the croſs,
The world and all things here below
Do look like dung and droſs.
2 The *Faireſt of ten thouſand* I
Will make my pleaſing theme;
I'll ſing his love and conſtancy,
His beauty and his name.
3 There's nothing ſounds ſo ſweet to me
As Chriſt's Name, Blood, and Croſs:
Beſides the merits of his death,
All things I count for loſs.
4 Since Jeſus for our ſins would die,
Who would not love the Lamb?
Thy perſon's lovely and to me
Moſt ſweetly ſounds thy name.
5 Thou'rt *white and ruddy* in my eyes,
Fairer than ſons of men:
Thou *altogether lovely* art,
The *Chief of thouſands ten.*
6 Could men by faith mount up to ſee
Our ſhining Saviour dear,
Had they the ſmalleſt glimpſe of thee,
Creatures would diſappear.
7 Who can thy worth and love declare?
Thy pity knows no bounds:
The vileſt men thou calls to flee
Into thy open wounds.
8 I then accept thine offer free
To ſave my ſoul from hell:

Since winds and ſeas thy word obey,
Should hearts of men rebel!

HYMN LXIII.

Thanks to CHRIST *for his Love and Sufferings.*

1 LET us together meet and praiſe
The ſlaughter'd Lamb of God,
And with joint hearts ſing forth his grace,
His Name, his Love, and Blood.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Into this wilderneſs he came
For three and thirty years,
To ſeek his poor, loſt, ſtraying ſheep
With many pray'rs and tears.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 The moſt deſpis'd he would not loſe,
But after them he ſought;
He ſtopt not till he found them all,
And with a price them bought.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 The price was great; his blood divine
For them muſt all be ſhed:
In love, to ſave from hell and ſin,
Chriſt's veins moſt freely bled.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 O bleſs the Lamb who gave himſelf
For Adam's ſinking crew,
To purchaſe our redemption,
When hell-fire was our due.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 He took our guilt and curſes due,
Our freedom to obtain:
He lov'd our ſouls; and, them to ſave,
The Prince of life was ſlain.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 To Chriſt we'll live, to Chriſt we'll die,
Who was our ſacrifice;
He well deſerves our life and death,
Who bought's with ſuch a price.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 Let hearts, and tongues, and all unite,
Chriſt's love and fame to raiſe;
Let all our actions honour him,
And our whole lives be praiſe.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN LXIV.

Let CHRIST's *Kingdom come.*

1 THE coming of thy kingdom, Lord,
Is our heart's great delight:
The thrones and kingdoms of thy foes
Them conquer in thy might.
2 Cauſe many glory in the Lord,
And in his ſtreaming blood;
For nothing can mens hearts ſubdue
But that o'erflowing flood.
3 The well which from thy ſide doth ſpring
Keep open to us ſtill,
That we and ev'ry thirſty ſoul
May come and drink our fill.
4 O let the number be increas'd
Of them thy wounds that know,
And feel the virtue of that blood
Which from the ſame did flow.
5 Teach men to come to God by thee,
Cauſe them from ſloth ariſe;
Shew them thy death is unto God
A pleaſing ſacrifice.
6 Send days of pow'r to bow their wills
Thine offers to embrace;
Make theſe, who earthly things admire,
Admirers of free grace.
7 O Father of our ſlaughter'd Lamb,
Remember men for good;
Be mindful of his pray'rs and tears,
And hear his ſpeaking blood.
8 Thy Spirit grant, for which he pray'd;
Convictions make like darts.
O Father, glorify thy Son,
And melt ten thouſand hearts.

HYMN LXV.

The convinced Soul coming to CHRIST.

1 I Am now ſenſible of guilt;
Lord hear the leper's pray'r:
O Jeſus, Maſter, if thou wilt,
Thou canſt me cleanſe and ſpare.
2 Where can a burden'd conſcience go
But unto Jeſu's blood?
What can waſh our deep ſtains of guilt,
But this ſoul-cleanſing flood?
3 When I am made to ſee my guilt,
Hide not this blood from me:
If this relief ſhould be conceal'd,
I'll ſink in miſerie.
4 Such hiding ſure comes not of thee;
'Tis I who am to blame:
My heart proves falſe, it ſhuts thee out;
I unbelieving am.
5 Oh, juſtly vile unthankful I
May be ſhut out by thee;
But, Father, look on Jeſu's wounds,
And hear them plead for me.
6 Altho' my ſins have ſwell'd up high,
And do for vengeance call,
Chriſt's blood like to a mighty ſea,
Can quickly drown them all.
7 Thou Son of David, hear my cry,
Let me receive my ſight:
Stand ſtill and call me: paſs not by,
My darkneſs turn to light.
8 Come, ſay unto my grieved ſoul,
Now ſore oppreſt with fear,
Your ſins are freely pardoned;
Fear not, be of good cheer.

HYMN LXVI.

Senſible Souls crying to GOD, *and pleading* CHRIST's *Blood.*

1 LAME ſouls here at Betheſda's pool
Wait till the waters move:
Lord, ſtir the pool, and help us in;
Our cure comes from above.

2 Chriſt's blood, which mighty changes works,
Can all our plagues remove:
Let this blood ſtream into our hearts,
Them ſoften by thy love.
3 Thy blood's my balm, my help, my hope;
To it with guilt I flee:
When ſin me ſtings, I mourn, I run
To plunge me in this ſea.
4 When I as dead in ſin do ly,
Lord, haſten to my grave:
Raiſe me, like Laz'rus, with thy cry;
From ſp'ritual death me ſave.
5 When my heart's barren, hard or cold,
With heav'nly rain me bleſs:
Riſe, ſhine on me with warming beams,
Thou Sun of righteouſneſs.
6 When ſin and ſatan me delude,
And make me go aſtray,
Lead my by faith to Jeſu's clefts,
So I'll regain my way.
7 Make me repent, in Chriſt believe,
My carnal heart renew:
Thus make me meet for heav'n above,
Where ſaints thy face do view.
8 In me exert thy ſov'reign grace,
And conquer all my pow'rs:
Let Chriſt's blood draw my heart to him,
And make it ſoft like ſhow'rs.
9 Jeſus, I aſk, I ſeek, and knock,
As thou doſt me command:
Now let me find; make good thy word,
For this I waiting ſtand.

HYMN LXVII.

The Holy Spirit makes the Goſpel-feaſt.

1 COME holy Spirit, from above,
And *on my garden blow;*
Come with the *north* and *ſouth winds* both,
And *make the ſpices flow;*
2 That *to his garden* Chriſt may *come,*
His pleaſant fruits to eat:
And let my ſoul be honoured
To ſit with him at meat.
3 Ah! now our love is waxed cold,
Chriſt's table is deſpis'd:
To vice and ſloth mens ſouls are ſold,
Our ſlain Lamb is not priz'd.
4 Cauſe heaven's dews drop from above,
To ſoften hearts of ſtone;
Cauſe men to grieve for ſlighting Chriſt,
And all their ſins bemone.
5 Lord, ſend a ſpark of heav'nly fire,
Our coldneſs to remove:
To ſeek thy face with ſtrong deſire,
Inflame our hearts with love.
6 O let thy Spirit ſhew to us
The Lamb was for us ſlain;
Thus warm our hearts, and thro' thy grace,
We'll not lodge ſin again.
7 And, when thou mak'ſt our hearts to burn,
Preſerve this loving frame;
Send new ſupplies ſtill from above,
To keep alive the flame.
8 Thy righteouſneſs and ſtrength, dear Lord,
Continually we need:
O for our daily food us teach
By faith on thee to feed.
9 Give new degrees of faith and love,
Send more ſtill from above;
Give more and more, till we perceive
To us thy ſpecial love.

HYMN LXVIII.

A Goſpel-walk after a Goſpel-feaſt.

1 ALL glory to the Lamb our God,
In whom we have believ'd:
The ſymbols of his body broke
From him we have receiv'd.
2 Great King, rule o'er our conquer'd hearts,
Our faculties poſſeſs;
Whate'er in them mints to rebel,
That quickly, Lord, ſuppreſs.
3 Help me to hate ſin, and it count
The author of my woe,
And war againſt it to declare,
As Chriſt's moſt deadly foe.
4 Let bleeding love me influence,
God, who is love, to ſerve,
And conſtantly his holy laws
To love and them obſerve.
5 The narrow way Chriſt did command,
He walk'd himſelf therein:
O give me grace to follow him,
Abhorring ev'ry ſin.
6 *The love of Chriſt* my heart *conſtrains*
To love his members too,
And all that unto him pertain,
Be they deſpis'd or few.
7 Since for his flock, where'er they dwell,
Chriſt his heart's blood did ſhed,
I'll fellowſhip ſtill hold with all
Who hold it with the Head.
8 In harmony with them I'll join
Our Jeſu's name to raiſe,
And call the angels to our help,
Redeeming love to praiſe.
9 Some lively ſouls in heaven's road
Go forward cheerfully;
And ſhall we in thy ways but creep,
Whilſt other Chriſtians fly?
10 Kill ſin in us, and quite ſubdue
All that againſt thee ſtrives:
Write HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD
On all our hearts and lives.

HYMN LXIX.

Addreſs to the HOLY SPIRIT.

1 COme, heav'nly Dove, and be my guide
Quite thro' the wilderneſs:
Chriſt is my way, with holineſs,
In this me lead to bliſs.
2 Do thou poſſeſs my yielding heart
With true faith, hope and love;
Renew my ſoul, and make me long
To dwell with God above.
3 Me perfect make in holineſs,
That I may be found meet

In heav'n to live with Chriſt and ſaints,
Where praiſing work is ſweet.
4 Moſt holy Sp'rit, I do commit,
To thee my heart and frame:
Thy workmanſhip in me maintain,
For honour of thy name.
5 In me pull down all pow'r of ſin,
And with me make abode,
And purify my heart within,
A temple meet for God.
6 Come dwell, and witneſs in my heart
That I'm a child of God;
This would me feaſt, and make me ſing
Thro' all the heav'nly road.
7 *Thy Spirit, Lord, take not from us,*
Leſt from thy paths we ſlide,
And all our pious purpoſes
Quite drop and lay aſide.
8 But Chriſt, who dy'd, is now alive,
And lives for us to plead:
And hence we truſt his Sp'rit will ſtay,
To help us in our need.

HYMN LXX.

A penitent returning Backſlider.

1 ONce I my Saviour did enjoy,
Sweet was his love to me:
I liv'd and much convers'd with him,
Then well did we agree.
2 While Chriſt I lov'd, his love I knew;
But, when my love wax'd dry,
The clouds turn'd thick, and my heart hard,
And formal was my cry.
3 Alas! I have God's Spirit griev'd,
And caus'd him to withdraw:
No wonder clouds thy face do hide,
When I forget thy law.
4 When thy good Spirit is withdrawn,
I ly before the Lord,
Much like a lump of lifeleſs clay:
Lord, ſend a quick'ning word.
5 O that it were with me again
As it was in months paſt!
Thy Spirit I would no more grieve
Nor thy ſweet favours waſte.
6 Oh! I'm unworthy of a ſmile,
I bluſh with thee to meet:
If I mayn't ſee my Saviour's face,
I'll kiſs his pierced feet.
7 Backſliding ſouls thou bid'ſt return,
That them thou mayeſt heal:
With tears let me return to thee,
Whoſe word doth never fail.
8 In mercy turn thy face to me,
And all my clouds diſpel:
Thy controverſy plead no more;
Thy anger is like hell.
9 My evidences, Lord, clear up;
Let ſin them blot no more:
Reſtore my fellowſhip with thee,
As I have had before.

HYMN LXXI.

View the Sufferings of CHRIST *crucified.*

1 BEhold, the Lamb ſtands dumb before
His raging murderers;
And while they nail'd and pierc'd him thro',
Moſt patiently he bears.
2 When from each pore his blood did ſpring,
What pangs felt he within!
Great was the load of wrath divine,
That bruis'd him for our ſin.
3 On Calv'ry hill he naked hung,
Pierc'd thro' till he was dead:
Thus both to men and angels he
A ſpectacle was made.
4 View on the croſs our ſuff'ring Lord,
With wounded head and hands,
With pierced ſide, and bleeding heart;
All red with blood he ſtands.
5 'Behold, ſaith he, my agonies
'I ſuffer'd for your guilt;
'What crimſon ſtreams run from my wounds!
'For you this blood was ſpilt.
6 'Your ſins me griev'd, and ſtab'd my heart;
'They pierc'd my hands and feet;
'All this I ſilently endur'd,
'For heav'n to make you meet.'
7 Can I, unmov'd, Chriſt's groanings hear,
Like to an harden'd Jew?
Can I, without a ſigh or tear,
This mournful ſcene review!
8 Forbid it, Lord! I'll bear a part
When I thine anguiſh ſee;
I feel, when I behold thee pierc'd,
And nailed to the tree.
9 Lord, my heart breaks; now thee I ſee,
Whom I have pierc'd, and mourn:
Alas! my ſins drove in the nails
By which thy fleſh was torn.

HYMN LXXII.

CHRIST'S *Wounds and Blood the Support of burden'd ſouls.*

1 IN all my anxious doubts and fears
I flee to Jeſu's wounds:
His blood calls penitents to hope,
To mourners peace it ſounds.
2 Chriſt's arms outſtretch'd are to embrace
Returning prodigals;
Thy blood doth guſh out, for to waſh
Them from their fouleſt falls.
3 To worſt of men oft virtue flows
From thy wide bleeding wounds;
Thou mak'ſt thy grace oft moſt abound
Where wickedneſs abounds.
4 Lord, where ſhall I my anchor caſt,
But on the rock alone,
Chriſt crucify'd immoveable,
The ſure foundation-ſtone?
5 Tho' earth's foundation be remov'd,
On him my ſoul relies;
In him my Father is well-pleas'd,
Chriſt's blood him ſatisfies.
6 Thy goſpel tells what thy blood works;

From terror it relieves :
Its virtue many thouſands know,
It ſaves whoe'er believes.
7 O bleeding Lamb, with pity view
Theſe fears which me moleſt ;
Let thy blood waſh out crimſon ſins,
In thy wounds give me reſt.
8 When I'm diſtreſt, here will I reſt
My heavy laden ſoul :
O hear my groans, and bear my loads,
My ſin-ſick ſoul make whole.

HYMN LXXIII.

CHRIST'S *Free grace, Love and Pity to men.*

1 OUR worthy ſlaughter'd Lamb thou art,
Our great High Prieſt indeed ;
Moſt freely on mount Calvary
Thou didſt for mankind bleed.
2 Thy wounds thou mak'ſt our hiding place,
And ſtill thou art our friend :
When wrath purſu'd, thou ſhed'ſt thy blood
That ſo we might be ſkreen'd.
3 For vileſt men, and blackeſt hearts,
Thy wounds did freely bleed :
For well thou know'ſt that of thy blood
Such ſouls ſtand moſt in need.
4 In thee faint hearts do find ſupport,
And troubled minds get peace ;
From thee poor hungry ſouls get food,
And wounded ſpirits eaſe.
5 Thou wilt not quench the ſmoking flax,
But blow it to a flame ;
The bruiſed reed thou never breaks,
But ſtrengthen doſt the ſame.
6 Had'ſt thou left ſaints, ſure they had ſtay'd
With men on earth that dwell :
Thy free grace them diſtinguiſhed,
Or they had dwelt in hell.
7 To thy free love I flee, O Lamb,
For ſcarlet ſinners ſlain,
To free me of my loads of guilt,
And eaſe me of my pain.
8 Thou ſay'ſt believe, and on me reſt,
And you ſhall find relief :
Thy promiſe ſweet I would believe ;
Lord, help my unbelief.
9 On thy blood only I rely,
As doth thy goſpel call :
The great atonement I receive,
Which ſaves believers all.

HYMN LXXIV.

The ANGELS SONG.

1 HOW ſweetly did the angels ſing
At Chriſt's nativity !
Let Adam's race take up their hymn,
And praiſe God chearfully.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 *All glory be to God on high,*
And peace be on the earth :
Henceforth good-will from heav'n to men,
Becauſe of Jeſu's birth.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 We more than angels ought to praiſe :
For, tho' they ſee God's face,
With ranſom'd men they have no ſhare
In God's redeeming grace.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 Hoſanna to king David's Son,
And to king David's Lord,
Our dear God man, our glorious Prieſt,
Who heav'n to us reſtor'd.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Let men and angels praiſe the Lamb,
Ev'n Jeſus Chriſt our Lord ;
Let men his ſtripes and wounds for them
With thankful hearts record.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 Becauſe he dy'd, God hath him rais'd,
And glorify'd on high :
Him all the heav'nly hoſts adore,
And praiſe eternally.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 Chriſt's riſing doth us juſtify ;
And his aſcent to God
Doth find us room with ſaints to ſing,
And ever praiſe his blood.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 We ſee thee now at God's right-hand :
Lord, draw us up to thee,
To triumph ever in thy love,
And all thy glory ſee.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN LXXV.

ADDRESS *to the* FATHER.

1 O Heavenly Father, we thee bleſs,
Who gave the Lamb to men :
The Lamb we bleſs, who did ſubmit
To be for ſinners ſlain.
2 Thou pity'd worms, and them did ſpare,
Yet ſpared not thy Son,
But him did wound and bruiſe to death,
For our ſins to atone.
3 Father of mercies, thro' Chriſt's death,
Thou pardons enemies,
And ſends thy Spirit to their ſouls
With faith and rich ſupplies.
4 *Forgive them, Father,* Chriſt once cry'd,
They know not what they do :
Forgive us, Father, we now cry ;
Chriſt's blood cries for us too.
5 O Father, thou doſt men purſue
With offers of thy grace ;
And, when refus'd, thou oft repeats
Thy goſpel terms of peace.
6 With many motives thou haſt try'd
Our backward hearts to win :
Thy Sp'rit with patience ſtrives to ſave
Men from the pow'r of ſin.
7 Of thy forbearance and free grace
A monument I am ;
And ſtill thou calls me to embrace
Thy ſacrificed Lamb.
8 Great love ! that I who ſpurn'd thy grace !
Thy pow'r and wrath defy'd,

Should mercy have proclaim'd to me,
  Thro' thy Son crucify'd.
9 O let not men abuſe thy grace
  To ſin, becauſe thou'rt good:
Fill all our hearts with grief and ſhame,
  That we thy grace withſtood.

N. B. *The ſeven following hymns are compoſed mainly for young perſons.*

HYMN LXXVI.

A SONG *for* YOUNG ONES.

1 AWake, ye little ones, and ſing
  The honours of the Lamb:
Let every child prepare a ſong
  To God our Saviour's name.
2 Our glorious Redeemer is
  Moſt worthy to receive
Our thanks and praiſe continually,
  Yea, more than we can give.
3 May his great love ſink in our hearts,
  And evermore abide;
Since for us children, ſinners viſe,
  The great IMMANUEL dy'd.
4 How hot and flaming was his love,
  That made him interpoſe
His naked breaſt, to take the ſtroke
  For us who where his foes!
5 May our hearts burn with love to him
  Thro' all eternity;
Since out of burning love to us,
  Chriſt on the croſs did die.
6 We bleſs the Lord, who hath to babes
  This glorious truth reveal'd,
Salvation thro' Chriſt crucify'd,
  From wiſer minds conceal'd.
7 From many is this treaſure hid;
  But thou haſt led our eyes
Unto the pleaſant goſpel field,
  Where this bleſt treaſure lies.
8 By faith and meditation
  Here will we walk and dig,
Till we make rich. and ne'r be put
  From creatures more to beg.

HYMN LXXVII.

A Song for Children.

1 A Little child, O Lord, I am;
  I ſtrength and wiſdom want:
I come to thee, who canſt them both
  In little children plant.
2 A willing child that comes to thee,
  Thou ſay'ſt, thou'lt not caſt out:
Thou bowels haſt of God and man,
  Why therefore ſhould I doubt?
3 Thy goſpel offers reach to all,
  And namely to the young;
Thy words left on record are ſweet,
  How charming is thy tongue!
4 "O come to me, ye burden'd ſouls,
  "With guilt and fears oppreſt;
"By faith your burdens on me caſt,
  "And I will give you reſt.
5 "Your willing necks bend to my yoke,
  "Yield to my government,
"And imitate my holy life;
  "And this you'll ne'er repent.
6 "I'm meek and lowly, learn from me
  "A meek and lowly mind;
"And thus your weary reſtleſs ſouls
  "Shall reſt and quiet find.
7 "My yoke to you ſhall eaſy prove,
  "My burden alſo light:
"For wiſdom's ways are pleaſantneſs,
  "And all her paths are right."
8 Lord, I believe thy faithful words,
  Thy offers I embrace;
Thine offices I do accept,
  And thank thee for thy grace.

HYMN LXXVIII.

A SONG *for* YOUNG PERSONS.

1 WE mourn that converts are ſo few:
  Cauſe ſouls like doves flee home,
Make converts fall like morning dew;
  O let thy kingdom come.
2 O Spirit of conviction, ſtrive
  With thoſe of tender years,
And cauſe thy darts pierce all our hearts,
  And melt us into tears.
3 Diſcover ſin in its black hue,
  That we may it deteſt;
And let us ſee God's remedy,
  Chriſt's wounds, wherein to reſt.
4 Thou empties firſt whom thou doſt fill;
  Caſts down whom thou doſt raiſe;
Thou quickens whom the law doth kill,
  And glorifies free grace.
5 Lord, make thy light unto me ſhine,
  To ſhew me what I am;
That I am loſt, without the blood
  Of Chriſt, the worthy Lamb.
6 Take this rebellious heart of mine,
  And bathe it in thy blood:
In it ſet up thy throne and reign;
  Pull down what thee withſtood.
7 O com'rades dear, bring all your hearts
  While young unto the Lamb;
No longer keep him from his right,
  Since for our hearts he came.
8 Who elſe deſerves our love but he,
  His blood that freely ſpilt,
To ſave our ſouls from juſtice' ſword,
  And purge away our guilt?

HYMN LXXIX.

A SONG *for* CHILDREN.

1 I Read my Saviour did come down
  A little child to be,
And on the croſs did ſhed his blood
  For children ſuch as me;
2 That to this fountain all may come,
  Their ſouls to cleanſe from ſin,
Lord, grant me faith t' apply this blood,
  And bathe my ſoul therein.
3 'Tis little that I know of thee,
  My crucified Lord,

Thy Spirit ſend to teach me more
Out of thy bleſſed word.
4 Lord, in thy word thou calls us all
To come to thee and live:
I come to thee with all my guilt;
My ſoul cleanſe and forgive.
5 My nature change, my heart renew;
No good can I perform:
I'm weak, but yet my Surety's ſtrong;
O help the feeble worm.
6 Lord, in thy ſtrength I'll change my courſe:
O plant grace me within,
And purify my little heart
From ev'ry luſt and ſin.
7 Thou art my Shepherd; lead me on,
Let me not go aſtray:
In thy ſweet ways cauſe me to walk,
And thee with love obey.
8 A humble, meek and loving frame
Into my heart implant:
Help me by faith on thee to lean
For ev'ry grace I want.

HYMN LXXX.

A SONG *for* YOUNG ONES.

1 THE goſpel ſound doth reach our ears,
Let young ones all rejoice:
The words are charming we do hear,
'Tis Jeſu's melting voice:
2 "Come unto me, incline your ear;
Hear, and your ſouls ſhall live;
A covenant I'll make with you,
And all your ſins forgive."
3 My ſtreaming blood ſhall purge away
The guilt of all your ſin;
My Spirit's warm enliv'ning beams,
Shall life beget within.
4 I'll be your righteouſneſs and ſtrength;
I'll lead you on the way,
Till you arrive in heav'n at length,
And dwell with me for ay.
5 We gladly hear our Saviour's voice,
Which bids us ſinners live:
Cauſe our dry bones begin to ſtir,
To us thy Spirit give.
6 There's none our ſouls do truſt but thee;
On earth there is not one,
Our panting hearts deſire to ſee,
But God in Chriſt alone.
7 That creatures got our thoughts in youth,
We heartily bemoan:
Now we thee chuſe, receive, and love;
To thee we live alone.
8 What ſhall I render to my God
For all his gifts to me,
And for his gift unſpeakable,
The Lamb for us to die?

HYMN LXXXI.

A SONG *for* YOUNG PERSONS.

1 TO JESU's hand we do commit
The light and love we have:
Preſerve and cheriſh that in us
Which thy good Spirit gave.
2 New-liſted ſoldiers we're to thee,
Our Captain wiſe and ſtrong:
We're ſworn to fight againſt thy foes;
To thy camp we belong.
3 For us Chriſt fought; he pull'd us from
Sin, ſatan, death and hell:
The battle coſt him many wounds;
But lo! it ended well.
4 His garments were all ſtain'd with blood,
But ne'er did quit the field:
His love hath overcome our ſouls,
And cauſ'd our wills to yield.
5 Let ſoldiers all their Captain praiſe,
Their General ſo brave,
Who fought and dy'd, and roſe again,
Their precious ſouls to ſave.
6 Our Lamb alone hath vanquiſhed
Hell's roaring lions all:
Unto him then let thanks be giv'n
By young ones great and ſmall.
7 O that I knew how to the Lamb
My thankfulneſs to ſhew!
Then do his will, and in no ill
Or ſin yourſelf allow.
8 May to the Lamb that once was ſlain,
Be praiſe and glory giv'n
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hoſts of heav'n.

HYMN LXXXII.

A SONG *for* YOUNG CONVERTS.

1 DEar Lamb, thou haſt thy myſteries
Unto us babes reveal'd:
The weak thou takes, and keeps thy truths
From wiſer minds conceal'd.
2 The nat'ral man cannot conceive
Things which the Spirit teach;
But us thou makes know and believe
The truths thy ſervants preach.
3 More bleſt than many righteous men
Are we in goſpel days:
What things they ſought, we find in Chriſt;
To his free love be praiſe.
4 With other children in the road
To hell we lately went:
From pity, thou thy Spirit ſent,
Our ruin to prevent.
5 To upper worlds we're help'd to go,
With thoſe of heav'nly birth;
While others chuſe to ſtay below,
And ſeek their bliſs on earth.
6 May we each tempting vice avoid,
And no more entertain
Theſe ſins and luſts by which the Lamb
Was crucify'd and ſlain.
7 If in our youth thou call'ſt us off
From this uncertain ſtage,
O give us now of heav'nly bliſs
A ſoul-comforting pledge.
8 If longer thou wilt keep us here,
Be with us all our days;
Fit us to honour thee on earth,
And ſing in heav'n thy praiſe.

HYMN LXXXIII.

Blood and water from CHRIST'S *ſide.*

1 AS our Redeemer undertook,
For us he ſatisfy'd:
On Calvary he bore our guilt,
There on the croſs he dy'd.
2 There we may ſee from his pierc'd ſide
The mixed current flow
Of blood and water, for to waſh
Black ſinners white as ſnow.
3 It needful was Chriſt's ſide and heart
Should pour a double flood:
By water we are purify'd,
And pardon'd by the blood.
4 O pierced Lamb, with pity view
My woful ſpots and ſtains;
And with that flood them overflow
Which from all ſin doth cleanſe.
5 May I get faith to uſe that blood
That ſtream'd from thee, my Lord:
No comfort have I in the earth
But what thy wounds afford.
6 Grant ſaving faith, thee to receive;
My unbelief remove:
May I thy ſuff'rings all record,
With faith that works by love.
7 Let faith be waxing ſtronger ſtill,
To count the world but droſs,
To hate the moſt beloved ſin,
And nail it to the croſs.
8 Author of faith, to thee we look,
For faith we ſend our cry:
The gift of faith unto us grant,
Our ſouls without it die.

HYMN LXXXIV.

A Dialogue betwixt Pilgrims.

MEN.
1 TELL us, O women ſojourners,
Unto what place ye go?
And why you do not ſeem content
To ſtay on earth below?
WOMEN.
2 All creatures here we empty find,
They can't ſupply our wants:
We go to Chriſt above, our bliſs,
To praiſe him with the ſaints.
M.
3 Have you not many friends on earth
Who with you ſympathize?
Cannot your earthly comforts here
Your hearts to ſtay entice?
W.
4 We're pilgrims here, earth's not our home;
Which makes us long to be
Where Chriſt our friend dwells with his ſaints,
And they him glorifie.
M.
5 Why don't you ſeek your treaſure here,
With others in the land,
Who ſeem well pleas'd with ſenſual things,
And ſomething in their hand?
W.
6 Our treaſure Chriſt laid up above,
He dearly bought our bliſs;
His blood's the price; nay, Chriſt himſelf
Our bleſſed treaſure is.
M.
7 Since Chriſt your treaſure is in heaven,
Your hearts muſt mount above:
Things earthly will not ſuit your minds,
You muſt be where you love.
W.
8 A ſight of Jeſu's love, and blood
Down ſtreaming from the croſs,
Makes all things to us here below
Appear as dung and droſs.
M.
9 Let pilgrims here join heaven's hoſts,
And hallelujahs ſing
To him that ſits upon the throne,
And to the Lamb our King.
W.
10 Hoſanna's of the higheſt ſtrain
To heaven's King be giv'n,
Our Saviour God, who came to men
With news of peace from heav'n.

HYMN LXXXV.

A DIALOGUE.

M.
1 DEar fellow-pilgrims we are glad
To find you in the road
That leads to new Jeruſalem,
The city of our God.
W.
2 Straight to that city we would go,
But we have little ſtrength:
Ah! in the way we move but ſlow;
Fain would we come your length.
M.
3 O haſte unto that city fair,
The Bridegroom waits for you:
He'll clothe, he'll wed, and feaſt you there;
Truſt him, his word is true.
W.
4 Our faith is weak, our grace is ſcant,
In God's ways we but creep;
Our ſins us clog, and tears we want
For them to mourn and weep.
M.
5 Seek for God's Spirit you to draw,
And cauſe you run with ſpeed:
By faith Chriſt's fulneſs ſtill apply;
There you'll get what you need.
W.
6 Lord, draw us, and thick clouds diſpell,
Set heaven in our ſight;
Remove our doubts, grant new ſupplies
Of divine heat and light.
M.
7 Tho' doubts perplex you here below,
No clouds you'll find above;
There in God's light we light ſhall ſee,
Where light is match'd with love.
W.
8 Unto that land of light and love

We'll haſte, Chriſt's face to view ;
We long to ſhare his heav'nly fruits,
Which ſtill continue new.
M.
9 Hoſanna to king David's Son,
And to king David's Lord :
His love proclaim whoſe ſide was pierc'd,
Whoſe hands and feet were bor'd.
W.
10 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt,
One God in Perſons Three,
Who us ſalvation brought when loſt,
Still praiſes ſing will we.

HYMN LXXXVI.

A DIALOGUE.

M.
1 COme, waiting virgins, join with us
To praiſe our glorious King :
In harmony lift up your voice ;
Daughters of Zion ſing.
W.
2 The invitation we accept
To ſing of Zion's King ;
To us no earthly buſineſs
Can ſo much pleaſure bring.
M.
3 O virgin-ſouls, the Bridegroom comes
The match to conſummate :
Buy oil in time, and trim your lamps ;
For him look out and wait.
W.
4 Our lamps we'll trim, and look for Chriſt ;
Let ſleep from us be driv'n :
In watching we will join you here,
And join your ſongs in heav'n.
M.
5 We'll jointly cry, "The creature's vain ;
O Lamb there's none but thee
Among the angels, or the ſaints,
Our ſouls can ſatisfie."
W.
6 Good cauſe have we all ſo to cry,
The Lamb appear'd our friend :
When wrath for ſin did burn like fire,
He from the flame us ſkreen'd.
M.
7 Come, hear Chriſt's dying cries and grones,
When nailed to the croſs ;
Come, ſee him red with blood and wounds,
When bearing wrath for us.
W.
8 Our great delight is ſtill to pry
Into Chriſt's wounds and croſs :
Compared with this happineſs,
All things we count as droſs.
M.
9 Siſters, love Chriſt, be not afraid
Of law's curſe, death or hell :
Chriſt bought your ſouls, and paid your debt,
And you in peace may dwell.
W.
10 Chriſt alſo bought your liberty
To be God's ſons and heirs ;
And you may Abba Father cry,
When you ſend up your pray'rs.

HYMN LXXXVII.

A DIALOGUE.

M.
1 O Women, what think ye of Chriſt ?
Is he not white and fair ?
Can any thing you ſee on earth
With God's dear Lamb compare ?
W.
2 Created things are vanity ;
In heav'n or earth there's none
Our panting ſouls deſire to ſee
But God in Chriſt alone.
M.
3 Do you love Chriſt to ſerve and praiſe,
More than the things of ſenſe ?
What do you think of Wiſdom's ways ?
What's your experience ?
W.
4 Chriſt's ſervice is an eaſy yoke,
We feel his burden light ;
And ſweetly in his ways we run,
When his love's in our ſight.
M.
5 Bleſt they who ſee Chriſt's love to them
In his ſore agonie ;
And in the ſtripes which he endur'd
Their ſouls from ſin to free.
W.
6 'Caſt not away your confidence.'
But truſt, and ſtill maintain
The Lamb is our inheritance,
He for our ſins was ſlain.
M.
7 'No condemnation you ſhall know
Who in Chriſt Jeſus are :'
His daughters lodge in Jeſu's wounds,
And pluck you hence who dare ?
W.
8 With him we cloſe, with him we cleave,
Who bled to make us free
From ſin and hell, and bought us life
By dying on the tree.
M.
9 Sure nothing, then, which you do aſk
Shall to you be deny'd ;
When you on ſcripture-grounds can plead,
The Lamb for you hath dy'd.
W.
10 We truſt we've found the Pearl of price,
Which us enriched hath :
In him we'll joy, and him we'll praiſe,
Both in our life and death.

HYMN LXXXVIII.

A DIALOGUE.

M.
1 REjoice, O women, for the Lamb
Your great High Prieſt is made :
He wept, he bled, to buy for you
A crown that ſhall not fade.
W.
2 With ſympathy his pains we feel
He ſuffer'd on the tree,

And all the anguiſh he endur'd
Our ſouls from hell to free.
M.
3 What caus'd the flaming ſword to ſtrike
And wound his ſoul ſo ſore,
And put him to ſuch grief and pain?
Was it our ſins he bore?
W.
4 We blame not Pilate, nor the Jews;
But we our grief renew
For all our ſins in heart and life,
Since they our Saviour ſlew.
M.
5 Mourning with you, we'll view the Lamb
As ſtretch'd upon the croſs,
Who never aſk'd to be reliev'd
Till he aton'd for us.
W.
6 Let's kill ſin too, that ſlew the Lamb;
His laws let us approve:
Conformity we'll ſeek to him;
His ſaints our hearts do love.
M.
7 Let's take Chriſt's blood, ſin to ſubdue,
And waſh out ev'ry ſtain:
Lord, do not turn away thy face
For ſpots which may remain.
W.
8 Lord, lead us daily to this blood,
To give us peace within;
And, that our peace may laſting be,
Our conſcience purge from ſin.
M.
9 Let's go to praiſe the Lamb above,
And in his preſence dwell,
Who hath redeem'd us by his blood
From all the pow'rs of hell.
W.
10 We'll go and join the angels ſong,
To praiſe the worthy Lamb:
That he is worthy of all pow'r
We'll evermore proclaim.

HYMN LXXXIX.

True BRITONS *Thankſgiving for their Deliverance from Popery and ſlavery.*

1 LET Britiſh hearts and tongues bleſs God,
And in his name rejoice;
All Proteſtants, come ſing aloud,
And make a joyful noiſe.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Praiſe God for kindneſs to this iſle,
And to our native land,
Who made the battle on us ſmile,
And ſav'd us by his hand.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 In mercy, God preſerves our crown,
In the reformed line;
French ſchemes and projects he breaks down
When hell and Rome combine.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 Papiſts and maſked Proteſtants
Still new rebellions try,
Pop'ry and ſlav'ry to advance
'Gainſt truth and liberty.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Rome's friends do plot and fight in vain,
Them Zion's King doth ſee:
His goſpel pure he doth maintain,
And give us victory.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 To two Prince Williams, under God,
Great Britain ſtands in debt:
They ſtopt her foes here and abroad:
Let God the glory get.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 He rais'd and bleſt them; his ſtrong hand
Our laws and rights maintains:
He keeps his goſpel in the land,
Us frees from rack and chains.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 We thank God, w're in Britain born,
And not in France or Spain,
Or nations who the goſpel ſcorn,
And worſhip pure diſdain.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XC.

ANOTHER.

1 CHriſt ſees his church in all her ſtraits
And hears his people's cries.
The plots of foes, however cloſe,
Are all before his eyes.
2 When Antichriſt with all his train,
Raze Zion quite, do cry:
Her mighty King above doth reign,
And all their rage defy.
3 Let Britain ne'er forget her God,
Who guards her, and preſerves
Religion, laws and liberties;
Smites not, as ſhe deſerves.
3 Ah Lord, our land's provoking ſins
Call for a ſecond flood:
A deluge ſend from Calvary,
To drown them in thy blood.
5 To Britain true repentance give,
On fleets and armies ſmile;
Change hearts and lives, their ſins forgive:
Abide ſtill in our iſle;
6 About her be a wall of fire,
The glory us among;
Protect us ſtill from Romiſh ire,
And all who would us wrong.
7 Let reformation from the throne
Spread both to rich and poor:
In ev'ry houſe let God be prais'd,
And ſin caſt to the door.
8 What ſhall we render to our God
For all his gifts to us?
And for his gift unſpeakable,
Chriſt bleeding on the croſs?

HYMN XCI.

BELIEVERS *Food at* CHRIST'S *Table.*

1 THE angels bright above
Do not partake this food:

They feaſt upon their Maker's love,
But not a Saviour's blood.
2 Here Chriſt his flock doth feed
With food of rareſt kinds,
Pardon and peace bought with his blood,
Moſt fit for troubled minds.
3 I'll feed and waſh me clean
In ſtreams of Jeſu's blood:
Lord, purge my ſoul from ev'ry ſtain
In that ſoul-cleanſing flood.
4 God's pity I admire:
When wrath 'gainſt man did ſwell,
He ſent his Son to bear our ſins,
And ſave our ſouls from hell.
5 Father, regard thy Son,
Who for us interceeds;
His blood cries louder than our ſins,
And for remiſſion pleads.
6 Thou ſay'ſt, a feaſt above
Shall to thy flock be giv'n;
What's wanting at the table here
Shall be made up in heav'n.
7 To Chriſt, when they aſcend,
They'll need theſe ſigns no more;
They'll feaſt and ſhare of heav'nly fare
Chriſt keeps for them in ſtore.
8 Lord, take me to that feaſt,
Where I ſhall ſee thy face,
And evermore feed and adore,
And bleſs thee for thy grace.

HYMN XCII.

CHRIST's *dying Love to be remembered.*

1 CHriſt ſaid, when men fell under doom,
To do thy will, O God, I come;
I freely come, I freely die,
For guilty men to ſatisfie.
2 Thou, Lord, for them who hated thee,
Didſt ſhed thy blood abundantlie;
Thy ſoul for ſin an off'ring made,
And thus our dreadful debt was paid.
3 *That night our Jeſus was betray'd,*
He took, he bleſs'd, he brake the bread,
In mem'ry of Chriſt crucify'd,
He ſaid, *Do this,* then went and dy'd.
4 "Do this, my friends, till I return;
Look on my wounds for ſin, and mourn:
Yet eat and drink ſtill thankfully;
This feaſt keep, and remember me."
5 A moving ſight, Lord, here I ſee,
My bleeding Lamb nail'd to the tree:
May I, while feeding here, be found
Cloſs prying into ev'ry wound.
6 Here is God's righteouſneſs brought near,
Clothing for naked ſouls to wear:
This robe, ſaith Chriſt, I wrought for thee;
Come put it on, remembring me.
7 Here's refuge, peace, eternal life,
Come ſhare and baniſh unbelief:
My blood wipes out the deepeſt ſtain;
Feed on this truth, *The Lamb is ſlain.*
8 This truth makes angels fall and cry,
How wondrous is this myſtery!
Ten thouſand thouſands do the ſame,
Who miniſter before the Lamb.

HYMN XCIII.

CHRIST *our* RIGHTEOUSNESS *and the* SOUL's ALL.

1 CHRIST feeds his flock, he calls their names,
His boſom bears the tender Lambs:
Look on the weak and bruiſed reed,
Which from thee ſtrength doth always need.
2 I'm weak and ſinful, deareſt Lamb;
But come and take me as I am:
O waſh me in thy precious blood,
And ſo preſent me unto God.
3 The goſpel-news my faith ſuſtain:
Which ſay, for us the Lamb was ſlain:
To Jeſus let the guilty fly,
Who out of love for men would dy.
4 "I none deſire to know beſide,
Chriſt Jeſus, and him crucify'd."
Accept me in his righteouſneſs,
And in my heart his love increaſe.
5 My robes are Jeſu's righteouſneſs,
My ſoul is faireſt in this dreſs:
Put on me righteouſneſs divine;
Say, Chriſt, with all he hath, is mine.
6 Thy viſit would revive my ſoul,
Thy gracious preſence makes me whole:
Come down, Lord, ſhew thyſelf to me,
Or elſe take up my ſoul to thee.
7 When Chriſt draws nigh, there's none can (move,
Nor part my heart from his ſweet love:
I then cry, "I'll not let thee go,
Till from thee bleſſings to me flow."
8 I'll glory only in our Lord,
By whom our nature is reſtor'd:
On Jeſus all my hopes depend.
Lord, love me, keep me to the end.

HYMN XCIV.

CHRIST's *wondrous* Love *and* Blood.

1 THE heav'ns and earth do brightly ſhine,
With rays of glorious pow'r divine:
But of our mercies Chriſt's the ſpring,
Let men his acts and battles ſing;
His wondrous love that made him dy
For man his mortal enemy.
2 Since finite off'rings all were vain,
Of ſin to purge away the ſtain;
Chriſt ſaid, I come a ſacrifice
That juſtice fully ſatisfies.
Amazing love that God ſhould die
For man his mortal enemy!
3 My Lord, amidſt his agonies,
His dying grones and bitter cries,
Did pray for us who us'd him ſo,
'Father they know not what they do.'
Chriſt's blood did then for us atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.
4 They're bleſt who know their ſins forgiv'n,
In Jeſu's wounds they have found heav'n,
With faith I'll view thy blood and croſs;

The world compar'd with thee is droſs.
I'll praiſe King David's Son and Lord,
And wiſh him ev'ry where ador'd.
5 No angel's tongue can ever tell
The glory of Immanuel:
All his love-wonders, and his name,
Eternity can not proclaim.
Lord, make us meet with ſaints above,
To ſing thy everlaſting love.

HYMN XCV.

The RICHES *and* GLORY *of* Saints *above.*

1 CHRIST's poverty and ſtate ſo mean
For us great riches did obtain.
Tho' ſtrangers here, and poor in hand,
We journey to the promis'd land:
Chriſt's riches there are largely giv'n;
All wants ſhall be made up in heav'n.
2 In heav'n the King unvails his face,
Which makes't a glorious dwelling place:
When ſhall the happy minute come
I'll change my baniſhment for home,
And mount and make my bleſt abode
With my dear Lamb, my Lord and God?
3 Above the ſaints for ever reſt
In Jeſu's their Redeemer's breaſt:
In holineſs they're pure and white,
They ſpotleſs ſhine like morning light.
O draw me up, the Lamb to ſee,
And live with him that dy'd for me.
4 For us our Lord roſe from the dead,
And did aſcend his blood to plead:
The napkin left, when he did riſe,
From tears may wipe the mourners eyes.
Since he hath got the victorie,
Sufficient is his grace for me.
5 Let's wait till Chriſt our judge appear,
And cauſe the dead his voice to hear:
My abſolution he'll proclaim,
And 'mong his ſaints enrol my name;
[illegible]'ll with his hands put on my crown,
And bid me on his throne ſit down.

HYMN XCVI.

The Lord's People feaſting at his Table.

1 JESUS, thy feaſt we celebrate;
At thy command the bread we eat
And drink the cup of ſacred wine;
To ſhew thy death thy friends combine;
Do this we will, and ſo prepare
To meet thee coming in the air.
2 Thy table ſhews thy love and grace,
And entertains our ſouls with peace:
Our hearts by right are only thine;
Poſſeſs them, Lord, with love divine:
Nail our deſires unto the croſs;
For all beſide thee is but droſs.
3 Feed ſouls, and on their graces ſhine,
And all their pow'rs poſſeſs as thine:
In ſtrength of this meal let us move
Towards the mount of God above;
To feel thy pow'r, to hear thy voice,
To taſte thy love is all our choice.
4 Chriſt made me at his table dine,
He raviſh'd me with love divine;
He gave a taſte of future bliſs:
I ſaid, He's mine, and I am his;
All treaſures here thou'rt far before:
Since Chriſt is mine I aſk no more.
5 My heart and pow'rs invite the King,
My tongue is looſ'd his praiſe to ſing:
With me, let all the hoſts above
Shew forth the praiſe of matchleſs love:
JESUS, poſſeſs my heart alone,
And in me let thy will be done.

HYMN XCVII.

The Love and ſacrifice of CHRIST.

1 CHriſt Jeſus the Lamb,
To ſave us he came;
His love to poor ſinners is always the ſame.
2 The love in his breaſt
Cannot be expreſt;
Part of it we'll utter, and wonder out the reſt.
3 When no ſacrifice
Could for man ſuffice,
Chriſt would be incarnate, to pay his ſoul's price,
4 In ſin men did ly,
None pardon could buy;
Love brought the Creator for creatures to die.
5 Man he would be made,
His blood all would ſhed,
Even ly in the grave that all might be paid.
6 All off'rings were vain
But Chriſt for us ſlain;
This ſacrifice only our peace can obtain.
7 His dear Son God gave
To ly in a grave,
And wade thro' hell's ſorrows, loſt ſinners to ſave.
8 Chriſt's death makes us gaze!
Who can this love praiſe!
It doth the bright angels and ſaints all amaze.
9 Chriſt for us was dead,
Now lives as our Head;
For us in the heaven's his blood he doth plead.
10 Exalted he ſtands
Shews his bleeding hands:
Chriſt, having paid juſtice, our freedom demands.
11 Salvation he brings
Which in our ears rings
To make us more happy than great earthly kings.
12 Chriſt's blood we hear call
All ſorts great and ſmall;
His wounds do perſuade us in his arms to fall.

HYMN XCVIII.

CHRIST's *Love makes him die, riſe, aſcend, and return.*

1 LOVE did condeſcend
Our Lord down to ſend
To be our peace-maker, the ſtrife for to end.
2 Chriſt wept and did cry,
And for our ſins die;
Love brought him from heaven, in grave for
3 Love made him awake, (to lie.

To heaven go back;
Love will make him return again for our ſake.
4 Above Chriſt makes room
For ſaints when they come;
Firſt here he prepares them, then brings them all home.
5 Some time he now ſtays,
Yet he'll the dead raiſe,
And conveen his people to ſhew forth his praiſe.
6 O when ſhall time end,
That I may aſcend
Eternity wholly in praiſes to ſpend!
7 The love of the Lamb
To ſinners doth flame:
Tho' ſin do defile me, take me as I am.
8 Thy blood me can cleanſe
From my fouleſt ſtains;
Of ſin it can purge out the very remains,
9 Things ſmall to me ſeem
Which here men eſteem:
Chriſt only I want, me from ſin to redeem.
10 Let all him believe,
Who can ſin forgive,
And all from its bondage their ſouls can relieve.
11 Chriſt all men will try,
Our Judge comes away;
His flock he will gather in that ſolemn day.
12 Their names he doth mind,
To weak ones he's kind;
He'll not go to heav'n, and leave one behind.

HYMN XCIX.

Faith *ſtruggling with* Unbelief.

1 CHRIST doth ſave men in his love,
From death's ſting, ſin and hell;
Them he fits to ſing above,
And in his preſence dwell.
From our fears, Lord, us relieve
To penitents thy word ſpeaks life:
Thy ſure promiſe I believe;
'Lord, help my unbelief.'
2 Let my lamp be ready trim'd
Againſt the Bridegroom come;
Let my ſoul be well prepar'd
That with him I get room.
All believers thou'lt receive,
And bear up under fear and grief:
Thy ſure promiſe I believe;
'Lord, help my unbelief.'
3 Love brought Chriſt down for to die,
Love laid him in a tomb;
Love cauſed him aſcend on high,
To find his people room.
All thy friends wilt thou revive,
In ſtraits and fears grant them relief:
Thy ſure promiſe I believe;
'Lord, help my unbelief.'
4 Cauſe us to ſee thy love to us
In thy ſore agonie,
And in thy wounds on the croſs,
When for us thou didſt die.
Them thou loves who to the cleave,
And of all friends thee count the chief:
Thy ſure promiſe I believe;
'Lord, help my unbelief.'
5 Here 'tis ſweet to view thy love,
And ſee thy face in part;
Far more ſweet it is aobve
To ſee thee as thou art.
Thou to meek ones life wilt give,
And them wilt ſave from ſin and ſtriſe:
Thy ſure promiſe I believe;
'Lord, help my unbelief.'

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HYMN C.

CHRIST *our Shephered.* Pſal. xxiii.

1 THE Lord himſelf my ſhepherd is,
That doth me daily feed:
Since he is mine, and I am his,
He will ſupply my need.
2 To verdant fields he doth me lead
For paſture and for reſt,
Where living ſtreams do gently glide;
He feaſts me with the beſt.
3 In love he doth my ſoul reclaim,
When from him I do ſtray:
Not for my worth, but for his name,
He guides me in his way.
4 When I go thro' the ſhades of death,
No evil then I'll fear:
His rod and ſtaff, and heav'nly breath,
Will yield me comfort there.
5 In ſight of all my deadly foes
Thou doſt my table ſpread;
My cup with good things overflows,
Freſh oil anoints my head.
6 Goodneſs and mercy, I believe,
Shall wait me all my days;
And in God's houſe I'll ever live,
To trumpet forth his praiſe.

DOXOLOGY. Jude 24.

NOW unto our Redeemer ſtrong;
Who by his mighty arm
Can keep from falling into ſin,
And ſave us from all harm;
Who can preſent us unto God
Quite faultleſs and complete,
Before the glory of his face,
With joys exceeding great:
To God our Saviour only wiſe
Be ſtill aſcribed, then,
All glory, pow'r and majeſty,
Both now and ay. Amen.
Let's worſhip with the heav'nly hoſt
JEHOVAH One in Three:
Praiſe Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt,
To all eternitie.

FINIS.